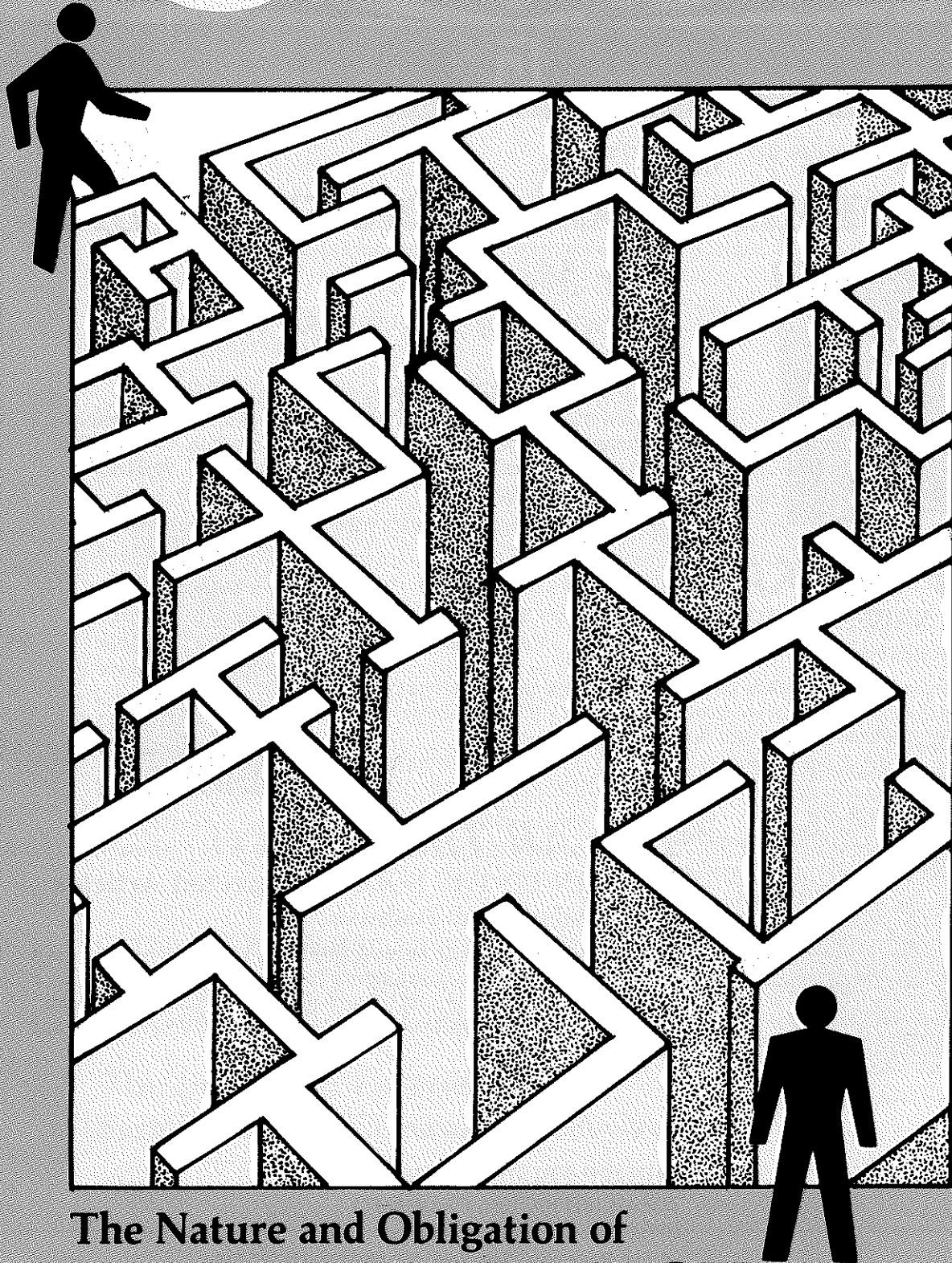


# THE JEWISH OBSERVER

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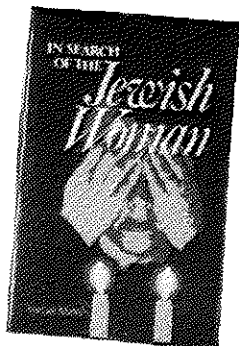
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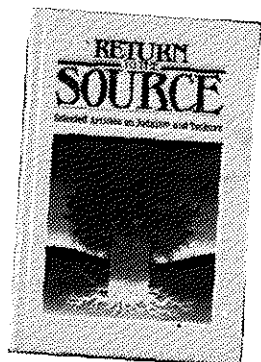
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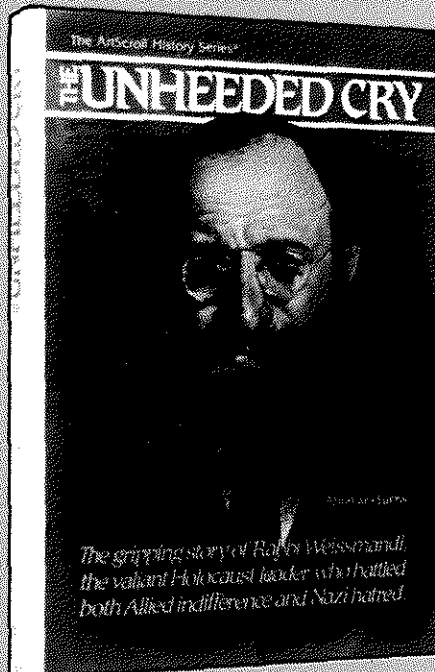
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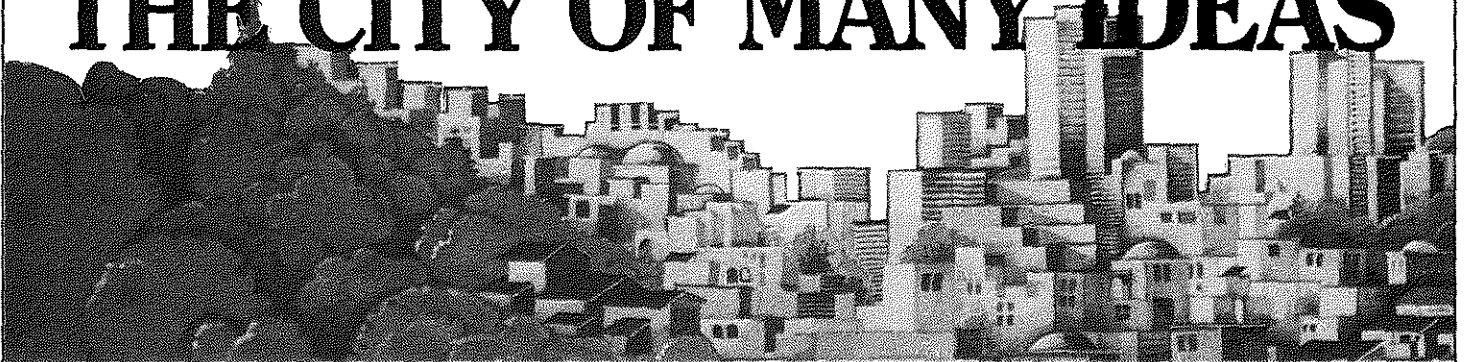
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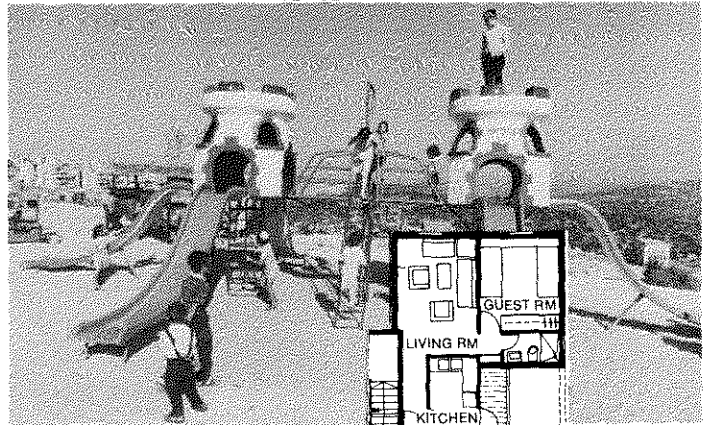
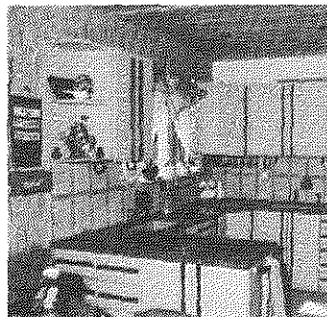


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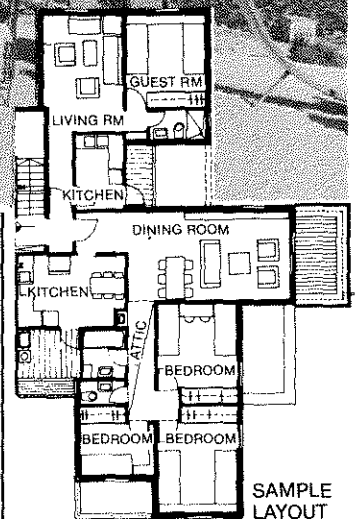


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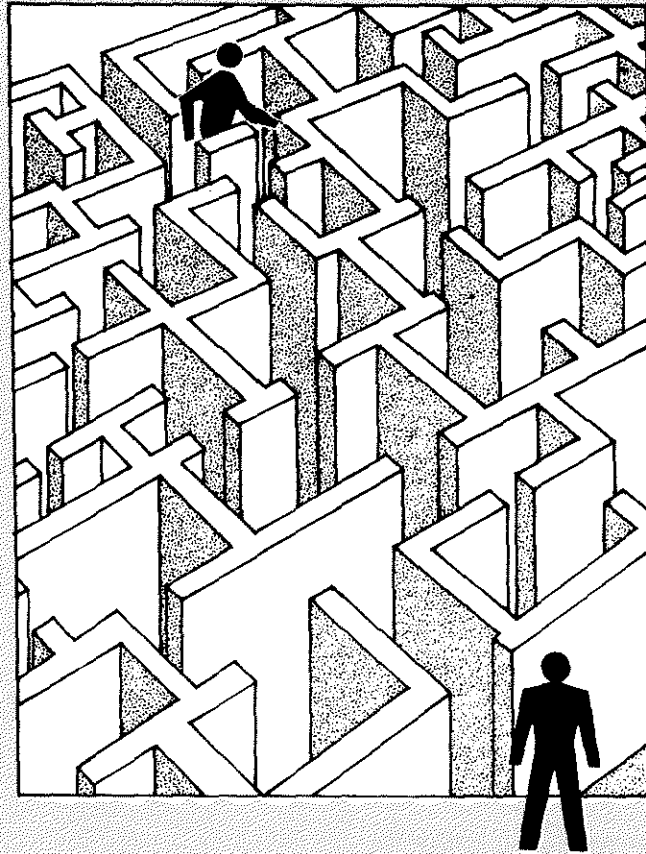




## AHAVAS YISROEL

—love for one's fellow Jew—is described as a mitzva that encompasses the entirety of the Torah.

- While it obviously can embrace all interpersonal commands, how does it include those that bid man with G-d?
- How can "Ahava"—an emotion—be legislated?
- Can love be compatible with controversy?
- In what ways does *Ahavas Yisroel* include Jews who are irreligious?—those who are anti-religious?



### The Nature and Obligation of "Ahavas Yisroel"

An analysis by the Novominsker Rebbe, Rabbi Yaakov Perlow.

Also

### Ahavas Yisroel in Action: Caring for the sick,

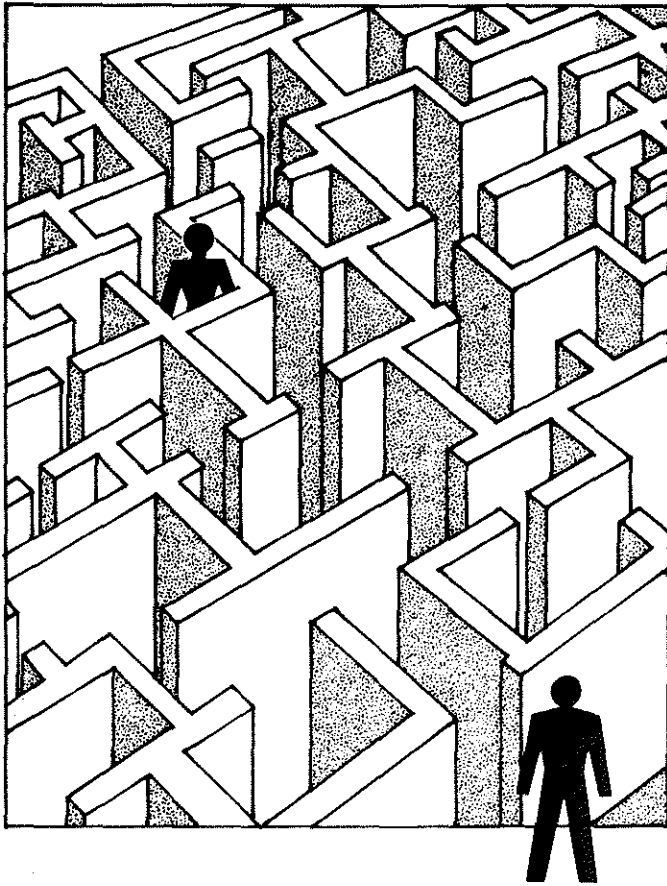
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### Is Love a Jewish Word?

A poetic examination . . . by Torah criteria



Rabbi Yaakov Perlow

## The Nature and Obligation of Ahavas Yisroel—

## Love for One's Fellow Jew

*The following essay by the NOVOMINSKER REBBE שליט"א is an elaboration of a talk he delivered before a National Torah Assembly of Zeirei Agudath Israel.*

### An All-Encompassing Command

"Love your fellow Jew as yourself." Said Rabbi Akiva, "This is a great rule in the Torah."

Rabbi Akiva prescribed *Ahavas Yisroel* as a *Klal*, a rule, that encompasses the entire Torah. Before him, the sage Hillel made it even more explicit:

מה דעלך סני לחברך לא תעביד

זו היא כל התורה כולה ואיך פירושא זיל גמור (שבת דף ל"א)

"That which is objectionable to you bring not upon your friend. This is all of Torah; the rest is explanatory, go study it."

The incisive language of our *Chachomim* (sages) implores us to study their words deeply. "Love your fellow Jew" is indeed an encompassing *mitzva*. It includes the whole spectrum of *Gemilus Chassodim*: visiting the sick, burying the dead, and all the obligations of benevo-

lences towards others.<sup>1</sup> Yet, one finds it difficult to perceive how "Love your fellow Jew" implies also the relationship of "between man and his Creator,"<sup>2</sup> so much so that it is considered the cornerstone and the basis of the entire Torah. The rabbis, however, did not mean to preach popular homiletics. They meant to set down in the *Clal*—a fundamental tenet of *Yahadus*, a principle for us to follow, a teaching as to how a Torah Jew is to think and feel and act.

י'רמב"ם הל' אבל פרק י"ד הל' א': מצות עשה של דבריהם לבקר חולים ולנחם אבלים ולהוציא המת ולהכניס הכלה וכו' וכן לשמח הכלה והחתן ולסעודם בכל צרכיהם ואלו הן גמילות חסדים שבגופו שאין להם שיעור, אע"פ שכל מצוות אלו מדבריהם הרי הן בכלל ואהבת לרעך כמוך כל הדברים שאתה רוצה שיעשו אותם לך אחרים עשה אתה אותן לאחייך בתורה ובמצוות.

יועין ברש"י שם בשבת.



We must first appreciate the idea that "*Ve'ohavta le'rei'acha kamocha*," espousing as it does concrete obligations, deeds to perform, is still in its root meaning a precept of *Ahava*, love. It is essentially an attitude, a feeling that one Jew is to carry for another. As such, it is both a חובת האברים and a חובת הלבבות—a "duty of the limbs" and a "duty of the heart." It is thus that the *Rambam* cites the *mitzva* in two different sections of his *Mishneh Torah*: in הלכות אבל, making it the framework of the various forms of *chesed*, and also in הלכות דעות, where he discusses the attitudes and traits of the Torah personality. And it is there that he writes in פרק ו' הל' ד':

מצוה על כל אדם לאהוב את כל אחד ואחד מישראל  
כגופו שנאמר ואהבת לרעך כמוך, לפיכך צריך לספר  
בשבחו ולחוס על ממונו כאשר הוא חס על ממונו  
עצמו ורוצה בכבוד עצמו.

It is incumbent upon every one to love each and every Jew as himself, as it says, "And you shall love your fellow as yourself." Therefore one should praise him, be careful of his property as he would of his own property and be solicitous of his honor.

### Can "Ahava" Be Legislated?

Ideally it is the *Ahava*-feeling for one's fellow Jew that should impel him to *Ahava*-behavior. Charitable deeds are the unspoken, natural expression of *Ahavas Yisroel*. But as a result of too often remaining unspoken, the *Ahava*-feeling tends to remain dormant, and sometimes forgotten. The true expression of "Love your fellow Jew" involves therefore both the limbs and the heart, acts of goodness coupled with the emotion of love.

No Jew is exempt from this *mitzva*—in all its aspects. No Jew, however "cold" or unemotional he may consider himself, is exempt from sensing, feeling, experiencing *Ahavas Yisroel* any less than he is exempt from sensing, feeling, experiencing *Ahavas Hashem*.

But how can *Ahava* be legislated? Emotion is not easily subject to willpower and free choice. What then does it mean to be commanded to love? The penetrating words of the *Sfas Emes* on *Ahavas Hashem* shed a unique light of Torah thought:

... והאמת כי הקושיא היא עצמה התירוץ שמה  
נלמד שיש בטבע כל איש מישראל לאהוב השי"ת  
בכל לבו ונפשו ורק שנטמן בעומק הלב. וע"י הרצון  
והתשוקה למצא זאת האהבה על זה נאמר יגעתי  
ומצאתי... שע"י שמשים האדם זה ללבו תמיד  
ומשתוקק לבוא לאהבת בוראו נגלה לו רוח הקדושה  
אשר בקרבו ועל זה נאמר וחיי עולם נטע בתוכנו....

שפת אמת פ' ואתחנן

In truth, the question itself implies the answer. Within the very nature of each Jew lies the intrinsic love of Hashem, with heart and soul, however hidden and recessed that feeling may be. The intense desire to

discover that love will bring it to the surface, as it is said: "I have toiled and I have found." The Jew's sustained effort and continued struggle to arrive at *Ahavas Hashem* will reveal his true inner being, the sanctity and spirit with which he is endowed.

—*SfasEmes, Vo'eschanan*

G-d's very command of "*V'ohavta*", therefore, informs us that He has instilled in all of us the capacity for *Ahava*. Would there be no such capacity, there would be no command. It is thus the task of each Jew to tap these wellsprings of love, raise them to his heart, and utilize them to the fullest.

Indeed, the steady practice of *V'ohavta le'rei'acha kamocha* with one's limbs will in itself arouse and stimulate the emotional chords of the heart. The effect of outer behavior on inner feelings has long been recognized by Torah wisdom and life experience.<sup>3</sup> Devotion to *chesed* and all the "deeds" of *Ahavas Yisroel* cannot but stir the pure Jewish soul to sense its inherent link of love with the soul of another Jew—and with the soul of *Klal Yisroel*.

### Ahava: A Normative Expression of One-ness

It is more than a link that binds one Jew to another. It is an innate oneness that makes us all organs of a single unit. "*Ve'ohavta le'rei'acha*" is simply the normative expression of this oneness. The idea is clearly illustrated in *Talmud Yerushalmi (Nedarim)*: If a person slicing meat would cut his hand, the injured hand would hardly take revenge on the one yielding the knife. As parts of the same body, they share each other's hurt.

The substance of our souls are the sparks that emanate from one source. The mass of individual Jews are the infinite rays coming from one sun. That sun is *Hashem* Himself. The countless rays spread in all directions. The further, however, they extend from the sun, the further do they also diverge from one another. The closer they are to the sun the closer are the individual rays to one another.

*Rashi* in *Chumash* takes note of the singular term "*nefesh*" that is used to describe the seventy members of *Yaakov Avinu's* family:

עשו שש נפשות היו לו והכתוב קורא אותן נפשות  
ביתו לשון רבים לפי שהיו עובדין לאלהות הרבה,  
יעקב שבעים היו לו והכתוב קורא אותן מפש לפי  
שהיו עובדין לא-ל אחד

רש"י בראשית (מ"ו כ"ז)

יציין מסלת ישרים סוף פרק ז': ואמנם כבר ידעת שהנרצה יותר בעבודת הבורא ית"ש הוא חפץ הלב ותשוקת הנשמה... ואולם האדם אשר אין החמדה הזאת לוהטת בו כראוי עצה טובה היא לו שיוודרו ברצונו כדי שימשך בזה שתולד בו החמדה בטבע, כי התנועה החיצונה מעוררת הפנימית ובודאי שיותר מסורה בידו היא החיצונה מהפנימית. אך אם ישתמש במה שבידו גם מה שאינו בידו בהמשך, כי תולד בו השמחה הפנימית והחפץ והחמדה מכח מה שהוא מתלהט בתנועתו ברצון...

# The accommodation of Ahava and machlokes —love and disagreement, remote as it may seem, is the critical test of an ideal Torah atmosphere, where the human ego is completely subordinated to the Derech Hashem.

When he left Canaan, Esav's family consisted of only six (himself and his five sons), and Scripture calls them the souls of his house, and this is because they worshipped many gods. But the family of Yaakov consisted of seventy and Scripture calls them soul because they all served one G-d.

*Rashi, Bereshis (46:27)*

The individualization of *Yisroel* from *Hashem Yisborach* presents a challenge of proximity: How close is each of us to the Sun, hence also how close are we to one another. In locking our hearts to our common wellspring, we begin to sense the vibrant, sacred kinship that prevails between Jews themselves. We discover the inner bond, the unifying single spirit, the point at which the collective of *Yisroel* mirrors the unity of *Hashem*.

In the words of ספר התניא פרק ל"ב:

והנפש והרוח מי יודע גדולתן ומעלתן בשרשן ומקורן באלקים חיים, בשגם שכולן מתאימות ואב אחד לכולנה ולכן נקראו כל ישראל אחים ממש מצד שורש נפשם בה' אחד רק שהגופים מחולקים. ולכן העושה גופם עיקר ונפשם טפילה אי אפשר להיות אהבה ואחווה אמיתית ביניהם אלא התלויה בדבר לבדה. וזה שאמר הלל הזקן על קיום מצוה זו זהו כל התורה כולה ואידך פירושא הוא וכו' כי יסוד ושורש כל התורה הוא להגביה ולהעלות הנפש על הגוף מעלה מעלה עד עיקרא ושרשא דכל עלמין...

The soul and spirit, who can know their greatness and excellence in their root and source in the living G-d? Being, moreover, all of a kind and all having one Father—therefore, all Israelites are called real brothers by virtue of the source of their souls in the One G-d; only the bodies are separated. Hence in the case of those who give major consideration to their bodies while regarding their souls as of secondary importance, there can be no true love and brotherhood among them, but only (a love) which is dependent on a (transitory) thing.

That is what Hillel the Elder meant when he said in regard to the fulfillment of this commandment, "This is the whole Torah, whilst the rest is but commentary," and so on. For the basis and root of the entire Torah are to raise and exalt the soul high above the body, reacting unto the Source and Root of all the worlds.

*TANYA: Chapter 32, translation by Nissan Mindel*

The meaning of Rabbi Akiva's saying לאהבת לרעך כמוך ואהבת לרעך כמוך is the enunciation of this idea. The precept derives from a larger truth, an axiom implanted in the relationship between *Hashem* and *Yisroel*. It is this

relationship that begets the commandment of *Ahavas Yisroel*. When the Torah summons Jews to love one another, the implicit directive is to anchor the oneness of *Yisroel* in the oneness of *Hashem*. The summons of *Ahavas Yisroel* calls upon our national "nefesh" to be stirred and awakened to its true being, to sense the ever present Sun within each of the extending rays, and thus for the rays to be bound together in unity which reflects the unity of G-d Himself

אתה אחד ושםך אחד ומי כעמך ישראל גוי אחד בארץ.

"You are One, Your Name is One, and who is like Your people, One nation on earth!"

At Sinai, the oneness of *Yisroel* reached its height, אחד כאיש אחד בלב אחד—"as one person, with one heart." The Torah was not handed down to a mass of individuals but to a single unit of *Yisroel*. In the Torah, essentially *Hashem's* revelation of "Himself," all the infinite, separate rays extending from the Sun, converge. Jewry is at its source. They are one. The fissures occur with sin. The decline of *Klal Yisroel* into dispersion and discord traces a path of dissonance with *Hashem* Himself. אין שלום בעצמי. "There is no peace in my bones due to my failing," moans the Psalmist. The absence of "peace" within the House of Israel reiterates one again, the fundamental idea that the seed of true *Ahavas Yisroel* is unimpaired *Ahavas Hashem*. Where the seed is injured, the fruits suffer a devastating effect.

## The "Derech Hashem" Beyond "Derech Eretz"

Ben Azai responded to Rabbi Akiva's *Klal Gadol BaTorah* with what he considered an even greater, more inclusive principle: זה ספר תולדות אדם כלל גדול מזה "This is the history of Man," which concludes with the words בדמות אלקים עשה אותו "Man was created in the image of G-d." The metaphysical definition of Man, as reflecting Divine Spirit, is the Torah measure of all human behavior. For Jews, it is even more ratified in a specific *mitzva*, "מה הוא And you shall walk in His ways; מה הוא מלבשי ערומים אף אתה, מה הוא מבקר חולים אף אתה — As He clothes the naked, so should you: as He visits the sick, so should you." Ethical behavior is thus not merely a rational imperative but a form of Divine service. Kindness, charity, justice are certainly part of the universal code of morality, the *Derech Eretz* which governs the interrelating between people. Indeed, the Sages have remarked, דרך ארץ קדמה לתורה—The precepts of *Derech Eretz* are the forerunners of the Torah. As the preamble before the actual message, *Derech Eretz* dictates the

*Those who wander in the wasteland, held "captive since infancy" by false and alien values; our forlorn brethren bereft of Torah truth; certainly those struggling, groping for spiritual guidance and sustenance, need more than anyone the fullest measure of Ahava and Kiruv.*

proper norms of human conduct. In this context the principles of Ethics, shared by all mankind, are the apex reached by *Derech Eretz*.

*Avraham Avinu*, however, reached well beyond. He recognized *chesed* and *tzedaka* and *mishpat* as מדותיו של הקב"ה the traits of *Hashem*. In sensing the Creator as being אהב צדקה ומשפט, "He who cherishes charity and justice," and in realizing that חסד ה' מלאה הארץ, "It is the *chesed* of *Hashem* that fills the earth," *Avraham Avinu's* commitment to these ways—and that of his posterity—reflects not merely a code of *Derech Eretz*, the Way of the Earth, but a *Derech Hashem*, the Way of G-d, the way upon which G-d Himself walks (see *Rambam, Hilchos De'os* 1:7). This is the heritage and challenge unique to *Klal Yisroel*: ושמו דרך ה' לעשות צדקה ומשפט, to keep the *Derech Hashem* as the source and stimulus of all ethical behavior. In our daily lives we must never lose sight of the fact that every noble act of *Derech Eretz* is to be imbued with "*kedusha shel Mitzva*," the service of *Hashem*, and the emulation of His ways.

#### "Ahavas Yisroel" in the Ways of G-d

In the galaxy of Divine traits, in the very purpose of Creation, *Ahavas Yisroel* predominates. The Scriptures are replete with the boundless *Ahava* that *Hashem* showers upon *Yisroel*. The gift of Torah at Sinai is, of course, the greatest expression of *Hashem's Ahavas Yisroel*, as we pronounce daily in the blessings of "*Ahava Rabba*" and "*Ahavas Olam*" preceding the *Shema*<sup>4</sup>. The feeling and attitude of *Ahava* for one's fellow Jew is thus also included in the *mitzva* of והלכת בדרכיו, walking in *Hashem's* ways, no less than the concrete acts of benevolence and charity. Were we all to appreciate the full dimension of *Ahavas Yisroel* as an ongoing, eternal, *Derech Hashem*, were we to understand our interpersonal relations as reflecting also our relationship with *Hakodosh Boruch Hu*, were we to observe the specifics of the *Derech Hashem* as the norms that validate life itself, our own private and communal lives would assume deeper, more sacred meaning.

יהוה יתעלה לסמיכות זו נראה פשוט דמיון שברכות אלו ברכות התורה הוויין לפני ק"ש שמקיימין בה מצות לא ימוש (ענין ברכות יא ובראשונים) לכן מקדימין בהם בחירתם ואהבתם של ישראל כדרך "אשר בחר בנו מכל העמים ונתן לנו את תורתו" וכן במעמד הר סיני כתובה מעלת ישראל שקראם הקב"ה ממלכת כהנים וגוי קדוש קודם שנתן להם את תורה.

#### Truth, Love, and Controversy

The search for truth, tempered with *Ahavas Yisroel*, is the measure of valid Torah controversy. The many differences in opinion and approach between *Beis Shammai* and *Beis Hillel* that symbolize, in the words of the *Mishna*, מחלוקת לשם שמים—a dispute for the sake of Heaven—are set nonetheless on the canvas of mutual respect and friendship. ללמדך שהי חביבה ורעות נוהגים זה בזה. "To teach you that love and friendship prevailed amongst them, in keeping with: 'And love truth and peace' " (*Yevamos*, 14a).

The accommodation of *Ahava* and *Machloess*—love and disagreement, remote as it may seem, is the critical test of an ideal Torah atmosphere, where the human ego is completely subordinated to the *Derech Hashem*. It is an atmosphere where the *Klal Gadol BaTorah* does not permit the seeds of malice to fester and infect the Jewish heart. Tragically, the free vent given to *Machloess* in our midst has dragged many of us into a continuing morass of ill-feeling, bad-mouthing, and even acts of violence. The recognition that controversy, which might otherwise be considered as genuinely *l'shem Shomayim*, can yet wreak such destructive havoc should serve as a signal that all is not well with the current perceptions of *l'shem Shomayim*. We may as well also admit to ourselves that it is the שטן המחלוקת itself, the satanic aspect of strife, more than the disputes in the spirit of *Hillel* and *Shammai*, that poisons the atmosphere today.

In the fierce preoccupation with one's own viewpoint one tends to forget—or has he yet to learn?—that the opinions of *Beis Hillel* prevailed precisely because they were pleasant and humble and accorded priority to the House of *Shammai*:

וכי מאחר שאלו ואלו דברי אלקים חיים מפני מה זכו בית הלל לקבוע הלכה כמותן מפני שנוחין ועלובין היו ושונין דבריהן ודברי בית שמאי ולא עוד אלא שמקדימין דברי בית שמאי לדבריהן.  
עירובין דף י"ג.

Since both are "the words of a living G-d," why did *Beis Hillel* merit that the *halacha* should be decided in their favor? Because they were amenable and humble, and studied both their own words and those of *Beis Shammai*. Not only that, they studied *Beis Shammai's* words before their own.

(*Eiruvin*, 33a)

## The search for truth, tempered with Ahavas Yisroel, is the measure of valid Torah controversy.

This is a curious reason, for there would seem to be little relevance between Beis Hillel's nobility and the correctness of their views. One is a matter of character, while the other requires intellectual strength. The assumption of the sages, however, indicates the effect of the *Ahava* personality upon the thought processes of Torah. He who excels in the "duties of the heart" can be more trusted to arrive at halachic truth. Such is the intrinsic relationship between *Midos* and *Seichel*, character and intellect. Such is the innate "nature" of Torah.<sup>5</sup>

### A Love Structured By Torah

Implicit to the attitude of *Ahavas Yisroel* is an *Ayin Tova*—a natural "kind eye" towards an imperfect fellow Jew. The *Ayin Tova* is able to accommodate criticism with forbearance, admonition with love. The famous prayer of the *Noam Elinelech*: *תן בלבנו שנראה כל אחד מעלת חבריו*—*ואם חסרונם*.—"Influence our hearts so that each of us sees our friends' positive attributes and not their faults"—reflects a scope of *Ahavas Yisroel* that sees the virtues of a Jew as organic, inherent in the goodness of his soul, while his shortcomings are but incidental trappings alien to his nature. Thus we are to focus our feelings on the Jewish core essence, not on the incidental—on that which is intrinsic and not on that which is circumstantial. The challenge of viewing another's imperfection generously is the subtle test of the quality of one's *Ahavas Yisroel*.

And yet, *Ahavas Yisroel* is not an unrestricted precept. However inspired one may feel towards loving fellow Jews, this love, like all generous traits, must be measured by Torah standards. Specifically, we must withhold our *Ahava* when dealing with those we are instructed to despise: those who abuse the Torah, trample upon its laws and corrupt its truths. The perpetrators of "wickedness" in the eyes of *Hashem* merit little love in the eyes of Man. The *שונא*, the enemy amongst us referred to in Scriptures in numerous places, refers to the conscious, deliberate practitioners of sinful acts:

השונא שנאמר בתורה לא מאומות העולם הוא אלא  
מישראל והיאך יהי' לישראל שונא מישראל והכתוב  
אומר לא תשנא את אחיך בלבבך, אמר חכמים  
שראהו לבדו שעבר עבירה והתורה בו ולא חזר הר"י זה  
מצוה לשונאו עד שיעשה תשובה וישוב מרשעו.  
רמב"ם סוף ה' רוצח וש"נ פי' ד' הגמ' פסחים קי"ג

יועיין באור שמח הלכות יסודי התורה פ"ט ה"ד דלש"י הרמב"ם הטעם  
שסמכו על הבת קול לקבוע הלכה כדברי ב"ה "משום שהב"ק נאמר על האדם  
ולא על גוף ההלכה הפרטית... שזה האדם ראוי לקבוע הלכה כמותו" עיי"ש  
ויש להוסיף שמכיון שזהו סגולת הטבע של תורה מש"ה לא אמרין בזה לא  
בשמים היא כי הבת קול כאילו העיד על המציאות ולא על הדין וכהא דשבת דף  
ק"ח אס' יבוא אליהו ויאמר עיי"ש.

The enemy mentioned in the Law does not mean a foreign enemy, but a Jew. How can one Jew hate another when Scripture says, "Do not despise your brother in your heart"? The Sages decreed that if one alone witnesses another committing a crime, and warns him against it, and he does not desist, one is obligated to despise him until he repents and departs from his evil ways.

RAMBAM Hilchos Rotze'ach

It is of course to be understood that the uneducated, those never really exposed to the light of Torah, can hardly be considered as undeserving of our love and outreach. Those who wander in the wasteland, held "captive since infancy" by false and alien values; our forlorn brethren bereft of Torah truth; certainly those struggling, groping for spiritual guidance and sustenance, need more than anyone the fullest measure of *Ahava* and *Kiruv*. The *halacha* that deprives *resha'im* from *Ahavas Yisroel* applies only to the knowledgeable, willful deviationist who is quite aware of, and has been taught, our Divine precepts and Torah values; yet he callously rejects them. He has been admonished about his ways, but he glibly ignores the admonishments.<sup>6</sup> This antagonist of *Hashem* thus also becomes *שונא*, your foe, your dangerous opponent, who hardly merits the outreach of *Ahava*.

### The Limits of Where to Love

One of the travesties committed today in the name of *Ahavas Yisroel* and *Achdus Yisroel* (national unity) is the friendliness and comradeship bestowed upon said deviationists. The Torah sensitivities of some of our more "modern" or "moderate" Orthodox colleagues have become so dulled as to their having accorded even rabbinical status and recognition to the leaders of deviationism. This spiritual recognition, and the social ambience attached thereto, reflecting an air of "one happy family despite our differences," is exactly what the sages prohibited in their stricture: *אסור להתערב עם הרשעים*. It is forbidden to associate with the wicked. It is the natural converse of the Psalmist's *חבר אני לכל אשר יראוך*. I am a companion to all that fear you." The word *chaver*, like the simple English word "friend," denotes a kinship of spirit, an attachment, a sharing of common interests and values. *Ahavas Yisroel* and *Achdus Yisroel* cannot serve as a cover for such kinship with the usurpers of Torah and those who violate its basic tenets. Conferring religious validity, however rationalized, on the usurpers is a cruel insult to our *Emuna*, a *Chilul Hashem* of immense proportions. In the prism of our *Mesora*, the Sages have distilled for us the meaning—and the price—of Jewish unity and collaboration. The parameters of *Ahavas Yisroel* are well-

י'כדמשמע מד' הרמב"ם ה"ג'ל וכמפורש שם בתניא וכן הביאו הפוסקים בשם  
שו"ת מהר"ם לובלין סי' י"ג.



defined in *halacha*. To distort these parameters does violence to the very basis and structure of our living Torah.

### Hatred Without Ego

The attitude of *sinas hareshaim*, despising the wicked, must, however, pass the test of a pure Jewish heart imbued with genuine *Ahavas Yisroel*. The *Rishonim*, in addressing the question as to how and when one is to "despise the wicked," alert us to the incipient ego feelings that may taint a correct attitude and transform it into a malice that is forbidden. An examination of the *halacha*: reveals a clear natural evolvement from permissible *sina* to the *sina gemura* a complete hatred, one fueled by a personal animosity. Thus they explain the *halacha*: אוהב לפרוק ושונא לטעון ומצוה בשונא לטעון כדי לכופ את יצרו—The obligation to help a *sonai*, one who deserves to be despised, load his animal, transcends the obligation to help a "friend" unload his animal, even though unloading normally takes precedence to loading. The reason given is יצרו—כדי לכופ את יצרו—to curb one's instinct. But why guard against a "yetzer" where the *sina* is approved? To which the *Tosefos* responds

יש לומר כיון שהוא שונא גם חבירו שונא אותו  
דכתיב כמים הפנים לפנים כן לב האדם לאדם ובאין  
מתוך כך לידי שנאה גמורה ושייך כפיית היצר.

That is, permissible as the original *sina* may be, it will then evoke a reciprocal feeling in the heart of the one being despised, "as water, so does one face mirror another," and this will in turn trigger a deeper, personal, "total" *sina* in the first person, a *sina* directed by an ego—"yetzer", and of this one must forever beware.

The late Brisker Rav זצ"ל pointed to the verses in *Tehillim* and their wrath and passion against the evil:

הלא משנאיך ה' אשנא, ובתקומיך אתקוטט תכלית  
שנאה שנאתים לאויבים היו לי.

Those who hate You, HaShem, do I not hate them?  
And do I not quarrel with them who rise up against  
You? I despise them with the utmost hatred. I regard  
them as my own enemy.

(*Tehillim* 139:21-22)

Precisely there, however, *Dovid Hamelech* pleads that his heart be searched for its purity, that it not be tinged with any dark instinct or bitterness.

חקרני אל-ודע לבבי בחנני ודע שרעפי וראה אם דרך  
עצב בי ונחנו בדרך עולם (קל"ט, כ"א-כ"ד)

Search me, O G-d, and know my heart.

Test me and know my thoughts.

See if I have vexing ways and lead me  
in the way of eternity.

*ibid* 23-24

The passion of hatred, even in its valid, halachic perspective, requires extreme caution and constant introspection, for hatred is an unhealthy, dangerous emotion.<sup>7</sup> Perhaps the subtle distinction between the English words "despise" and "hate" is a necessary guideline in

the accommodation of *Ahavas Yisroel* and שנאת הרשעים. That such an accommodation must often be made even towards the very same person is a challenge posed to us by the stirring words of the תנאי.<sup>8</sup>

וגם המקורבים אליו והוכיחם ולא שבו מעונותיהם  
שמצוה לשנאותם מצוה לאהבם ג"כ ושתיהן הן אמת  
שנאה מצד הרע שבהם ואהבה מצד בחי' הטוב הגנוז  
שבהם שהוא ניצוץ אלקות שבתוכם המחי' נפשם  
האלקית וגם לעורר רחמים בלבם עליה כי היא בבחי'  
גלות בתוך הרע מס"א הגובר עלי' ברשעים  
והרחמנות מבטלת השנאה ומעוררת האהבה כנודע  
ממ"ש ליעקב אשר פדה את אברהם [ולא אמר דהע"ה  
תכלית שנאה שנאתים וגו' אלא על המינים  
והאפיקורסים שאין להם חלק באלקי ישראל  
כדאיתא בגמרא ר"פ ט"ז דשבת]. פרק ל"ב

Even with regard to those who are close to him, and whom he has rebuked, yet they had not repented of their sins, when he is enjoined to hate them, there still remains the duty to love them also, and both are right: hatred, because of the wickedness in them; and love on account of the aspect of the hidden good in them, which is the Divine spark in them, which animates their divine soul. He should also awaken pity in his heart for [the divine soul], for she is held captive, as it were, in the evil of the *sitra achra* that triumphs over her in wicked people. Compassion destroys hatred and awakens love, as is known from the [interpretation of the] text, "to [the house of] Jacob who redeemed Abraham."

(As for King David, peace unto him, who said, "I hate them with a consummate hatred," he was referring to [Jewish] heretics and atheists who have no portion in the G-d of Israel, as stated in the Talmud, Tractate *Shabbat*, beginning of ch. 16).

*Tanya*

The integrity of emotion is critical to the true Torah personality. For the human heart is very devious: "The human heart is most deceitful, who can fathom it?" (*Yirmiyahu* 17:9) The subtleties of our feelings in *Ahavas Yisroel*—and all other duties of the heart—need constant, honest re-examination, and clear Torah guidance. Only through studied effort, through *Tefilla* and *Siyata Dishmaya* can we hope to attain that kind of heart worthy of the Jewish soul.<sup>9</sup>

ועיין בספר קדושת לוי פרשת בראשית ד"ה רבותינו ז"ל אמרו  
8 ולפי"ז יש ליישב קושיית התוס' שם בפסחים דבאמת שייך כפיית יצר גם  
בשונא שמותר ומצוה לשנאותו משום דע"י כך שיפרוק לאוהב ולא יטעון  
לשונא עלול דמאד יא נחא לי בדבר מחמת שנאתו ותגבר בלבו השנאה על  
האהבה, והרגש זה צריך לכופ ולכבוש כי אדרבה יש לעורר רחמים רבים בלב  
כמבואר בפנים.

\* והדבר צריך הבחנה גדולה במינים ואפיקורסים שבזמננו אם אינם מאותם  
שלא ידעו ולא למדו שדינים כתינוק שנשבה, וגם יש שיעקר רשעותם הוא  
לתיאבון שבהפקידא נחא להו וע"י כך נשתרשו בחטא ונשתבשו בדעות, ועיין  
בשו"ת חתם סופר אה"ע"ז סי' ס'. וראה בדברים הנמרצים שכתב במרגניתא  
טבא בסוף ספר אהבת חסד אות י"ז והובאו בחזון איש יו"ד סי' ב' אות כ"ח.  
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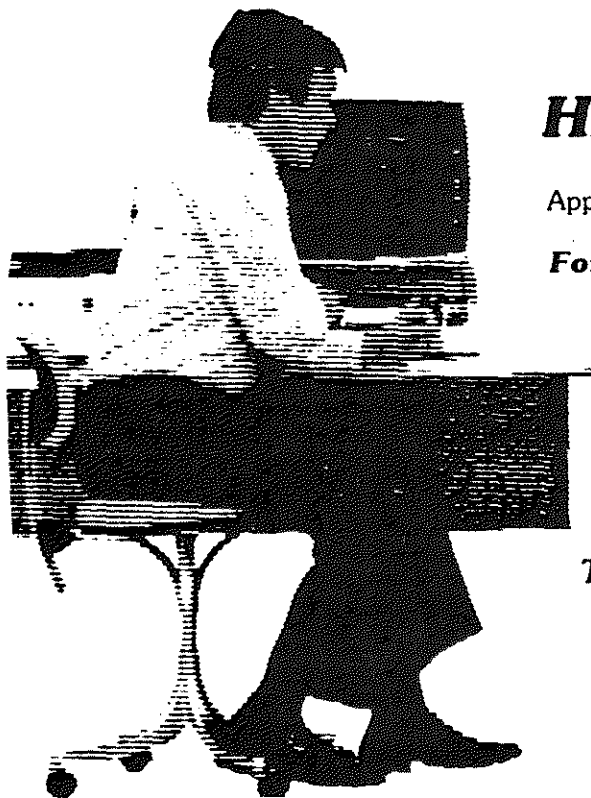
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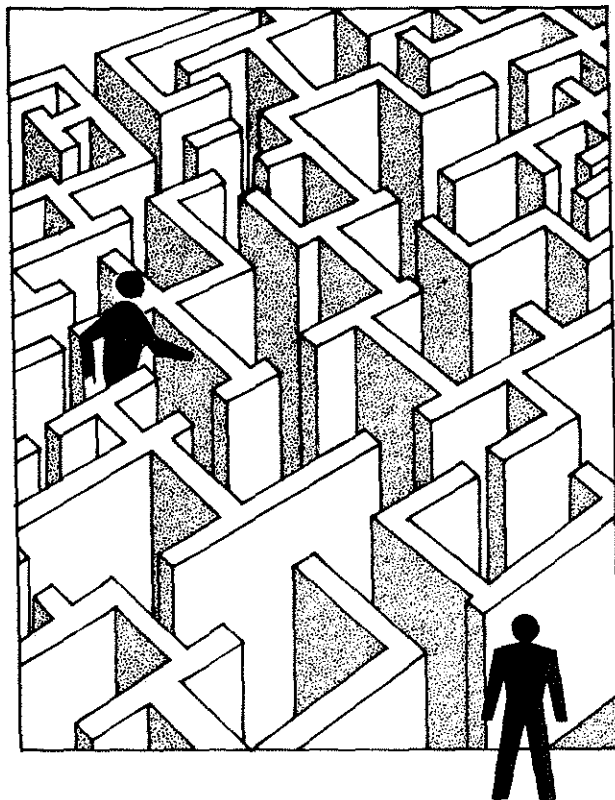
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## When It Seemed There Was No One to Help

"I Looked, and There  
Was No One To Help . .  
I will relate the kindness  
of G-d . . . all the good  
He has granted us."

(Yeshayahu 63:5,7)

### Dispatched By the Chazon Ish

This age of remedies is personified by the mechanical heart beating on William J. Schroeder's chest. Our children, it seems, may well see the Jarvik 7 as our fathers saw the Model T. After all, how do we, today, view the state of medicine a generation ago? Regardless of the rapid progress of medicine—and, in some ways, because of it—there is one factor that was crucial then and still is—and in all likelihood, will continue to be so when our children grow up:

In 1949, long before the era of open heart surgery, not to mention Dr. DeVries' artificial heart, the Bostoner Rebbe, Rabbi Levi Yitzchok Horowitz, was approached by an Israeli living in Providence, Rhode Island: In Bnei Brak, the Chazon Ish had instructed the man's brother to have much-needed heart surgery performed by a Dr. Harkin of Boston.

"I know neither Dr. Harkin, nor Boston," said the Israeli from Providence. "Perhaps you could help us?"

And so, 35 years ago, the first of countless such *mitzvos* fell into the Rebbe's lap, connecting those in need of sophisticated medical help with those equipped to dispense it. The next morning the Rebbe was on the phone

with Dr. Harkin, setting the preliminary stages for the doctor's consent and the hospital's admission—both necessary steps to secure a visa for the heart disease victim. At the time there had only been 90 such operations performed worldwide, with a 90% success rate.

The Bostoner Rebbe quickly arranged everything on his side of the ocean, and then waited weeks until he received a telegram from Israel. The next day an ambulance was dispatched to the airport.

The hospital staff insisted that an interpreter be present around the clock. Should the patient wake up in the middle of the night and find no one with whom he could communicate he would surely panic. The Rebbe arranged for three shifts to be at his bedside, 24 hours a day, for three weeks. And when the operation was finally scheduled for a Thursday morning, the patient refused, arguing that the following Sunday was Tisha B'Av and the operation must be delayed until after the fast. The Rebbe tried to intervene, without success. In desperation he turned to the doctor, a non-Jew, who responded, "I know that the Ninth of Av is the saddest day of the Jewish year, but tell the patient that this is going to be the happiest day of his year—G-d will be with me." Wednesday night, the eve of the operation, a telegram arrived from the Chazon Ish (who was unaware of what was transpiring), which read: "May the efforts of the hospital be with *hatzlacha*." The following morning the operation was performed successfully,

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and the patient was eventually transferred to the Rebbe's house where he recuperated for a month.

### The Emergence of ROFEH

That initial episode and similar efforts that followed in its wake resulted in Project ROFEH—a referral, lodging and liaison organization. Located in Boston, one of the world's outstanding medical centers, ROFEH has connections with the Harvard Medical School, Joslin Clinic, Deaconess Hospital (which specializes in treatment of diabetes), Brigham Hospital (kidney diseases), Massachusetts General Hospital (open-heart surgery), and the Children's Medical Center, to name just a few. When ROFEH receives word of a Jew in need, a dedicated organization swings into action.

*Erev Succos last year, ROFEH was alerted that a baby in the greater Boston area was born with severe heart problems. Because of the delicate nature of the necessary surgery, the delivering hospital attempted to get Dr. Aldo Castanada, the Chief of Surgery at Children's Hospital to perform the operation, but it could not reach him. Project ROFEH was contacted. ROFEH was informed that the Chief of Surgery was in the middle of a conference and could not be interrupted. The receiver was transferred to the Bostoner Rebbe who spoke to Castanada's secretary. Within one minute, the doctor called back—and performed open heart surgery on the youngest heart patient in history.*

*The family—particularly the mother, whose baby was taken from her minutes after delivery—needed support, encouragement and housing for the Yom Tov. ROFEH and the Rebbe's community eagerly provided the help that was necessary to see this family through a trying ordeal.*

### The ROFEH Contact

ROFEH is primarily involved with making contacts.

*April, 8 years ago, a first year law student at Boston University felt pain in his underarm. A doctor at BU's student clinic told him that he thinks that he has a punctured lung. To be on the safe side he sent for an X-ray and found a massive density between the lungs. A tumor, 6" by 6" by 2½", was discovered in his chest, above the heart.*

*A week before surgery, the student stopped by the Rebbe's residence for a blessing and some advice regarding the Pesach Seder, which fell out at the time of the operation. The house, the student recalls, was incredibly busy with dozens of people coming to sell their chometz and pose halachic queries.*

*The Bostoner Rebbe began to interrogate him: Who is the doctor? Which hospital? What procedure? etc. etc. . . . Since the operation was already scheduled the student was reluctant to disclose all the details for further examination.*

*The Rebbe jotted down the information, picked up the phone, and as the student tells it, "started pulling strings like a puppeteer." The Rebbe discovered that the doctor scheduled to operate was a junior member of the operating team, and this type of surgery was not his hospital's specialty.*

*The Rebbe then telephoned the chairman of the department of thoracic surgery in Massachusetts General Hospital, who could not believe what the Rebbe was saying. "It could be Hodgkin's disease, which affects the lymph system, or thymoma, a different cancer. Clearly the growth has taken root in the thymus, and puncturing it via the Chamberlain Procedure could spread the cancer all over the body."*

*Days later the patient was admitted to Massachusetts General Hospital for open chest surgery performed by the chairman of the department. It was a six-hour operation; the surgeon also removed the pleura (lung lining) to act as a bag for the malignant tumor so that no stray cells would escape.*

*ROFEH saw to it that recuperation was accompanied by a Seder, and a constant stream of visitors who trekked five miles each way during the three day Yom Tov. The Bostoner Rebbe also managed to find a kipa-wearing oncologist to explain the student's illness to his overwrought parents.*

### Ethical Guidance

ROFEH provides an invaluable service for doctors who find themselves in ethical dilemmas and wish to consult with a religious authority. For this reason, the Bostoner Rebbe was appointed to a prestigious research committee to fill the chair on Bio-Ethics at the Massachusetts Institute of Health, which is linked with Massachusetts General Hospital and the Harvard Medical School. Whoever occupies this chair is sure to have far-reaching influence on all the medical institutions of the world. If Massachusetts General, regarded as one of the finest hospitals in the world, takes a clear stance on a specific ethical matter, one can assume that Memorial Hospital in New York and Hadassah in Jerusalem will at least take note.

*A woman from New York sought the attention of a top gastro-intestinal specialist at Massachusetts General Hospital. The Bostoner Rebbe made the connection and the doctor agreed to take the case just hours before the Rebbe's departure for Israel.*

*One week later, ROFEH called the Rebbe in Jerusalem to inform him that the gastro-intestinal specialist was looking for him. The Rebbe telephoned Boston and found the doctor in a despondent mood. He relayed that the woman's kidneys had stopped functioning—but even with dialysis, her illness would kill her within a week.*

*"Rabbi, what do you say?"*

*"Is she alert?"*

*"Now, yes. But she will die nonetheless, and there is no reason to prolong her life with heroic measures."*

*"I want you to put her on the dialysis machine."*

*"But what will I tell my colleagues? Dialysis in such a case is unheard of."*

*"Put the blame on me."*

*The doctor was relieved, for that was precisely what he had wanted to hear, but felt restricted from making such a decision. As it turned out, the woman did not need dialysis for more than a few days and is today leading a normal productive life.*



## All This And Lodging, Too

Often ROFEH's help is principally with providing lodging for those in medical need. Frequently patients arrive in Boston with several family members to help them through an agonizing and sometimes protracted process. Some come for weeks, some even for years. To accommodate these needs, ROFEH has a special seven-apartment complex, the New England Hassidic Center, as well as the Rebbe's residence, if need be.

When Rabbi Boruch Sorotzkin, זצ"ל, the late Telshe Rosh HaYeshiva, came to Boston for medical treatment, he found a spacious apartment at his disposal—not realizing until several days had passed that he and his Rebbitzin were occupying the residence of the Rebbe, who had moved out to make the Rosh HaYeshiva comfortable during that difficult period.



"Refu'as hanefesh Ur'fuas haguf—curing the soul and curing the body (from the prayer for a recovery) is the intertwining between saving the soul and its body," the Bostoner Rebbe once explained. Words well said from the founder of an organization so deeply engaged in saving both. □

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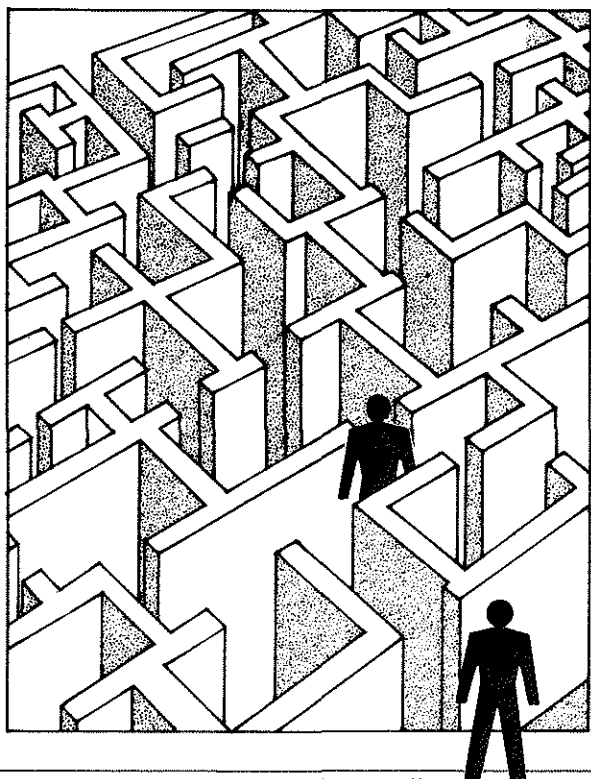
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Overcoming the Hurdle

"Have you gone to be *menachem aveil* yet?"

"Yes, I went yesterday. How about you?"

"Not yet. I think they're sitting *Shiva* until Monday morning. But I don't know when I'll go. I get home from work too late to make the *minyan* for *Mincha-Ma'ariv*."

"So why can't you go later in the evening or on Sunday?"

"It's easier for me to go for one of the *minyanim* because there are always other people there. I usually try to avoid making a *Shiva* visit alone. I wouldn't know what to say."

How many people share this sentiment and then postpone making a *Shiva* visit until it becomes logistically impossible. Others do not even have such good intentions and find some excuse right away not to fulfill this *mitzva*.

The laws of *nichum aveilim* (comforting mourners) are rarely studied, in depth. Like the flimsy, paper-back editions of *Eichah* and *Kinos*, made for one use only, we hope we will not need to consult these *halachos*. While this avoidance is most understandable, it has nevertheless led to misconceptions, confusion and ignorance regarding the detailed requirements of this important *mitzva*. As a result, some people disregard *nichum aveilim* entirely while others fulfill this *mitzva* in a way that makes the *aveilim* wish the *menachamim* (comforters) had stayed home.

**Dr. Wikler** is a psychotherapist and family counselor in private practice. He lives in Brooklyn, N.Y. The author would like to express his grateful appreciation to the Bostoner Rebbe, Grand Rabbi Levi Horowitz, שליט"א, and to Yaakov Salomon, C.S.W., for their generous assistance in the preparation of this article.

Dr. Meir Wikler

## The Psychodynamics of Grief and Mourning:

### A Layman's Guide to Making a "Shiva" Visit

No deep Talmudic insights or profound Torah thoughts will be found in this article. Rather, it is my intention to demonstrate that by learning and following the halachic requirements of *nichum aveilim*, not only is the guess-work taken out of this *mitzva*, but many basic psychological needs of *aveilim* are also met. Of course, these benefits are not the "reasons" for the details of the *mitzva*. Rather, as the late Dayan Dr. I. Grunfeld wrote in his Introduction (p.xcix), to his translation of Rabbi S.R. Hirsch's *Horeb*: "A reason for a law which is not given by G-d but is arrived at through human meditation must always remain a hypothesis and can never assume certainty in such a way as to influence practical obedience to the law."

Nevertheless, it would be permissible for us to examine how the *aveil's* basic psychological needs are addressed by faithful adherence to the halachic requirements of *nichum aveilim*. As Rabbi S.R. Hirsch explained (*Horeb*, p.clvi), one of the objectives of studying *mitzvos* is "to weight the consequences of their observance or non-observance in practical life, and by deep reflection, to trace the wisdom of G-d in His word, as by observation we trace it in His work."

To many readers, what follows may represent nothing more than plain common sense. Nevertheless, we live in an age when the common sense of yesterday is all too often overlooked or forgotten today.

#### The "When" of Comforting

People often speak of waiting until the third day of *Shiva* before making a *Shiva* visit. Sometimes this kind of delay—for example when the burial takes place on a Wednesday—will not leave much opportunity for *nichum*

*aveilim*. (The mourners "get up" the following Tuesday morning.)

Both *Kol Bo on Aveilus* (p.297) and the *Gesher HaChaim* cite support for the custom of waiting until the third day of *aveilus*, but the former also quotes the *Maharil*, who states, "Immediately after (the *aveilim*) return from the cemetery, people go for a little while to the mourner's home and they sit down to comfort him." The *Gesher HaChaim* (20:5) adds:

"If it will be difficult for someone to comfort afterwards, he may go to the home of the mourner to comfort even during the first three days, since the rows of comforters (offer the traditional words of comfort) immediately after the burial. But (someone comforting within the first three days) should limit his conversation.

In short, people should not automatically write off the first three days. Only if they will have ample opportunity to comfort after the first three days and they are reasonably assured that the *aveil* will not be left completely alone, should they wait until after the third day. But if social engagements, business appointments or travel arrangements make it difficult to make a *Shiva* visit after the third day, a *Shiva* visit can most definitely be made during the first three days of *aveilus*.

### But I Don't Know What to Say!

Perhaps the greatest single factor causing people to shrink from *nichum aveilum* is the fear of not knowing what to say. When a loss is so great and a wound so deep, people can feel overwhelmed by attempting to comfort a mourner. They can even feel immobilized by the sincere desire to eradicate the mourner's suffering while being helpless to do so. As they anticipate their mounting frustration, they consider whether they and the mourner might be better off if they just stayed home.

This attitude is based on fundamental misconceptions regarding the psychological needs of the *aveil* and the requirements and guidelines of *halacha*. A heightened awareness of the former can lead to a deepened respect for the timeless wisdom of the latter.

A few of the rules that one must bear in mind are:

- Wait for the *aveil* to initiate the conversation. If he says nothing, sit in silence. (See, for example, *Shulchan Aruch*, *Yoreh Deah*, vol. 3, 376:1 and *Gesher Hachayim*, 20:5.)
- The conversation should dwell on the merits of the *niftar* (deceased). The *aveil* is not to be comforted by distracting him from his loss. In addition, as the *Ramoh* (376:2) cautions:

*A person should not say (i.e. ask the rhetorical question) to the aveil, "What can you do? Because it is impossible to change (the situation)." This is heresy, because it implies that if it were possible to change things, he would do so. Rather, he should accept the Divine decree with love.*

- Upon leaving, the *menachem* offers the mourner the traditional words of comfort: "*Hamakom yenachem es'chem* . . . , May the Ever Present comfort you among the

other mourners for Zion and Jerusalem." In addition to helping the *aveil* connect his personal loss with the shared losses of the entire Jewish people, this formula provides a universal closure to the *Shiva* visit. Without it, *menachamim* would be forced to grope awkwardly and nervously for "the right words" with which to conclude their visit.

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### Psychodynamics of Mourning

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No two *aveilim* share identical experiences. How an *aveil* reacts to his *aveilus* depends upon various factors: the *aveil's* integration of Torah attitudes, the *aveil's* relationship with the *niftar*, and the *aveil's* individual constitution as *Chazal* have emphasized (*Masechet Berachos* 58a); "Just as (people's) faces are not similar to each other, so too their emotional responses are not identical."

Some generalizations, however, can still be made about the experience of *aveilus*. In most cases, *aveilus* can trigger any one or a combination of the following emotions: shock and denial, anger and frustration, fear and anxiety, loneliness and isolation, guilt and regret, and depression. Although these reactions often overlap and merge with one another, for purposes of organization, they will be discussed separately. In the course of this discussion, I hope to demonstrate how following the *halacha* responds to each emotional need, whether the comforter is aware of it or not.

### Shock and Denial

The *aveil* experiences shock as an emotional numbness. To himself and to others, the *aveil* even appears not to have realized the full extent of his loss. On some level, he seems to be denying the magnitude of the tragedy.

This reaction is more common during the first stages of *aveilus*. It should not frighten the *aveil*, who may be wondering, "Why don't I feel more pain?" Nor should it offend other members of the family who may be wondering, "Didn't he care about the *niftar*?!"

The *aveil's* reaction can be compared to the lights going out when a fuse has blown. The excessive demand for electrical current has burned out the appropriate fuse and cut off all electricity. Similarly, the emotional trauma of *aveilus* can cause such an immediate demand for emotional energy that feelings are temporarily cut off.

An *aveil* who experiences this form of emotional numbness needs gentle reminders of the reality of his loss, in doses small enough for him to be able to handle. The visits of the *menachamim* are the best and most gentle reminders. But how can they know how much reminding the *aveil* can handle? They can't know. Therefore, if at all possible, they should take their cues from the *aveil*. But what if the *aveil* is too shocked and grief stricken to speak? Then the supportive presence of the *menachamim* may be all the reminder he can handle now. Any words

beyond the traditional words of comfort may be too much. The *menachmim*, therefore, should simply soothe the *aveil* with their silent presence.

### Anger and Frustration

*Aveilim* weak in their religious convictions may be angry with the Divine plan that called for the return of the soul of the *niftar* at this time. But even *b'nei Torah* can experience anger and frustration. Their anger may not be directed at any particular target. Just the realization that something of great value has been taken away can trigger an involuntary reaction of anger. They need to know that this is a common reaction, which does not call their commitment to Torah into question. Sometimes this anger is manifested by a generalized short-temperedness or even rudeness. These must be seen as transitory phenomena that do not signify a deep rooted absence of proper *bitachon* (trust in Hashem).

What does one say to someone who is angry? Anything approximating—"Don't be angry" would be as inappropriate for an *aveil* as for someone deeply embroiled in a heated dispute. What the *aveil* really needs is an opportunity to vent this anger. *Kri'ah* (rending one's clothing) certainly provides an opportunity to express anger and frustration. In addition, nothing assists the process of emotional ventilation better than a patient listener. Just being there to listen helps the *aveil* deal with his anger more effectively than anything the *menachamim* can say to the *aveil*. Chastising him for any excess, therefore, would be quite pointless under the circumstances.

### Fear and Anxiety

The loss of a close family member sets off a chain of practical consequences that can be devastating. A person who provided financial support, dependable advice, emotional sustenance, warm affection or that invaluable helping hand is now gone. The *aveil* is plagued by questions of "How will I manage?" and "Whom will I turn to, now?" These dark shadows of uncertainty can then arouse fear and anxiety within even the most independent and mature individual.

Words of reassurance are relatively ineffective in helping an *aveil* cope with fear and anxiety. What does help is concrete action. A demonstration of support goes much further than any words can. Volunteering to assist the *aveil*, before being asked, is the best form of reassurance. The *menachamim* can volunteer to arrange the *minyán*, prepare meals, contact other potential *menachamim*, or even move the *aveil's* car to avoid a parking violation: Without it even being said, this kind of activity reassures the *aveil* that the *menachamim* will also be there after the *Shiva*, when they may be needed even more.

One of the most basic, concrete demonstrations of support is the physical presence of the *menachamim*. Their willingness to "bother themselves" to make the

*Shiva* visit is in itself reassuring to the *aveil*. It lets him know that he does have others on whom he can depend.

### Loneliness and Isolation

For many years, often a lifetime, the lives of the *niftar* and the *aveil* were very closely bound. Aside from how they felt about each other, they simply may have had a lot to do with each other. If so, the *aveilus* opens a chapter in the *aveil's* life marked by an ever-present void.

This emptiness will not be easily filled. When the *aveil* faces that realization, he may focus extra attention on the lost relationship, to the exclusion of others. This reaction may express itself through emotional and social withdrawal. Just as extra blood rushes to the site of a wound, so the *aveil* focuses extra attention on his loss.

Efforts to forcibly "draw out" the *aveil* will not be successful. Swimming right after eating can draw blood from the digestive system, but a muscle cramp will result. Similarly, aggressive efforts to draw out the *aveil* should be avoided. Neither should the *aveil* be allowed to withdraw completely from all social contact. What he needs are gentle, persistent efforts to gradually draw him out, at his own pace.

Once again, the flow of *menachamim* throughout the *Shiva* period can be the most effective antidote for the *aveil's* loneliness and isolation. Here, too, the *menachamim* must wait to take their cue from the *aveil*. Not to do so could result in causing great discomfort for all concerned.

### Guilt and Regret

Some people harbor the mistaken notion that mental health professionals consider guilt to be a four-letter word. Guilt is an emotional reaction which, like any other emotional reaction, may be excessive and inappropriate or normal and appropriate. Feeling guilt during *aveilus* certainly falls into the latter category. As Rabbi Zelig Pliskin explains so succinctly (*Gateway to Happiness*, p. 368),

*Grief is often accompanied by guilt feelings. Many people look back at how they behaved toward the deceased and remember their mistakes in relating properly to him when he was alive. Since we can no longer make amends, these feelings can become very painful; at times they become obsessive.*

How can the *aveil* relieve these feelings of guilt? How can the *menachamim* assist in this process? In reality, this task is not nearly as awesome as it may seem.

How do people normally relieve their feelings of guilt? They make amends. While, as Rabbi Pliskin says, the full opportunity is no longer available to the *aveil*, a partial opportunity is nevertheless available through giving respect to the *niftar*. This may be accomplished by fastidious adherence to all laws of *aveilus*, and by speaking positively about the *niftar*, recounting his meritorious deeds and publicizing his virtues. Just as there must



be witnesses at the reading of a will, so there must be "witnesses" at the recounting of the spiritual legacy of the *niftar*. Thinking about the *niftar's* virtues only increase guilt feelings; *speaking* about the *niftar's* virtues can relieve these feelings.

The practical implications of this for the *menachamim* are clear. They must provide the opportunity for the *aveil* to speak about the *niftar*. If they deliberately fill their *Shiva* visit with small talk to relieve their own discomfort, they will have failed to address the psychological needs of the *aveil*. If, however, they listen and passively encourage the *aveil* to speak about the *niftar*, they will have rendered him invaluable service.

### Depression

Depression is nothing more than extreme sadness. When brought on by the external reality of *aveilus*, it is quite normal. When brought on primarily by internal factors, it can be pathological.

In the more extreme cases, depression may be manifested by loss of appetite, sleep disturbance, agitation or sluggishness, loss of energy and fatigue, indecisiveness and inability to concentrate, or generalized feelings of hopelessness.

Depressive symptoms can alarm the *aveil* or those around him, but they need not. His state of emotional disorganization will pass in due time and cannot be rushed. . . . Much clean-up work is also required following an earthquake, but it will not be completed overnight. Until order is restored, considerable disorganization must be tolerated. Similarly, the *aveil* may suffer from disorganization of depression as he begins to pick up the pieces of his life.

*Menachamim* can help the depressed *aveil* by accepting his depression as a natural consequence of *aveilus*. But this acceptance cannot be articulated at all. It can only be demonstrated. When the *menachamim* sit with the *aveil* and literally permit him to feel depressed, they are meeting the *aveil's* primary need for acceptance and support.

### Being There, More Than Spoken Eloquence

From this discussion of the psychodynamics of grief and *aveilus*, it should be clear that no profound, eloquent words of comfort are required to meet the psychological and emotional needs of an *aveil*. Most of these needs can be met by the mere presence of the *menachamim*. It should also be apparent that when conversation is called for, the *menachamim* should not be the ones to initiate or change the subject of conversation, but should take their cues from the *aveil*.

Based on the psychodynamics of *aveilus*, therefore, no "game plan" or agenda of conversation topics need be prepared in advance of making a *Shiva* visit. The *menachamim* should simply go in and wait for the *aveil* to initiate conversation.

As Rabbi Shimson Raphael Hirsch advises in *Horeb* (p.433-434): "Be with him from whom G-d has taken a member of his family. . . . Stay by him and show him that he is not forsaken. . . . Sit silently by the mourner until he himself gives vent to his sorrow in words."

### Hope for the Future

Sometimes people avoid making a *Shiva* visit because they misunderstand the psychological needs of the *aveil* and the requirements of *halacha*. And excuses not to make a *Shiva* visit are always readily available: "I get home too late," "I'm not sure how to get there," "I'm really not that close with the family," etc. But if these people understood what is, in fact, required of them when making a *Shiva* visit, they would be a little less anxious, awkward and less likely to dodge *nichum aveilim*.

This article was quite clearly written *halacha lemaiseh* (for practical application). Even so, it is my hope for the future that there will be no opportunity to observe the *mitzva* of *nichum aveilim* when we merit the fulfillment of the prophecy (Yeshayahu 25:8):

He will destroy death forever;  
and the Eternal G-d will wipe  
away the tears from all faces. . . .



## Not just a cheese, a tradition...

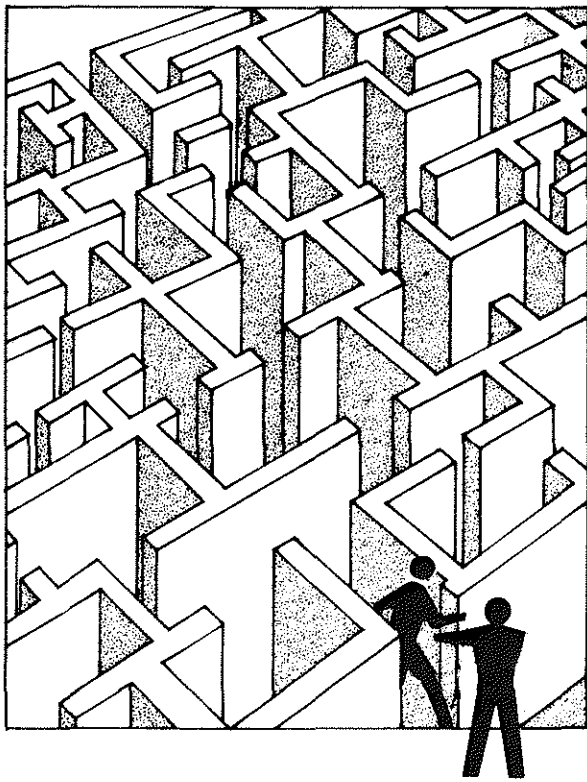
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### Of Differences and Challenges

There is a distinct contrast between the disciplined lifestyle of the Orthodox Jew and the free-floating style of the society that surrounds us. Naturally, a barrier forms between the two, for the distance is great. But sometimes one wonders how much of our side of the barrier is a reflection of Torah values and how much of it is self-imposed . . . how much of our rejection of worldly attitudes results from honest principle, and how much from inhibition, or open hostility without reason. Being on the right side of a confrontation is only part of the task. Understanding one's position and living in accordance with this understanding can be even more challenging.

What is more typical of this contrast than "love"—a controversial word to say the least. Poets say that the world turns on love, and indeed, contemporary culture seems to thrive on it. By the same token, Rabbi Akiva stressed the command "And you shall love . . .," describing it as a great principle in the Torah, the primary rule for living and developing. Moreover, to relinquish our right to love is to relinquish our right to live. As the Ibn Ezra (*Devarim* 30, 19) phrases it: "Life is for loving." Thus, failure to love is akin to squandering the gift of life itself.\*

Yet, the differences—the barrier—between the two approaches is abundantly clear. The Chazon Ish זצ"ל summarized the difference so clearly: "What they [the

## Is Love A Jewish Word?

world at large] call love is to us a *Koreis*\* violation."

And the challenge implicit in this is also clear: Can we draw from our Torah perspective and infuse the word "love" with spiritual meaning, which theoretically can bring a person to the point of perceiving himself in purely spiritual terms? And can we impart a counterbalance to the style of love that the world at large flaunts, in a manner that will give us the strength to accept the idea of love without fear—to confront it head-on, rather than to feel compelled to flee from it, or simply to express confused hostility toward it?

### What Is Love?

What is love?

The dictionary defines love: to feel a passion, devotion, or tenderness for a person or object. These words can describe every type of love. Yet every individual struggles to love in his own way, providing as broad a spectrum of definitions of love as the variety of faces that grace the earth. For each individual possesses his own mode of expression, his own statement of love.

We naturally turn to the Torah for more specific guidance. The Torah does not offer definitions, but it does provide descriptions of love of man for G-d, man for man, and—the purest of loves—that of G-d for man. Each in its way feeds on the other, and, in turn, inspires us with standards to strive for, to live by: "Veohavta—Love G-d with all your heart and all your soul," says the *Shema*. . . "Love is strong as death. . . Many waters

\*See Rabbi Shlomo Wolbe's *Bein Sheishes Le'Asar*: "Olam Hayeditus."

Rabbi Bassman, a member of the Kollel of Beth Medrash Govoha in Lakewood, NJ, has been represented in these pages by several poems and his rendition of Rabbi Shlomo Wolbe's address on the contemporary relevance of Mussar (Mar. 84).

\*reference to the Divine punishment of a shortened life meted out for adultery or other illicit relations, which in some instances is idealized in worldly literature as a romantic fulfillment.

cannot extinguish the Love," exults *Shir HaShirim* (8, 6-7). So there you have the dimensions of *Ahava*: it is achieved with heart and soul. It possesses immense power. It demands totality. It operates from spirituality and it emanates from completeness.

Let us hear the echo of these descriptions in the words of those who achieved love in their own heart and soul:

- The late Vizhnitzer Rebbe, Reb Chaim Meir Hager זצ"ל: "If he loves me, I love him. If he doesn't love me, I'll love him so, until he has to love me."

- The Alter Rebbe, Reb Shneur Zalman זצ"ל: "The mountain that G-d lifted over the Jews' heads at Sinai to coerce them into accepting the Torah was a mountain of love." (*Likutei Torah Parshas Re'ei*: 22, 1)

- Rabbi Elazar M. Shach, שליט"א, tearfully addressing hundreds of listeners: "Before one lifts a stone to throw at a *Shabbos* violator, better he first learn to cry for a fellow Jew that does not know the beauty of *Shabbos*."

So our sights have been raised. Let us now strive to better understand the usage of the word love and clarify its definition from a Torah perspective. We then may be closer to expressing love positively and freely in human encounters.

### With Totality and Balance . . . As a Jew Loves

"Serve G-d out of love, otherwise you might come to hate. But as one that loves you will not hate, for the lover does not hate. Serve G-d out of fear, otherwise you might come to kick (away in rejection). But as one who fears you will not kick, for he who fears does not come to kick." (*Yerushalmi: Berachos*, quoted in *Tosafos, Sotah* 22b)

Two extremes of human nature—love and fear—are brought together in harmonious balance, reflecting how all-encompassing the Torah message is. On an intellectual level, a psychological lesson is taught. On an esthetic level, the diversity of human experience is portrayed. And on an esoteric level, a glimpse is offered into the mystery of the human soul.

The human psyche embraces deep and powerful emotions. Whenever a person takes a position, assumes a specific perspective on life, much more is often taking place than is discernable. Beneath the surface there is often a deep stirring of inherent desires and forces. It is here that our Sages guide us with their approach of "counter-balance." For without the ability to assume more than one approach, the most beautiful of relationships is fraught with danger.

One can come close, so close, and love something deeply . . . and then kick it away in rejection. . . . One can stand back and view the most awesome object, respect it deeply, and yet be overcome by ominous distance and venomous hatred. . . . Only through the intricate development of a sensitive balance can one learn to love lovingly and to fear fearlessly. For fear disciplines love into an awesomely powerful experience. And love

gently nudges the awe-inspired person into a state of closeness that has the power of perpetuity.

How does one achieve such a balance? By recognizing the two positive forces in our lives: The Torah as the source for a system of values, which presents us with opportunities for action that encompass the absolute of authentic Truth; and the individual, fashioned in accordance with the Torah blueprint, with an amazing array of tools lying dormant within, waiting to be recognized, activated, balanced, and perfected. Through self-understanding and by directing ourselves positively along Torah guidelines, we can achieve that balance within ourselves, between ourselves and those around us, and ultimately between ourselves and G-d.

### The Torah's Tools of Loving

In commanding us to love our friend, the Torah speaks of love as "a turn towards."\*\* And, as in all Divine service, the tools with which we turn are our minds and hearts, as the Torah says:

"וידעת היום—And you shall know today":

The mind clarifies issues and determines values . . . weighing the good and the bad . . . identifying right and wrong. The mind chooses here, rejects there, structuring a world of virtue, of spiritual beauty.

"והשבות אל לבבך—And you shall take to your heart":

The heart feels, experiences . . . This is central, for "רוממא ליבא בעי"—G-d wants heart—when a person opens his heart to a matter, he can become totally involved in it. Indeed, the Torah calls for love of G-d to be "בכל לבבך—with all your heart"—not just with part of it. Then a balance sets in. The heart softens the rigidity of the intellectual convictions, warming and humanizing the person's attitude, while the mind rationalizes the feelings of the heart, controlling and directing them. The two become fused into one spiritual entity, one calculated expression, with goals and values imbued with feeling. The mind determines what is right, and the heart directs the entire person toward it. The love that flows forth is pure—honoring the guidelines of the conscience, yet genuine and spontaneous.

Now let us take a closer look at the factors that interact and can bring a person to love: the heart and the mind . . . and the person himself.

### The "Heart" Factor

The heart: alive, pulsating, throbbing, sustaining . . . but more than anything else, sensing, feeling; for the responsibility of the heart in its life-giving role is not so much in its more obvious surge of vitality as in the quieter, more subtle ways in which it stays next to the object of its concern, at its very heart.

The heart senses, and feels along with others—not only in their happy moments, but in the painful ones, as

\*\**"Ve'ohavta le re'acha"* literally: and you should love toward your friend

well. Not only does it respond to expressed suffering, but it reaches quietly into the depths of the person who is trapped within his suffering, if only to be there quietly and share the pain.

Who were the classic "feelers" of all time? The friends of Iyov, as our Sages tell us: "Friends such as the friends of Iyov or death" (*Babba Basra*: 16b).

Two things stand out about Iyov's friends. One: they sensed Iyov's pain from a distance, spontaneously, naturally, without being formally told. Two: upon confronting Iyov's suffering in person, they sat wordlessly for seven days and seven nights (*Iyov* 2, 13). They saw that the pain was great and that there was nothing to say, for the distance between the world of the sufferer and the world of the onlooker is too awesome to be bridged with words. But by just looking and listening they provided more than any words could have.

Friendship: Sensing from a distance. Coming close if just to look on. . . . Being there quietly, gently, spiritually.

If living is for loving, how understandable is our Sages' judgment, "Friendship or death."

### The "Mind" Factor

"Intelligence is a source of life to its master" (*Mishlei* 16, 22).

As loving is an integral part of living, so is a clear state of mind a source of life.

To what extent do we involve our minds in our total experiences? Here is a simple test. Number a sheet of paper from one to ten. Focus on the person closest to you and jot down his or her virtues. It is here that the necessity for balance between respect and love becomes clear. If your pen flows freely, you need not fear expressing your love. One can venture that it contains a wealth of purity and spirituality. If, however, you experience difficulty in intellectualizing your love on a conscious level, instinct is the governing force in your relationship, and a counter-balance is sorely needed. And, if marriage is a focal point for the development of the self, as it surely is, it is here that the primary effort toward balance-setting should take place.

### The "Self" Factor

The Torah teaches us how to love others: "*kamocha*—as you love yourself."

Before learning to fly an airplane, one usually learns to drive a car. We all "drive cars," but so often in a relaxed mood, with automatic shift. It is time to set the gears in motion, and get a feel of the road, time to gain conscious momentum and "drive!"

The *kamocha* process, also, is an unfolding one, similar to the relationship of a parent to his child. The Gaon of Vilna implies that when our Sages instruct a parent to bring up a child with a balance of rejection of the left hand and the embrace of the right, they refer to the

child growing within the self (*Gaon on Mishlei* 17, 7). As Reb Noach Weinberg once put it: "If you don't love yourself, I don't want you to love me, because you're only going to hurt me." (Once again we are reminded of the inherent "kick" factor in the attainment of love.)

*Kamocha* means being aware of and sensitive to your own feelings, feeding yourself when you are hungry, bandaging yourself when you are hurting. *Kamocha* means realizing yourself as the most valuable possession that you own, and trusting yourself as the person you can be, and not the person you are not meant to be.

If this attitude is properly nurtured, the next word, "*l'reiecha*"—your friend, blossoms forth naturally from whatever *kamocha* you contain within yourself.

### Jewish Marriage and the Transcendental Touch

Jewish marriage plays a central role in a disciplined lifestyle, crucial as it is in the development of a powerful, balanced love experience. A woman's biological cycle and the relevant *halachos* of family purity set up two extremes in marital relationship. And again, it is the extremes that provide the balance. The transcendental level of love from a respectful distance fashions a *mitzva* out of a potential act of *Koreis*, and transforms a potential act of kicking into an act of giving.

We find an example of restrained love of this sort from the reunion of Yaakov and Yoseif after their twenty-two years of painful separation. While Yoseif embraced his father, Yaakov did not return his show of affection but instead said "*Krias Shema*." This was not a step aside from the intense relationship that burned between father and son. Quite to the contrary. The reality of Yaakov's love for Yoseif manifested itself in a powerful expression that transcended physical embrace, assuming its place as part of a cosmic embrace of the Creator. One could say that Yaakov's was a transcendental touch.

And so, too, does the development of a disciplined

### The Liberal Kick of Rejection

"And [Yitzchok] brought her to the tent . . . and [then] he loved her (*Bereishis* 30:25)."

The liberal Jew\*\* effuses love, brotherhood, peace, and interfaith cooperation. But has he achieved the clarity of mind, the security of conviction that comes from possessing true values of his own? The liberals tend to acclaim Rabbi Akivas as their hero—as the innovative reformer, the man who offered Torah interpretations that Moshe could not divine, casting aside Moshe Rabbeinu as a relic of the past. Why Rabbi Akiva? And why do they shun Moshe Rabbeinu? The

\*emphasis from commentary of Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch, end of *Chayei Sara*

\*\*in the theological sense, not necessarily in the political sense



balance in human relationships bring forth a love that stands above external physical expression. answer is that Moshe is described as "ראשו בשמים"—his head high in the heavens" (Sifri, Haazinu)—his mind is the symbol of clarity and truth, of higher intellect, of disciplined love. To the liberal's narrow understanding, Rabbi Akiva, who focuses on love as the sum of all Torah values, apparently believes in "doing his own thing." So they reject Moshe in his favor.

And here the imbalance is clear. For even as the liberal Jew strives for a totality of commitment, his totality is crippling egocentric, arbitrarily fixed at his own level of experience and comprehension. The awe and fear of G-d, of His spoken word, of His spokesman Moshe, is not there to serve as a counter-balance. And so, unbalanced and upended, the liberal is trapped at one extreme, unable to right himself. And even as he loves, his love freely invades the other side of the line of reason and responsibility, a line of demarcation that the Chazon Ish so clearly delineated.

The irony of the liberal Jew's fate is that the painful kick of his one-sided love is directed at himself. For as we take note of his home, with its 1.7 children, as we watch his progeny disappear into the nothingness of assimilation, the question arises: *Why? If you love so, why don't you build a family, and extend your expression of love to your own creation?* The feeble answer is: *I cannot. I am not able to. I have other over-riding priorities. Where is the powerful love?*

Sadly, the kick becomes self-directed. And as we stand by and helplessly watch him pursue his self-justifying ideals, we can only follow Rabbi Shach's example and shed a tear for the spiritual fulfillment he never had, trying in the meantime, as the Alter Rebbe says, to draw him close with the strong chords of authentic love (וכלשונו שם: כולי האי ואולי).\*

### A Breath of Life

If we could clarify our value system regarding toward whom and how we should express our love. . . .

If we could integrate ourselves into a balanced expression of love. . . .

If we could blossom forth naturally to become sensitive to those around us. . . .

If we could sense the other's unspoken need even from a distance. . . .

If we could come forth quietly to express our love by just being there. . . .

If we could learn to read pain wordlessly and suffer along. . . .

If we could master the art of self-love. . . .

If we could shed a tear for the spiritually deprived, then love takes on its fullest spiritual meaning, inspiring us to take in a breath of fresh meaning in life, filled with the vitality of the ageless message of the Ibn Ezra, "Life is for loving."

\*See Tanya, Chapter 32

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# BOOKS

## History—Straight and Fictional— For Grown Ups and Children

**The Feast and the Fast**, prepared by Rabbi C.U. Lipschitz and Dr. Neil Rosenstein (Brooklyn, 1984, distributed by Maznaim Publications, \$5.95)

This book tells the dramatic personal story of Rabbi Yom Tov Lipman Heller, the *Tosfos Yom Tov*, on the occasion of his 330th *Yahrzeit*. Essentially this little volume is an English rendering of the *Tosfos Yom Tov's* own account of his suffering, *The Megilas Eichoh*, and the additional material recorded by his son. The second half of the book provides genealogical tables through which the many families that count themselves among the *Tosfos Yom Tov's* descendants can be traced. Whilst the second part of the book is of primary interest to these families and to historians, the first part gives an inspiring insight into the life and stature of one of our great historical personalities.

**Reb Meir Premishlaner**, by Rabbi Uri Auerbach (Brooklyn, 1983, Maznaim, \$5.95)

Like the volume discussed previously, this work, too, is a labor of love, by a descendant of the personality to whom it is dedicated. It is not a biography in the conventional sense, but rather a collection of Hassidic tales about him as well as *Divrei Torah* by him, from which there emerges the image of a legendary figure who, moving among the spiritual giants of his time, made his own mark on the minds and hearts of the people. Well-written, this book makes good reading; however, the reader would have welcomed it if the author had gone beyond the retelling of stories to a more systematic and analytical presentation of Reb Meir'l, his life and what he stood for.

**Fire in the Sky**, by Selig Schachnowitz, translated from the German by M.L. Mashinsky (N.T.T.S. Publications, Monsey, N.Y., 1984, \$5.95)

The author of this historical novel is well-known for his other works that have previously appeared in English, such as *Light from the West* and *Avrohom ben Avrohom*. Like these books, the present volume was written for the adult reader, but is very suitable for adolescents and will undoubtedly be eagerly read by them. It is set in

Germany in the early seventeenth hundreds and brings to life many of the issues that marked Jewish life in those days—anti-Semitic agitation and persecution on one side, the controversies over the Shabatai Tzvi heresy and mystical tendencies on the other hand. Well-known historical figures move through its pages, and the story holds the interest of the reader throughout.

**The Exiles of Crocodile Island**, by Henye Meyer, illustrated by Yosef Dershowitz. (Artscroll Youth Series, N.Y., 1984, \$9.95 hardcover, \$6.95 softcover)

This is a historical novel, based on a remarkable and tragic historical incident mentioned by the Abarbanel (*Shemos* 7:26) and also in general historical works (where the island in question is known as San Tome). Several thousand Jewish children were deported from Portugal to Crocodile Island, after their expulsion from Spain in 1492. This book tells the story of their suffering, as well as the fictional account of the escape and adventures of one of them. His wanderings bring him to Jewish communities in Italy and North Africa; thus the readers receive a vivid picture of Jewish life in those days at the same time as they learn about Jewish suffering, self-sacrifice, and loyalty to Torah. The plot is dramatically presented, the characters come alive, and the book is very well written. Thus this novel—though designed for the youthful readers—will prove of interest to adult readers too.

**The King Who Came Back**, by Avraham Ben-Yaakov (Feldheim, N.Y., 1984, \$5.95)

This book defies easy classification. It is a slim volume, containing a vivid narrative, beautifully illustrated, that can be read as a fairy tale for children. At the same time, however, it is a parable—in the manner of Rabbi Nachman Brazlaver's tales—about man's struggle with himself, and his quest for the truth. A concluding explanatory note by the author points out that this story can be read both as a critique of our society, ruled by falsehood and foolishness, and of man's inner life. As such this book is meant to present a challenge to the adult reader—and there can be no doubt that it will make the reader think. A truly interesting work.

**The Story of Reb Yosef Chaim**, adapted by *Rabbi Shimon Finkelman* from *Guardian of Jerusalem* by *Rabbi Shlomo Zalmen Sonnenfeld* (Artscroll Youth Series, NY, 1984 \$9.95 hardcover, \$6.95 softcover)

This is a condensation for young readers of the larger work on the life and times of Rabbi Yosef Chaim Sonnenfeld which was previously published by ArtScroll under the title *Guardian of Jerusalem*, to critical and popular acclaim. Many of the issues that are touched on in this biography cannot easily be done full justice in a simplified presentation (e.g. the differences of outlook between Reb Yosef Chaim Sonnenfeld and Rabbi Kook). But even the reader who will not gain a full understanding of the historical and ideological complexities will be inspired and benefit greatly from the human aspect of the story—a close-up of how a *Gadol* emerged and how he lived. Incident after incident is told here that will create a deep impression upon every reader.

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## Other Children's Books

**The Best of Olomeinu, Books 5 and 6**, anthologies of 20 stories each, compiled by *Rabbi Yaakov Fruchter*, edited by *Rabbi Nosson Scherman*, illustrated by *Yosef Dershowitz*, designed by *Shea Brander* (ArtScroll Youth Series, NY, 1984, \$9.95 hardcover, \$6.95 softcover)

These two volumes are a most welcome addition to a series which has gained well-deserved popularity. Volume Five, primarily containing stories by *Leah Herskowitz*, is devoted largely to Pesach stories, from a Marrano Seder in Spring of 1692 to a Seder in Williamsburg in 1971, from events in Russia and Poland to happenings in the U.S.A. All of them—like their predecessors in the four previous volumes culled from *Olomeinu*—are exciting and inspiring in content, excellently written and beautifully illustrated. (A word is perhaps in place about "The Mystery of the Gold Coins," a story about the young Mayer Anshel Rothschild starting his life as a servant of Rabbi Tzvi Hirsch of Tshortkov, in Poland; this is a folktale popular in several variants—but actually the Rothschild family was of German origin, living in Frankfurt, in a house marked by a red shield, whence the name of Rotschild.)

Volume Six, which features in particular a number of stories by *Ursula Lehmann*, is dedicated primarily to the *Yamim Noraim* and *Sukkos*. Unlike previous volumes, it contains almost exclusively stories set in our days. Some are more exciting (such as the Inspector Moishele mysteries), some more directly didactic; but all are very readable indeed. These books most successfully integrate effective story telling with the teaching of Torah values. It is to be hoped that there will be more *Olomeinu* anthologies coming forth.

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**Follow the Moon**, by Yaffa Ganz, illustrated by Harvey Kleinman (Feldheim, NY, 1984, \$8.95)

This book is subtitled "a journey through the Jewish year." Its outsized pages contain a wealth of information about the Jewish calendar, and about each month and the special days in it—presented in a manner that will hold the interest of the young reader, and accompanied by full-color illustrations that make the subject matter concrete and memorable. This book is thus an excellent vehicle for conveying knowledge to children. It deals not only with the *Yamim Tovim* and fast days, but such events as the translation of the Torah into Greek and the founding of the State of Israel. This book is a good starting point for talking to our children about the past and present of our people.

**Growing Up**, by David Rosoff edited by Shimon Hurwitz and illustrated by I.A. Kaufman. (Feldheim, N.Y., 1984, \$13.00)

*Growing Up* is a book for young readers—with a difference. In essence, it is the story of Sammy getting ready for his Bar Mitzvah; in the process, Sammy learns that there is more to becoming Bar Mitzvah than reciting the *Haftorah* and having a party—in fact, he decides to forego an ostentatious celebration. In the course of his preparations, he familiarizes himself with the Thirteen Principles of Faith (beautifully explained in the text) and a "Tefillin Handbook," a practical guide, complete with diagrams and answers to common halachic questions (the publishers plan to publish this 84-page handbook also as a separate pamphlet). Thus, a vast amount of instructive material and thought-inspiring discussion is packed into the single story—too much,

probably, to hold the attention of any reader not particularly concerned with the subject of Bar Mitzvah and Tefillin, but just what is needed and will interest a boy approaching this stage in his life. This book, which is based on a work published in Hebrew in *Eretz Yisroel*, is beautifully produced, in very readable style, and with excellent pictures. It should be given to every Bar Mitzvah boy—a year before the event.



The growing demand for reading material for our children, which accounts for the increasing number of new booktitles on the market, also is responsible for reprints of older favorites. Thus, there has just appeared a second edition of *David Meyer, The Orphan from Jerusalem*, by G. Silber, which *The Jewish Observer* welcomed a number of years ago as an excellent and inspiring children's story.

In a different area—while *Olomeinu* has been and remains the outstanding Torah magazine for youngsters, efforts have been made to produce other periodicals for children. The most original and unusual has




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been the comic book series, "Mendy and the Golem," which has attracted attention in the general media because it attempts to use the forms and style of general comics to teach Torah content. This type of presentation will undoubtedly catch and hold the interest of a wider circle of readers. However, it also raises the question as to how far we can and should go in borrowing and initiating approaches strange to us. On the West Coast, **Kan-fey Yonah**, a quarterly publication for children in a more traditional mold, has been appearing regularly. Most attractively produced, it would appear to be particularly geared to outreach efforts, and should very effectively get its message across to readers that need to be drawn closer to *Yiddishkeit*.

In the area of tapes and records, note should be taken in particular of the most recent release by Dov Dov Publications, **Dov Dov's Tough Break**. Like its prede-

cessors, it combines technical and artistic excellence with a beautiful way of conveying to children specific and important lessons. The songs are catchy, and without doubt, will become as popular as previous Dov Dov creations, and equally effective educationally. This reviewer knows of at least one family where this tape led the children to insist on eating *Melaveh Malkah*!

It is very important for parents to be aware that records and tapes of such quality are available—and to shield their children from some of the tapes in circulation that are in poor taste and educationally undesirable.

**Once Upon A Soul**, by *Hanoch Teller* (NYC Publ. Co., 1984), reviewed in the previous issue of JO, is not only available in hardcover (\$9.95), but has also appeared as a paperback (\$7.95).

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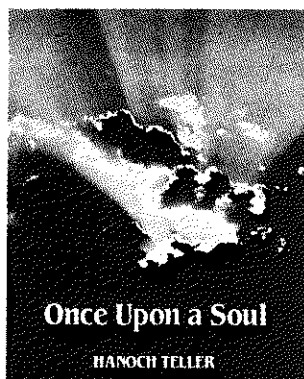
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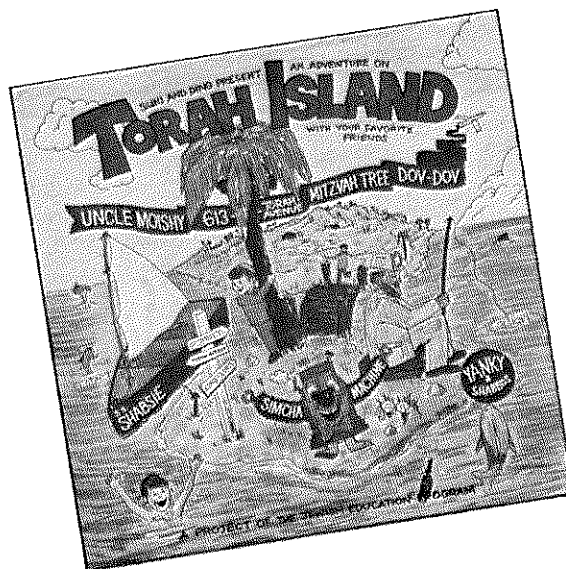
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# JO On Eretz Yisroel: A View From the Holy Land

To the Editor:

The JO has many readers in *Eretz Yisroel*—more than you might guess. The arrival of each issue is a treat for the whole community. My husband and I have to fight to hold on to our own copy until we have both read it through. Apparently, the many members of the *Yishuv* here who once lived in America retain a strong interest in the goings-on there. The magazine is well-edited and tastefully put together. We enjoy it and, in fact, take pride in it.

Naturally, we are particularly interested in the way *Eretz Yisroel* and everything connected to it is viewed in the U.S. For the sizable segment of the population to which I refer, the view of periodicals oblivious to Torah or insufficiently governed by it, are of little concern. Recognizing The JO as a substantial and probably influential magazine, speaking for and to the Torah world in America, we are uniquely sensitive to our reflection in its pages.

## Our Perspective . . . and Yours

Because our perspective here is quite different from that of your editorial offices, I would presume to describe what troubles many of us about the picture of *Eretz Yisroel* that emerges from regular reading of JO.

Articles, "Second Looks," even incidental references, are almost always negative in tone. Since, in each case, the point made is a valid one, it is hard to take issue with any individual criticism. But the cumulative effect of all these negatives, though subtle, is powerful. We believe that, for the readership in the United States, the net result must be an attitude towards *Eretz Yisroel* that can best be summarized as "Bad News."

It has been explained to me that

this type of reporting is well-founded in *daas Torah* and is entirely *l'shem Shomayim*. I am familiar with the nature of the magazine, and the stature of those who stand behind it. Still, my own unease over this picture has increased with the years, and recently, I found a focus in something pointed out to me by Rabbi Yoel Schwartz, a noted Yerushalmi *talmid chacham*, based on a commentary of Rabbi Yoseif Chaim Sonnenfeld, זצ"ל (quoted in p.141 *האיש על החומה ב*). Rabbi Sonnenfeld warned that we must not picture the *meraglim*—the spies dispatched by Moshe—as evil men. They were the *gedolim* of that greatest of all generations (דור דעה). To this very day, he said, *tzaddikim* fast on the 23rd Elul—the *Yahrzeit* of the *meraglim*—so great was their righteousness, so pure their motivation. How then do we understand the disastrous episode? Upon entering the Holy Land, those men became imbued with *Ruach HaKodesh*—a holy spirit. They were able to view all the evil deeds generations of Jews would commit in the Land. Though Caleb and Yehoshua attempted to explain that it is not for us to figure G-d's accounts, but we must arise and conquer the Land—in accordance with His command—the majority prevailed. Their intentions were for the good of the people, says Rabbi Sonnenfeld, but their report had the most tragic consequences.

## The Religious Texture of Life in the Holy Land

The impression that an imbalanced view of the scene in *Eretz Yisroel* is being conveyed to the religious community in the US is confirmed when friends come to visit us: They are shocked to hear the

day's radio broadcasting (on *Reshet Beis*, the major radio station) begin at 6:00 A.M. with *Krias Shema* and a *shiur* (lecture) on *Mishnayos*. All they had heard about in America was *media-apikorsus*. They are surprised to see that every *Erev Yom Tov* and every *Erev Shabbos* every store closes at midday. All they had heard about till now was *Chillul Shabbos* in Petach Tikva. They are amazed to learn that Jews living here—straight across the *frumkeit* board—have considerably more children per family than in the U.S. and are encouraged to do so by government benefits. All they know about this area of the *Medina* concerned abortions. They are astonished to discover that on Pesach no *chametz* can be purchased in Israeli cities and that all hospitals post special signs forbidding bringing any food. All they were exposed to in the past was *Kashrus* "problems" in *Eretz Yisroel*.

The list is endless. It causes us great pain. Certainly, the JO cannot be blamed for the unfavorable view Jews always tend to take of their Land. *מאסה בארץ חמדה*—despised the Land of Beauty—is one of our most deeply-rooted evil inclinations. It will feed on anything available.

## A Delicate Balance

My plea here—my hope and constant prayer—is that the JO could somehow take the initiative in reversing that tendency.

How can this be done by a magazine like the JO, which recognizes its obligation to better its readers, to give corrective advice to Jews wherever they are? This is obviously a problem without a simple solution. It is a most delicate balancing act, but then, so is every aspect of our lives as servants of *Hashem* in this

world. As concerns *Eretz Yisroel*, He has always made the challenge particularly difficult, but never one we could not meet, were we but properly armed and motivated. If Caleb and Yehoshua could find something good to say about that situation (giants, fortresses, Amalek, death everywhere!), then I am confident that The JO can do the same today.

I believe the criterion must be—not the objective legitimacy of the criticism, or the objective truth of the account—but the effect that these written words will have on their readers. Will they improve our own Torah attitudes? Will they spur us to specific action? Will they encourage us to take on new challenges? Or will reading corrective criticism—*tochacha*—directed to oth-

ers invite us to shake our heads in disparagement of them and curl up complacently in renewed self-righteousness?

It seems to me that this is an *eis ratzon*—a time of special desirability in the eyes of *Hashem*. The “Zionist idea,” having served its purpose, is dying. There are strong indications that it has already been buried. There is no need to continue to beat it—little point in even mentioning it. Rather let us turn our attention to the void it has left in the lives of those who were committed to it. Jews guided by Torah are in a unique position today to fill this vacuum—to feed the hunger of the people of Israel for Torah, to envelop the Land of Israel in knowledge of *Hashem*! Where a message of en-

couragement to the monumental *mitzvos* of *Ahavas Yisroel* and *Binyan Ha'aretz* can be derived from an event or a scene in *Eretz Yisroel*, let us make that message loud and clear. But, where all that we can infer about *Eretz Chemda* (its people, its politics, its laws) is a bad feeling, far better in the long run to leave the matter alone—unreported, ignored.

If there is *chutzpa* in my presentation, may it be excused as a bit of runaway fervor (or taken as an additional sign that our “*Achishenu*” time of speeding up the *Geula* is running out, and *Moshiach* must be near)\*.

SHIFRA SLATER  
Arzei Habira, Jerusalem

\*a reference to the spread of *Chutzpa* as an indication of *Ikvusa de Meshicha*, when the footfalls of *Moshiach* are heard.

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## Editorial Response:

### JO: A Responsibility to Project the Full Picture

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THE JEWISH OBSERVER attempts to portray as full a picture of life in *Eretz Yisroel* as possible—both the delights and the problems.

On the one hand, we must never lose sight of *Eretz Yisroel* as the Holy Land, the spiritual center of our people, home of a dynamic, expanding Torah society. On the other, we must recognize that Israel is ruled by a government that idealizes a Jewry without Torah, and it is our responsibility to expose the destructive policies that must emanate from such a leadership. It is JO's goal to present all sides of the picture.

We do, indeed, attempt to portray the accomplishments of Torah life in *Eretz Yisroel* with articles ranging from “The Day of the Donkey” to “The Many Layers of Tzefas,” from reports on the *teshuva* phenomenon, *Mifal Hashas* and *Veshinantom* programs to “Wall Chips”—all of which indicate a background of a vibrant community of hundreds of thousands of Torah Jews.

At the same time, informing the readers of the *Shabbos* crisis in Petach Tikva is neither an attempt to smear the *Yishuv* with a broad brush of defamation, nor pointless criticism. We do so with several specific goals in mind: First, the Israeli government does respond to the expressed outrage of American journals and their readership. Moreover, the secular press reports on these incidents from an anti-religious bias, constantly misrepresenting the events. These distortions must be corrected somehow, somewhere.

#### The Battle Still Rages

It may be true that Zionism has been abandoned as a solution to the “Jewish problem” (except amongst the religious Zionists, according to some political commentators) because harsh reality has demonstrated that “normalization” of the Jewish people—in terms of dwelling in a land of its own, speaking its own

tongue, etc.—has utterly failed as a cure for global anti-Semitism. Nonetheless, the underlying secular Zionist ideology of relying on military might and political prowess has not yet been abandoned. Out of genuine concern for the military security and financial welfare of the *Yishuv*, too many of us tend to overlook the deep-rooted anti-religious policies of those in power, and unquestioningly fall in line with every statement and program of the government.

So the battle for the hearts and minds of Jewry has not yet ended. . . . The “*Modeh Ani*” in the morning and Torah thought at night on the radio are wonderful, but what about the poisonous *hashkafos* and misrepresentations that are being aired by the media during the hours in between?

#### A “Cosmopolitan” Jerusalem?

Finally, there is a grave danger in ignoring that much of the Israeli

leadership—in politics, academia, and the media—is still virulently anti-religious, regardless of the lack of vibrancy of their Zionism. They use their positions of influence to project their views and enact them without hesitation—but living in the religious splendor of the Arzei Habira section of Jerusalem, Mrs. Slater, may not realize this. For instance, just two kilometers to the south, in the heart of *HaIr Ha'Atika* (the Old City), a life battle is taking place, where an informed, educated electorate and readership can make the difference. A group of parents there, who are affiliated with Bnei Akiva, has been deeply dissatisfied with the Mamlachti Dati schooling for their children, and petitioned for a Chinuch Atzmai School. Minister of Education, Zevulun Hammer (*Mafdal*) refused to fulfill this request—apparently because he considered it an affront to his party's ideology, which promotes Mamlachti Dati. So Chinuch Atzmai

funded the school for several years, and meanwhile requested a school building of the municipality—a prerequisite for official recognition necessary for government funding. Mayor Teddy Kollek is not interested in that kind of schooling in the *Ir Ha'Atika*, and has thus far not come up with the building.

This is consistent with Kollek's constant battle to promote theaters and football stadia, while putting a stranglehold on further growth of a Torah presence in Jerusalem. After failing in his attempt to cut off expansion of the Mattersdorf-Itri-Sanz-Ezras Torah religious northern tier of the city with the infamous Ramot Road, he conceded, "We may have lost the North, but the rest of the city shall be cosmopolitan!"

So here we have a typical case: A struggle for the soul of the Holy Land being fought out between a small, valiant group and media-touted public figures, such as the

brash, popular mayor . . . not only similar to the battles waged by Rabbi Yosef Chaim Sonnenfeld half a century ago, but actually the very same battles. Remaining silent in regard to this kind of story only reinforces the public's misconception of events, which is being fed by the poison-pen secular media. Shedding light on such stories tells our readers in whom to place their trust, who is trying to do us in, and—not incidentally—where to direct our *tzedaka* dollars.

Light and darkness, then, are in a constant interplay in *Eretz Yisroel*, and it is our task to make our readers keenly aware of both. We will admit that our good intentions often fall victim to the frequent, pressing need to blow the whistle when religious interests are threatened. So we do accept Mrs. Slater's challenge. Publishing her letter is but one small step in the direction of projecting more of the positive of *Eretz Yisroel*. We hope to do more.

N.W.

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# second looks at the jewish scene

## A Modest Proposal

The scene is a familiar one. It is Monday night in the Eibschutz *dira* in *Geulah*. Before Sarah presses the round white button to close the kitchen light, she reviews her schedule for the next morning: While Nachum is dressing the children, she'll run downstairs to the *makolet*, pull out 3,000 Shekalim for fresh leben, two loaves of bread and enough bags of milk to last until Thursday, when she'll buy milk to last until Sunday. Then, with Nachum's Kolllel check, she'll be able to purchase enough to last to Tuesday.

The next morning proceeded as predicted, until Sarah returned to the kitchen. Nachum was waiting impatiently at the door, "I'm going to be late, Sarah. The children are ready for breakfast. Ahuva might miss her 'Tenda—what's wrong?"

Sarah struggled to hold back her tears. "Nothing—except I couldn't pay for all the milk. The price went up again."

Nachum looked at his two daughters seated at the breakfast table, at his son Ari in the high chair, and shrugged his shoulders.

"We can't add any more water to the milk," Sarah said. "If I do, we may as well have one set of dishes."

"I'll speak to Reb Mendel at the Kolllel about a cost-of-living adjustment," Nachum said. Not that he expected to get a raise, but at least he could leave his wife and family on a note of hope.



Hope can be a misplaced investment in an economy that was once suffering from too-tight linkage\* to spiraling triple-digit inflation—and

\*Linking wages to the inflation rate refers to a formula of automatic rises in Shekel-wages as the value of the Shekel drops.

now has become totally unlinked. Other segments of the population are also suffering, but not to the same degree as the Kolllel people. For instance, the October cost of living index in Israel went up 24.3%—another record, according to economists, although less than feared. By the end of the year, say Israel's central bureau of statistics, the inflationary rate will hit 500%—others project an 800% spiral! Under the economic package deal worked out in Israel, employees forego one-third of the normal increase. They thus received on December 1 only a 12.8 percent increase in gross income.

Before the economic freeze, Kolllel families could benefit somewhat from linkage—mostly in terms of increased government funding for yeshivos. But that is a thing of the past. Today, the humanitarian factor is often far more painful than in Nachum and Sarah's case, when dealing with families of eight or ten children. Some families are actually on the verge of starvation. We know, of course, that people who opt for a

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Kollel life and those who join *Baal Teshuva* yeshivos do not do so for financial gain. They expect less than a life of luxury. But starvation is something else.

### The Ideological Consideration

And, then, there is another consideration—an ideological one. These Kollel families are the backbone of our Torah society and will form its future leadership. In our scale of priorities, they should be the very last to suffer from economic setbacks. We need them, and we need them to function well. This places a special burden on those of us who are comfortable, and find ourselves untouched by Israel's economic chaos. We certainly should find practical ways to act on this very real crisis. . . . The onus is *not* on the Kollelim, who are hard pressed to meet old-scale commitments. The onus is on the rest of us.

A long-time observer of the scene—a *Rosh HaYeshiva* formerly in America, now in Jerusalem—suggested the creation of a mechanism whereby families in America . . . and Switzerland and Belgium and South Africa . . . each adopt the children of a Kollel family in Israel, and supply them with the \$36.00 or \$50.00 monthly needed to bridge the gap between bare subsistence and livable income. Without too much ingenuity, this could be set up, twinning families of means and generosity of spirit with families in need . . . circling the globe with the merit of *Toras Eretz Yisroel*, and spreading the bread and butter of affluent societies to the deserving families of the Holy Land. The time is more than ripe.

Rabbi Hanoch Teller

## Scorched Scrolls

Jerusalem residents woke up December 14 to the somber news that two synagogues with fifteen *sifrei Torah* were set afire. Among the *sifrei Torah* were several that people had risked their lives to save from the Nazi inferno: One man had managed to bury a *sefer Torah* before fleeing from a town where his entire family was murdered. Before coming to Israel after the war, he returned to that town he had wished to forget, to unearth the *sefer Torah*. . . . Another *sefer* was written 30 years ago under the auspices of Chief Rabbi Herzog and the Mayor of Tel Aviv by an elderly scribe who immigrated from Yemen—the cost of each letter was donated by a different Jew. . . .

A woman who never married and had lived her entire life in poverty had saved her pennies to sponsor a *sefer Torah*, in the hope that in this way she could perpetuate her name. Hers, along with one 700 years old, which had belonged to the *Maharam MiRottenberg*, together with the rest—all of distinguished *yichus* and written by *tzaddikim*—went up in flames.

The burning of a *shul* housing Torah scrolls awakens troubled memories. . . . Such scenes accompanied pogroms and have become a symbol of the torment of the *galus*. After a generation's respite from such atrocities one would hope that they were events from a not-to-be-repeated past. Arson at the Diaspora Yeshiva on Mount Zion and in the Ramban Shul, also in the Old City of Jerusalem, proved differently.

The Talmud is at no loss for expressions of sorrow and remorse to accompany the destruction of a *sefer Torah*. But, perhaps, if we examine some reactions (and the lack thereof) we can glean some new insights:

Torah leaders issued a call for introspection and scrutinization of one's ways and deeds.

What about the general (irreligious) press in Israel? One organ committed to highlighting every injustice in Israel, and the first to insist upon the apprehension of anyone responsible for a criminal act (such as illegal demonstrations against the desecrating excavations of ancient cemeteries or those protesting auto traffic on *Shabbos* . . .). One reporter who ran early in the morning to the scene of the tragedy and saw the fire-scorched scrolls and witnessed smoke billowing from a gutted *aron kodesh* and library wrote,

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shed a tear at this harrowing sight." With the exception of this one line, not a single paper deemed this event a news—or comment—worthy item for their editorials or "op-ed" pages.

Imagine what the outcry would be if two mosques and their holy scriptures would have been set ablaze! The reaction of the Israeli media would be louder than the plethora of condemnatory declarations that would emanate from the UN!

And the response from the Knesset plenum? Surely from here—where the report of such an atrocity from any other country would arouse an angry debate and indignant denunciations—a loud protest would be forthcoming!... But again there was silence.



AT THE SCENE of the mass funeral for the *sifrei Torah* there were other reactions: The procession of 20,000

people was graced by several "living" *Sifrei Torah* such as Rabbi Shlomo Zalman Auerbach and the Gerrer Rebbe שליט"א. Yet there were other "scrolls" that, in their own way, reflected the tragedy of the day: from Jewish tourists pleading with the crowd to stop shoving so they could get a better shot, to policemen who seemed to feel that this ceremony—held in the outside heat—was an unnecessary bother. All of these "*sifrei Torah*" were ablaze with no one alert to the fire destroying them... Do we blame these "scrolls" for their own destruction, or do we, the passive observers to their spiritual immolation, perhaps carry the onus for their lack of sensitivity? How much have we done to keep these "scrolls" secure?

Rav Channaniah ben Tradyon studied and spread the word of Torah defying the edicts of the ancient Romans. He was caught by

the iniquitous authorities, who wrapped him in a *sefer Torah* and burned him alive. He said to his students who were forced to look on: "If I were to be burnt by myself it would be difficult enough. But now that I am engulfed with flames together with the *sefer Torah*, He who will avenge the affront of the *sefer Torah* shall avenge my humiliation."

"What do you see?" they asked him.

"I see scrolls aflame and their letters flying into air..."

We must answer like Rav Channaniah ben Tradyon. To those who don't have the impudence to burn the scrolls but would wish to ignite the letters, we shall strengthen our Torah centers and commitment. To those who burn with a thirst from within but are unaware of the flame, we shall try to quench the fire, and preserve both the scrolls and their luminous script. . . .

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# A Call to "Every Jew"— and Some Responses

## Is Urging For Religious Fidelity Really Divisive?

As a matter of course, the Jerusalem rabbinate has every year been placing a notice into Israeli newspapers on the eve of the *Yamim Noraim*, advising the readers that they should stay home rather than *daven* in one of the few non-Orthodox *shuls* in Israel. To be sure, there were outcries from those who preach "pluralism"—which means acceptance of Conservative and Reform as alternative forms of acceptable doctrine and worship. And, in the meantime, some of the uninformed were alerted in the process as to how to select a proper place of worship, if only for the proverbial three times a year. . . . The paid notice and the responses have become a routine of sorts these past few years.

This most recent *Yamim Noraim*, a similar notice addressed to American Jewry was placed by *Agudas Harabonim* (the Union of Orthodox Rabbis of US and Canada) in the widely-read *Jewish Week* (see box), and all fury broke loose. *The Jewish Week*, which is mailed to all contributors to the NY Federation of Jewish Philanthropies, found the ad so objectionable, that in the same issue it published an editorial condemning the message for being "divisive and contrary to the spirit of Judaism." In addition, it expressed doubt that Rabbi Moshe Feinstein (whose name appeared on the ad) actually approved of its message. The editorial also dismissed the ad's sponsors as "small groups . . . representing . . . a minority of Jew," conjecturing that "the Union of Orthodox Congregations of America, the Young Israel and the Rabbinical Council of America . . . do not believe that Jews should stay home on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur if there is no Orthodox synagogue nearby and should, in effect, boycott Conservative and Reform congregations."

### Who's Divisive?

*The Jewish Week* and its editorial begs for comment—for its lack of understanding of the issues, the paper's own offensive policies, and its false assumptions. First, it is strange that the Reform and Conservative leadership—which has broken away from a sacred tradition of 3200 years standing, promoting violation of Torah commands, and introducing chaos into the integrity of the Jewish family—should be held up as the paragons of unity; while the Orthodox community—which serves as a living continuum of the Sinai experience ("one nation at the foot of the mountain")—is considered divisive for its fidelity to Torah Judaism!

One flips through the pages of *The Jewish Week* encountering advertisements for Chef Boyardee Cheese Ravioli (without rabbinical endorsement of contents of the can), pages listing the bargain prices for

cuts of non-kosher meat at various supermarkets, and a notice (Oct. 5 '84) extolling the "fine Italian cuisine" at La Trattoria restaurant; one searches the editorial columns for a note of protest—in vain.

And the divisiveness of some of the columns go without comment in the editorials: An advice column in *The Jewish Week* ("Ask Helen Latner") featured a letter from "Inquiring Mom," to wit: "Dear Helen, My son is to be married to a Catholic girl this fall. We are Jewish. [Mom wants to preserve] the custom of the mother and father both walking down the aisle with their child. . . . Her father will not hear of her mother participating."

Helen is full of warm encouragement and wise counsel: "Indeed, when our children are born, we parents pray to be allowed to lead them joyfully to the bridal canopy. That is why in our tradition, the groom and the bride are each escorted to the huppah by their mothers and fathers. What's more, if there are grandparents, they should have a special place of honor at the head of the procession. Her parents obviously do not understand this. If you can't agree to a uniform escort, compromise. . . . Lead your son to

### AGUDAS HARABONIM (Union of Orthodox Rabbis of U.S. & Canada)

#### Warns Not To Pray In Reform or Conservative Temple

In view of the coming High Holidays, the Union of Orthodox Rabbis whose President is the world wide accepted Torah authority Hagaon Reb Moshe Feinstein shlita, declares, that it is a serious violation of the Halacha (Jewish Law) to pray in a Reform or Conservative Temple, whose Clergy have long rebelled against numerous sacred laws of the Torah and mislead thousands of innocent souls.

Every Jew must make every effort to find an Orthodox Synagogue to pray in, and absolutely not to enter a Reform or Conservative Temple. If you do not have an Orthodox Synagogue within walking distance then you should pray at home even on Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur.

Wishing Kial Israel a Ksiva V'chasima Tovah.

Union of Orthodox Rabbis of U.S. & Canada

the huppah as you have always dreamed of doing . . . and you can all be happy."

Not a word of reproof or even a note of sadness to be found in Helen's column. And as for the editorial—silence. A Jewish boy is marrying a Catholic girl on page 25 of *The Jewish Week* with no mention of conversion on the one hand, or the tragedy of it all on the other, and all is well. . . . A "dream" come true!

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## Who's For "Pluralism"?

*The Jewish Week* assumes that three Orthodox organizations of its liking would not back the boycott of Conservative and Reform houses of worship, implicit in the Agudas Harabonim notice. While representatives of all three organizations reportedly sent in letters protesting this false assumption, *The Jewish Week* only saw fit to print the one from Harold Jacobs, on behalf of the Young Israel. According to J.W. editor David C. Gross, the other two letters did not merit publication in a marathon Letters column, running for weeks on this topic, because "they did not add anything new"—and ideas count, not organizations. Even when the organizations were singled out by name in an editorial on the topic, as taking a stance diametrically opposed to their actual position?

### For the Record: Anti-Compromise

For the record—and as easy to confirm as a simple telephone call—Rabbi Moshe Feinstein's view is totally consistent with the one projected in the ad. Similarly, Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik, whom the UOJCA and the RCA consider their mentor, issued a statement to the same effect years ago:

I do hereby reiterate the statement I have made on numerous occasions, both in writing and orally, that a synagogue with a mixed seating arrangement not only forfeits its sanctity and its Halachic status of *Mikdash M'at*, but also becomes a vulgarized institution which is unfit for prayer and *avodah sheb'lev*. With full cognizance of the implications of such a Halachic decision, I would still advise every Orthodox Jew to forego *tefila betzibur* even on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, rather than to enter a synagogue with mixed pews, notwithstanding the fact that the officiating rabbi happens to be a graduate of a great and venerable Yeshiva.

No rabbi, however great in scholarship and moral integrity, has the authority to endorse, legalize, or even apologetically explain this basic deviation. Any rabbi, or scholar who attempts to sanction the desecrated synagogue casts ipso facto a doubt on his own moral

right to function as a teacher or spiritual leader in the traditional sense of the word. No pretext, excuse, ad hoc formula, missionary complexes or unfounded fear of losing our foothold in the Jewish community, can justify the acceptance of the Christianized synagogue as a bona fide Jewish religious institution.

—from a letter to the RCA

## An Unorthodox "Orthodox" Response

Even more objectionable than *The Jewish Week's* editorial was an article by Rabbi Haskel Lookstein (described as "a leading Orthodox rabbi . . . first vice president of the New York Board of Rabbis"), entitled: "An Orthodox response to an unorthodox ad" (Oct. 19, 1984). He feels that the "unorthodox advertisement placed by the Agudas Harabonim should not go unchallenged by Orthodox Jews. Many of us are greatly offended by the gratuitous public slap in the face to our friends and co-workers in the Jewish community. We are deeply disturbed by the advertisement's divisive message at a time when Jewish unity is harder to achieve and more essential than ever to maintain."

After a column and a half of *drashos* and comment, he adds: "the only thing the ad accomplished was to publicly slap the faces of Reform and Conservative Jews and their rabbis. Why did they deserve such an insult?" (as if a warning to uninformed congregants is an insult!)

Rabbi Lookstein truly reveals his attitude toward the Reform and Conservative movements with the following: "We have to come to expect such divisiveness between religious and secular, Orthodox and non-Orthodox, in Israel. But in America we have learned to live with religious pluralism. We can compete ideologically and religiously without repudiating those with whom we disagree. We are committed to mutual respect and civil discourse."

In other words, he will welcome the day when those forms of Judaism that reject the divinity of Torah

will be accepted alongside Orthodox in Israel, accorded mutual respect, accepted in friendly ideological competition—a chaotic situation that Rabbi Lookstein finds the blessing of pluralistic American Judaism!

Here, too, we wonder why Rabbi Lookstein has not consulted Rabbi J.B. Soloveitchik, who went on the record a score of years back, as quoted in an article in the old Yiddish language daily *"Der Tag-Morgen Journal"* (September 19, 1954):

I cannot under any circumstances understand how Orthodox rabbis, who spent their best years in Yeshiva and were permeated with the spirit of *Torah she Be'al Peh*—of the spiritual world for which Rabbi Akiva, Rambam, R'MA, the Vilna Gaon, Reb Chaim Brisker and other sages serve as pillars—how can such rabbis associate with spiritual leaders who find this awesome world totally without value?

A rabbinical organization is not a professional union dedicated to protecting the rabbi's economic interests. It is an ideological organization where people unite to work for one cause, one ideal. This fundamental difference makes cooperation impossible.

For Rabbi Lookstein's benefit, we repeat: Far from an area of friendly ideological competition, Rabbi Soloveitchik calls interdenominational cooperation "impossible."

#### Weep For The Error

One might suggest that the organizations favored by *The Jewish Week* ask themselves why *The Jewish Week* thought them more tolerant of deviationist groups than they actually are. The *Mishna* in *Yoma* (1:5) describes how, on *Yom Kippur* Eve, the elders of the *beis din* instructed the

*Kohein Gadol* to swear that he would not depart from the prescribed sacrificial order (as the Saducees would). At that point, the *Kohein* and the elders would part company to weep—he for being suspected of deviating and they for suspecting him.

Is it possible that the UOJCA and the RCA are misunderstood in their intolerance of deviationism for not yet having taken leave from the

Synagogue Council of America\*—since their continued membership in the SCA together with the Conservative and Reform movements, implies the legitimacy of these groups? Or is it simply that *The Jewish Week* does not understand Jewishness, Judaism, and its imperatives?

\*The Young Israel does not belong to the SCA. Their inclusion in the *Week's* "good list" defies explanation.

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## HOLOCAUST REMEMBRANCE SHOULD FOCUS ON LEGACY OF SPIRITUAL HEROISM, AGUDATH ISRAEL CONVENTION TOLD

PORT CHESTER, NEW YORK—Over three thousand delegates and guests gathered here for the keynote session of the 62nd national convention of Agudath Israel of America (November 22-25), heard leading rabbinical personalities and Torah sages evoke the poignant images of broad-scale spiritual heroism in the midst of the fires of the Holocaust—"a heroism that yet surpassed the episodes of physical resistance"—in posing a challenge to contemporary Jewry to reclaim the standards of learning and piety that were the hallmark of the European Torah world that was decimated in World War II. The Saturday evening session, which included messages by senior members of the organization's Council of Torah Sages, capped days of intense intellectual deliberations in an emotionally laden atmosphere on the convention theme: "Forty Years Since the Liberation of Europe: An Orphaned Generation Strives to Restore a Shattered Legacy."

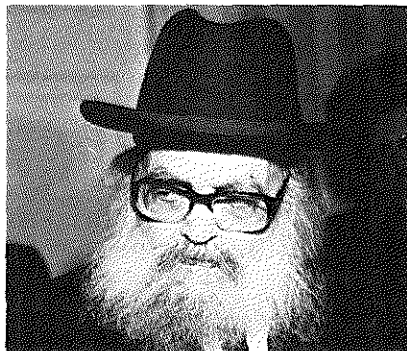
In his keynote address, presidium-member **Rabbi Yaakov Perlow**, the Novominsker Rebbe, stressed that the pure and elevated way of



life led by faithful Torah Jews in Europe before the war was maintained at the cost of great personal sacrifice and fortitude in the face of persecution, dire poverty, and the powerful tides of ideological movements current in the pre-War era that were antithetical to Torah belief and practice. He contrasted these conditions with the comfort of Jews in America today, and avowed that a "concrete goal must underlie the mourning for, and remembrance of the martyred six million." The Torah scholar said that contemporary Jews must meet the "demands and claims" that the sacrifice of European Jewry places upon them to "perfect the quality of Torah life and to set the true priorities before us in Jewish learning and piety."

### Council of Torah Sages

Rabbi Perlow's address was preceded by greetings from two of the elder sages of the *Moetzes Gedolei HaTorah*—The Council of Torah Sages—as a hushed atmosphere descended upon the gathering of thousands as each made his way to the dais. **Rabbi Yaakov Kamenetzky**, Rosh HaYeshiva of Mesivta Torah Vodaath, related how he had seen the



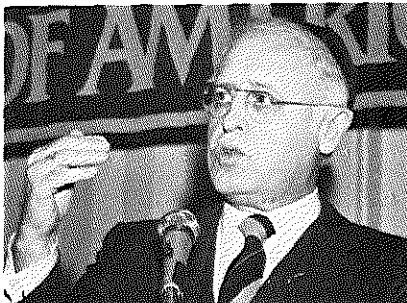
build-up of Torah life between the world wars, its devastation in the Holocaust, and its renewal again after the war. He urged Torah Jewry to maintain the perspective of a people in exile so that it be spared the need to be reminded of their status through the ravages of persecution, and so to merit the deliver-



ance of G-d from all its tribulations. **Rabbi Yaakov Yitzchok Ruderman**, Rosh HaYeshiva of Ner Israel-Baltimore, spoke of the pre-eminent importance of work for the *Klal* (worldwide Jewish community) and urged Agudath Israel to constantly expand its "sacred activity" on the many fronts it carries its efforts.

### President's Address

In another major address, **Rabbi Moshe Sherer**, president of Agudath Israel of Amer-



ica, called upon members of the Torah community to confront "the enemy from without and the enemy from within" in meeting the issues that Orthodoxy faces in America today.

The Orthodox leader scored the secular Jewish organizations that recently united to sign a declaration regarding the Law of Return, which he called an "unprecedented meddling by secular Jewish groups in a Halachic issue outside their competence, which can have serious consequences." He urged Orthodox Jews to fight against "complacency and apathy within the Torah community, which stymies the best efforts of dedicated *Klal* workers in expanding the sorely needed programs of advocacy, reach-out, service, and the guarantee of worldwide Jewish security and safety."

The keynote session, chaired by **Rabbi Chaskel Besser**, presidium member, also viewed a filmed message from *Moetzes Gedolei HaTorah* Chairman **Rabbi Moshe Feinstein**, and heard words of greeting sent by **Rabbi Israel Spira** (Bluzhever Rebbe), another senior member of the *Moetzes Gedolei HaTorah*. The Saturday evening session was also addressed by a special guest from Europe, **Rabbi Mattisyahu Solomon**, *Mashgiach* of Gateshead Yeshiva in England, and also heard a message on the importance of unity within the Orthodox camp from **Rabbi Yoseph Harari-Raful**, a distinguished Torah scholar of Sephardic origin who was elected a presidium member of the organization. **Rabbi Ben-Zion Blau** of the presidium of Agudath Israel in England and **Rabbi Shraga Grossbard**, Director General of Chinuch Atzmai-Torah Schools for Israel, delivered greetings. Simultaneous translation into English of the Yiddish-language addresses by **Rabbi Alter Ben-Zion Metzger**—were available on special receiver sets for all weekday sessions.



Rabbi Besser



Rabbi Solomon

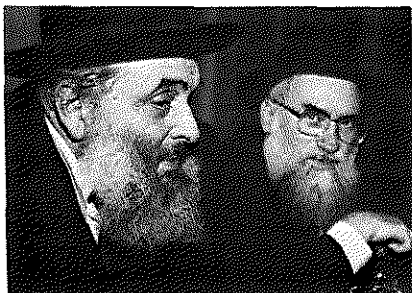


Rabbi Harari-Raful



Rabbi Grossbard

The dais was graced by the presence of Roshei Yeshiva and Rabbonim from a cross-section of the Torah community, including members of the presidium **Rabbi Shmuel Faivelson** (Bais Shraga, Monsey), **Rabbi Yitzchok Feigelstock** (Mesivta of Long Beach) and **Rabbi Aaron Schechter** (Mesivta Chaim Berlin, Kollel Gur Arye), as well as **Rabbi Yekusiel Bitersfeld** (Mesivta Beer Shmuel), **Rabbi Hillel David** (Flatbush), **Rabbi Yosef Frankel** (Vielopoler Rebbe), **Rabbi Aryeh Malkiel Kotler** (Beis Medrash Govoha), **Rabbi Dovid Kwiat** (Rav, 18th Avenue Agudah), and **Rabbi Simcha Shustal** (Stamford Yeshiva).



**Rabbi Faivelson, Rabbi Levine**



**Rabbi Feigelstock, Rabbi Schechter**



**Rabbi Kotler, Rabbi Bitersfeld**

Greetings from Israel, from **Rabbi Elazar Shach**, Rosh Yeshiva of Ponevezh Yeshiva, and the **Gerer Rebbe** were read to the assemblage, as well as from the **Belzer Rebbe**. Greetings from the U.S.A. included the **Zanzkloisenberger Rebbe**, the **Bobover Rebbe**, and **Rebbe Moshe Horowitz** (Bostoner Rebbe-New York).

#### Commission Formed

In response to a groundswell of sentiment among the convention delegates, which in-

cluded many survivors of the European destruction, the decision was announced Saturday evening that Agudath Israel of America would appoint a new **Commission on Holocaust Remembrance**, with the specific aim of recording and transmitting the legacy borne in thousands of untold tales of Jews who proudly defied the Nazi murderers in order to observe the slightest of the *mitzvos*. The Commission will also seek ways to preserve for future generations a living picture of the spiritual grandeur of pre-War European Torah Jewry.

#### A Shattered Legacy Remembered

The tone of the four day conclave was set Thursday at the opening symposium, "The Holocaust—How Do We Best Remember?" The public session, chaired by **Mr. Joseph Friedenson**, editor of *Dos Yiddishe Vort*, heard first from **Rabbi Shmuel Unsorfer**, a disciple



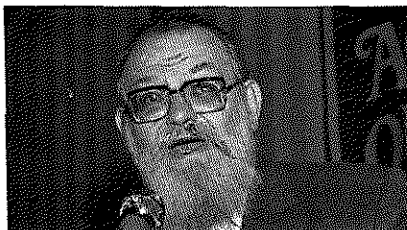
**Rabbi Unsorfer**



**Mr. Friedenson**

of the great Hungarian Torah tradition who also spent years of learning at the Chassidic citadels of Polish Jewry. The Torah scholar, who took a leading role in the rebuilding of Chassidic yeshivos in England and Canada after the war and now heads Mesivta Reishis Chochmo in Montreal, spoke of the deep esteem held for Torah-learning that permeated religious Jewish life before the war, and of the refinement of personal character that was the hallmark of European Torah Jewry. Rabbi Unsorfer related several moving incidents from personal experience illustrating the depth of commitment of Jews to Torah observance during the bleakest hours of the war.

From a different perspective, the American-born **Rabbi Dovid Cohen**, of Congregation Gvul Yaavetz of Flatbush, a scholar who studied with the sages who brought the Lithuanian Torah tradition to America, emphasized the need for Americans to comprehend what European Jewry was like in its constructed state before they can deal with



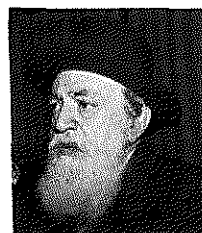
**Rabbi Dovid Cohen**

the meaning of its destruction. He called upon the surviving remnant of the Holocaust to summon the effort to ensure that the next generation retain at least a glimpse of the "spiritual splendor" of pre-War European Jewish life. Both speakers minimized the importance of physical monuments and days of remembrance, and stressed the reclamation of the standards of Jewish life as the fitting memorialization of the Jews who perished.

The opening session was also greeted by **Rabbi Shlomo Oppenheimer**, Chairman of the Vaad HaHanhola, and **Yisroel Greenwald**, President of Zeirei Agudath Israel.

At the theme symposium on Thursday evening, chaired by Convention chairman **Benjamin Fishoff**, delegates and visitors were presented with a panoramic portrayal of the way life was in Torah communities throughout Western and Eastern Europe. **Rabbi Shimon Schwab**, Rav of Congregation K'hal Adath Jeshurun of Washington Heights, described the strength of commitment he had seen in pre-War German Orthodox Jewry and went on to depict the love of learning that was the norm of Jewish life as he experienced it in Lithuania and northern Poland.

**Rabbi Israel Pierkarski**, Rabbi in Cong. Bais Yaakov of Forest Hills and Rosh Yeshiva in Tomchei T'mimim, movingly depicted the high levels of learning and piety that were attained even by the simple Jews of Poland, and told of thousands of poor and humble workers who knew the entire Talmud at instant recall, but who nevertheless went



**Rabbi Pierkarski**



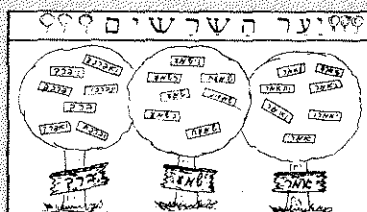
**Rabbi Schwab**

unheralded in a culture saturated with knowledge of Torah. The Thursday evening session was preceded by the presentation of Avodas HaKodesh Community Service Awards, made by **Rabbi Shmuel Bloom**, Administrative Director of Agudath Israel of America. The awardees: **Rabbi Elchonon B. Freedman** (Detroit), **Jac Goldenberg** (Los Angeles), **Dovid Neuman** (Cleveland), **Moshe Neuman** (Cleveland) and **Mendel Singer** (Chicago).

#### Election Session

On Friday morning convention delegates heard remarks from **Dr. Isaac Lewin** on behalf of the Agudath Israel World Organization, after which the assembly elected national officers of Agudath Israel of America. (See box.)

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## AGUDATH ISRAEL ELECTS NEW NATIONAL OFFICERS

Agudath Israel of America announced its new national officers, elected at the organization's 62nd annual convention. A ten-member presidium was chosen to lead the Orthodox Jewish coalition group, and Rabbi Moshe Sherer was re-elected president of the body.

The presidium consists of Rabbi Chaskel Besser, Rabbi Shmuel Faivelson (Rosh Yeshiva, Bais Shraga, Monsey), Rabbi Yitzchok Feigelstock (Rosh Yeshiva, Mesivta of Long Beach), Rabbi Elya Fisher (Rosh Kolel-Ger), Rabbi Levi Yitzchok Horowitz (Bostoner Rebbe-Boston), Rabbi Avrohom Chaim Levin (Rosh Yeshiva, Telshe-Chicago), Rabbi Yaakov Perlow (Novominsker Rebbe), Rabbi Yosef Harari-Raful (Rosh Yeshiva Ateret Torah), Rabbi Aharon Schechter (Rosh Yeshiva, Mesivta Rabbi Chaim Berlin, Kolel Gur Aryeh), and Rabbi Moshe Sherer.

Elected as chairman of the Vaad Hanhala of Agudath Israel was Rabbi Yosef Frankel, with Avrohom Halpern as co-chairman.

Vice presidents of Agudath Israel are: Mendel Berg, Dr. Ernst L. Bodenheimer, Rabbi Leib Cywiak, Ben Zion Fishoff, Eugene Fixler, Louis Glueck, Rabbi Yaakov Goldstein, Chaim Hertz, David Klein, Julius Klugmann, Rabbi Shlomo Oppenheimer, Chaim Alter Roth, Shmuel Roth, and Menachem Shayovich. The national treasurers: Al Rieder, Aaron Seif, David Singer and Nachum Stein. Eli Basch and Mordechai Frie man were elected secretaries.

Joseph Friedenson will serve as general secretary, Rabbi Boruch B. Borchardt as executive director and secretary, and Rabbi Shmuel Bloom as administrative director.

Officers at large of Agudath Israel for the new term will be: Abish Brodt, Rabbi Reuven Feinstein, Eli Fink, Jacob Fink, Jacob I. Friedman, Avrohom Fruchthandler, Dr. Bernard Fryshman, Rabbi David Greenzweig, Chaim Gross, Rabbi Edwin Katzenstein, Eric Katzenstein, Menachem Lubinsky, Moshe Neiman, Joseph Neumann, Mordechai Neustadt, Rabbi Yehudah Oelbaum, Akiva Piotrkowski, Shlomo Rieder, Alan J. Rosenberg, Zev Schlesinger, Avrohom Schonberger, David H. Turkel, Professor Aaron Twerski, and Willy Wiesner.

The regional vice presidents of Agudath Israel, chaired by Rabbi Leizer Levin (Detroit), are: Canada—Fred Pfeiffer (Montreal) and Moshe Nussbaum (Toronto); Mid-Atlantic—Professor Laurence M. Katz and Ernst Gutman (Baltimore), and Isaac Friedman (Philadelphia); Midwest—Reuven Dessler and Henry Lowenthal (Cleveland), Dov Loketch (Detroit), Rabbi Simcha Lyons (St. Louis), and Rabbi Chaim Schmeltzer (Chicago); New England—Rabbi Shlomo Margolis (Brighton); West Coast—Elimelech Schwartz and Jacob Friedman (Los Angeles), and Joshua Moshel (Denver); South Atlantic—Rabbi Avrohom Groner (Miami).

Elected to the Agudath Israel Commission on Social Services were: Louis Glueck (Chairman), Moshe Neiman and Dov Levi (Co-Chairmen), Mendel Berg, Judah Bittman, Eugene Fixler, Siegmund Freundlich, Jacob I. Friedman, Israel Green, Z. Hasenfeld, Rabbi Edwin Katzenstein, Avrohom Melohn, Avrohom Schonberger, David Schonbrun, and Moshe Zafir.

The convention elections session was chaired by Chaim Hertz, with Rabbi Edwin Katzenstein as co-chairman.



## Workshops

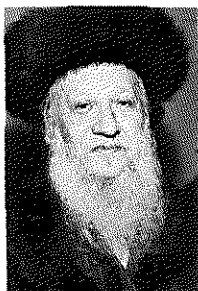
Several practical resolutions were hammered out at workshops held on Friday morning of the convention. At a session on consumer input in the *Kashrus* field, a call was heard for supervision agencies to legally sue the misusers of their stamps of certification, a step which has never been taken despite the many instances of food companies fraudulently labeling their products with such symbols.

Besides the resolution to form a Holocaust Commission, which was proposed at a workshop on Education and the Holocaust, an appeal was drafted at a concurrent conference calling for the expansion of the formal Agudath Israel staff structure to deal with overseas rescue and relief concerns on behalf of Jews in lands of persecution and danger.

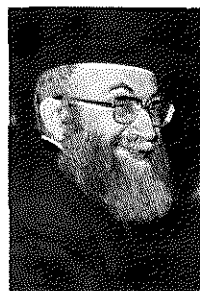
Legal experts from around the country on the rights and interests of Jews as affected by the legislative process met to share approaches to issues facing Orthodox Jewry nationwide. Participants at the workshops included: "Teaching the Holocaust to our Youth": **Rabbi Chaim Segal**, **Mr. David Klein**, **Dr. Joseph Geliebter** and **Rabbi Menachem Lubinsky**, chairman. "Hatzolas Yisroel": **Mordechai Neustadt**, Chairman, **Vaad L'Hatzolas Nidchei Yisroel**, **Yehuda Borusan** (Baltimore) and **Rabbi Shlomo Noach Mandel** (Toronto), chairman. "Legislative Issues in the Grassroots of America": **Mr. Henry Lowenthal** (Cleveland), **Mr. Mendel Singer** (Chicago), **Rabbi Yisroel Shenkolewski** (Lakewood), and **Dr. Irving Lebovics** (Los Angeles), chairman, with **Rabbi Yaakov M. Dombroff** (Elizabeth) and **Rabbi Chaim Schnur** (Los Angeles) as the resource panel. "*Kashrus*: Effective Consumer Input": **Rabbi Moshe Heinemann** (Baltimore), **Rabbi Pinchos Horowitz** (Chuster Rav), **Rabbi Avrohom Teichman** (Los Angeles), and **Rabbi Yisroel Belsky**, chairman.

## Shabbos Ruach

*Shabbos* was ushered in at the convention in *Tefilla* led by **Reb Ben Zion Shenker**, after which the assemblage of a colorful mixture of Chassidic and Litvishe, Sfardi, Hungarian, and German Jews—Holocaust survivors and native-born Americans—and other stripes of Torah Jewry heard words of Torah from **Rabbi Avrohom Chaim Levin**, Rosh Yeshiva of Telshe-Chicago, on the spirit of optimism that characterized *Gedolei HaTorah* even in the most tragic of circumstances. Following *Seudas Shabbos* Friday night, delegates reconvened for a session of *Divrei Torah*, chaired by **Rabbi Moshe Mordechai Lowy**, Rav of Agudath Israel of Toronto. **Rabbi Levi Yitzchok Horowitz** (Bostoner Rebbe-Boston) spoke of the inspiration to be derived from the spiritual heroes of the Holocaust generation, and led the gathering in a heartfelt song of devotion he learned from survivors who had sung



Rabbi Horowitz



Rabbi Svei

it in the midst of the bleakness of the death camps.

**Rabbi Elya Svei**, Rosh HaYeshiva of Philadelphia, and member of the *Moetzes Gedolei HaTorah*, next delivered an impassioned message calling for unity within the ranks of the Torah world and an abandonment of the desire of Jews to be a nation like all the nations, to seek redemption in false *isms* and false Messiahs, and to stray after the frivolities of the non-Jewish culture. "If the martyrs could return and see us," said Rabbi Svei, "how would they judge us in preserving what they died for?"

**Rabbi Simcha Bunim Ehrenfeld** (Mattersdorfer Rav) spoke of the importance of the singularity of dedication to Torah ideals to the exclusion of other values. The *Shabbos* morning davening was enhanced with a *drasha* by **Rabbi Pinchos Hirschprung** (Chief Rabbi of Montreal), who emphasized the



Rabbi Ehrenfeld



Rabbi Hirschprung

importance of the kind of broad knowledge of Torah that was typical in the communities of Polish Jewry. **Rabbi Reuven Feinstein**, Rosh



Rabbi Feinstein



Rabbi Pam

Yeshiva of Yeshiva of Staten Island, introduced the *drasha* with a description of the development of Torah life in America, as related to the convention theme.

*Sholosh Seudos* featured a major address by **Rabbi Avrohom Pam**, Rosh Yeshiva of Mesivta Torah Vodaath and member of the *Moetzes Gedolei HaTorah*, who spoke of the historic patterns of G-d's love for the Jewish people following the catastrophes that struck us, and the missed opportunities to hasten the redemption. "It is our task to take the initiative and dedicate ourselves to educating the broad masses of Jews estranged from Torah," Rabbi Pam emphasized.

**Rabbi Elya Fisher**, Rosh Kollel-Ger, and presidium member, spoke of the miraculous rescue of Torah sages who were able to rebuild Torah institutions in America and Israel, and urged redoubled effort on the part of the current generations in reaching the heights of pre-War Jewry.

The *Shabbos* afternoon session was chaired by **Rabbi Meyer Scheinberg** (Rav, Agudath Israel of Flatbush).



Rabbi Fisher



Rabbi Scheinberg

## Religion and Politics Debated

In a Sunday morning symposium that attracted widespread interest throughout the Orthodox Jewish community, two noted scholars, **Rabbi Berel Wein** of Congregation Bais Torah of Suffern, N.Y., formerly a practicing attorney, and **Professor Aaron Twerski**, of Hofstra University, forcefully debated the question: "Religion and Politics—Where Do We Draw the Line?" Rabbi Wein strongly favored strengthening the



Rabbi Wein



Prof. Twerski





wall separating church and state while advocating a low profile for the Jewish community in the public debate of religious issues in politics. Arguing that "the climate that is created in the country is what we must be interested in," Rabbi Wein warned that "in a society that is empty" of religious values due to "the excesses of secular culture," the Evangelical Right has full expectations of "Christianizing America," and that many cult groups and Christian missionaries have "almost unlimited funds pouring into a campaign to capture Jewish souls."

Professor Twerski argued vigorously for the participation of Orthodox Jews in efforts to combat such legislation as the Equal Rights Amendment and nondiscrimination statutes that would force Torah institutions with government contracts to hire homosexuals. "There is good reason," Twerski said, "to fear the ascendancy of the radical right and the imposition of sectarian values on society. The pressure to implement total

unthinking egalitarianism on all communities threatens the existence of Orthodox Judaism and its institutions."



The session was chaired by **Chaim David Zwiebel, Esq.**, Director of Government Affairs of Agudath Israel of America.

#### Daf Yomi Shiurim

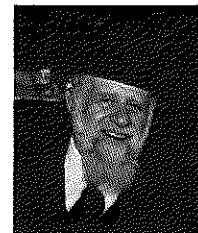
Daf Yomi *shiurim* lent an added dimension to the Torah *ruach* of the convention. Leading sessions were **Rabbi Moshe M. Weiss**

(*Rav*, Agudath Israel of Staten Island), **Rabbi Eliezer Horowitz** (*Rav*, Agudath Israel of 14th Avenue, Boro Park), **Rabbi Nisson Alpert** (*Rav*, Agudath Israel of Long Island), **Rabbi Faivel Cohen** (Flatbush), and **Rabbi Shmaryahu Karelitz** of Far Rockaway. **Rabbi Simcha Wasserman** (Rosh Yeshiva, Yeshiva Ohr Elchonon, Jerusalem) delivered a *pilpul shiur* on the *Daf* on *Shabbos* afternoon.

The closing banquet of the convention Sunday afternoon was greeted by **Rabbi Yitzchok Kolitz**, *Rav HaRoshi* of Jerusalem, who arrived at the convention that morning.



**Rabbi Karelitz**



**Rabbi Wasserman**

### Chinuch Atzmai Leader:

#### "GOVERNMENT CUTS THREATEN UNIQUENESS OF TORAH SCHOOLS"

**Rabbi Shmuel Weinberg**, Associate Director-General of the Chinuch Atzmai-Torah Schools network in Israel, reported at a meeting in New York that the reductions in government subsidies for the network, recently instituted as a part of an overall economic retrenchment, "threaten the basic teaching program by imposing unbearable costs directly upon the network, compounding its struggle to maintain its high standards of quality education."

Speaking at a meeting of the organization's Steering Committee, Rabbi Weinberg described how the network's budget includes the *Keren Hachinuch LeTorah* (Fund for Torah Education), funded by contributions from friends the world over, for maintaining special programs not funded by the government. It includes, for example, the program of 100,000

additional hours of Torah education, where teachers receive extra hourly pay. Since this hourly rate keeps rising with the inflation, he said, maintaining these hours is already a great struggle. Another special program is the additional summer month of sessions maintained by Chinuch Atzmai.

"When the government reduced its subsidies by 1,500 weekly hours for the teaching program it mandates and funds," Rabbi Weinberg continued, "leaders of Chinuch Atzmai-Torah Schools were faced with the agonizing decision of either dropping those hours, or assuming their cost within the already-strained Fund for Torah Education. The decision was to continue the full teaching program. If new funds are not found to cover the 1,500 weekly hours, it will be necessary to use funds designated for another program,

the additional summer month of learning, forcing its reduction or elimination."

Other government reductions, Rabbi Weinberg reported, were imposed in such sensitive areas as heat in schools and emergency repairs. Normally, ministerial budgeting for schools included proportional allocations for subsidiary needs, such as heat and repairs.

The Chinuch Atzmai-Torah Schools bring quality religious and secular education into every area of settlement in Israel. They currently have an enrollment of more than 40,000 children with a staff of 3,000 in 205 schools and 235 kindergartens serving 125 communities. The network has produced a generation of productive Israeli citizens who serve as a growing source of moral strength for the country's population.

## EDUCATIONAL SESSIONS, BRANCH UPDATES HIGHLIGHT NATIONAL CONVENTION OF AGUDAH WOMEN

The National Convention of Agudah Women of America held in conjunction with the Convention of Agudath Israel of America in Port Chester, New York, attracted over 400 women from coast to coast. **Sheila Feinstein** of Manhattan and **Lily Kreindler** of Queens served as convention co-chairmen. Among the presentations at the Convention were an informative lecture by **Rabbi Dovid Cohen** of Congregation Gvul Yaabetz, Brooklyn, an inspirational talk on *Midos* by **Rabbi Mayer Scheinberg** of the Agudath Israel of Flatbush, a *shiur* on the Parshas HaShevua by

**Rebbitzin Rochel Sorotzkin** (Yavneh Teacher's Seminary in Cleveland), **Esther Bohensky** and **Aliza Grund**, National Co-Presidents of Agudah Women, also participated in the convention program as did **Rita Siff**, Administrator of Agudah Women. **Marilyn Fishoff** of Forest Hills delivered an inspiring talk on "Tracing Our Roots."

**Rebbitzin Josephine Reichel**, Honorary National President of Agudah Women, read *Tehillim* in keeping with N'shei's daily schedule.

Agudah Women of America, through a

network of day care centers, training schools, educational facilities, and loan funds in Israel and social service projects in the United States, serves hundreds of women and families. The National Headquarters at 5 Beekman Street, coordinate the efforts of branches throughout the country and directs American activities to respond to developing needs in Israel.

Members of the Convention Committee included **Sarah Blank**, **Alica Bassior**, **L. Dachs**, **Miriam Fastag**, **Tzipporah Schlesinger**, and **Rose Sommerfeld**.

### Symposium on the Baal Teshuva Movement

At the closing symposium of the convention, the assembled body was addressed by two well-known doyens of Israeli secular society who returned to full Torah Judaism as a result of personal quests for meaning in life. **Uri Zohar**, for years the top entertainment celebrity in Israel, described the process by which he came to embrace Jewish observance and belief, and delivered an impassioned plea that Jews in America join in




**Rabbi Zohar**



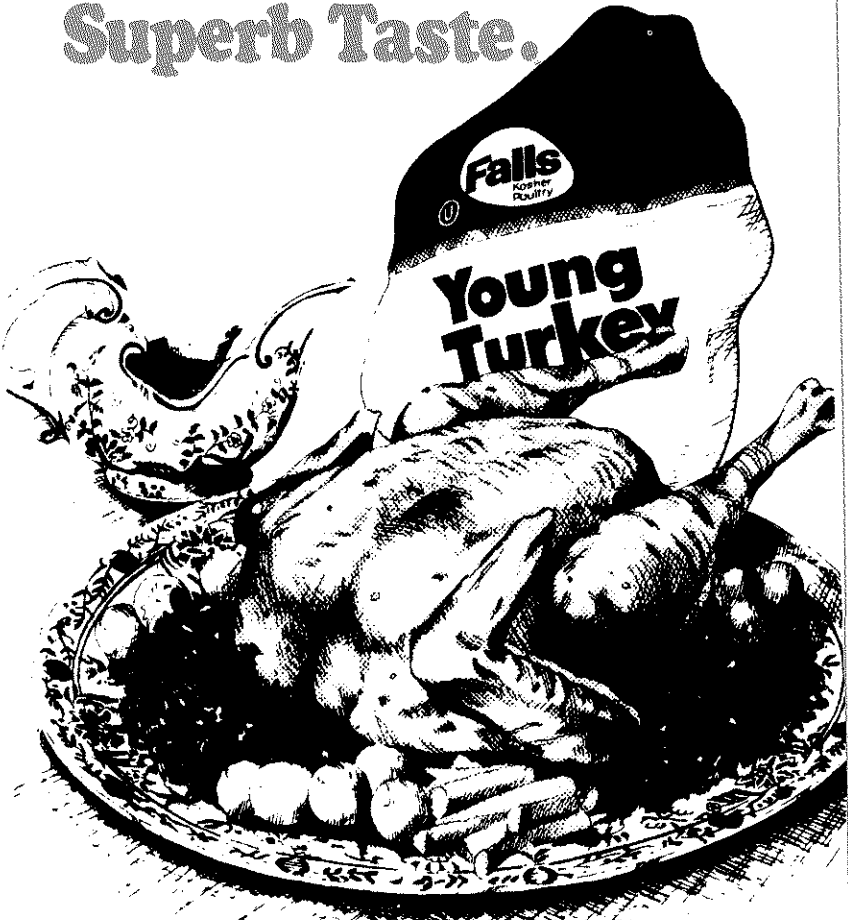
**Dr. Srebernik**

"the battle" for the soul of the Jewish nation through support of the movement to foster *Baalei Teshuva*.

**Dr. Shalom Srebernik**, a noted Israeli lecturer in physics who became a *Baal Teshuva* while pursuing his scientific career in Canada, directly addressed the theme: "What Can Jews in the U.S. Learn from Israel's Baal Teshuva Movement?" He described the growth of *Arachim* ("Values"), an Israeli based organization sponsoring his and Zohar's visit to the U.S., which has developed a series of seminars wherein groups of non-observant Israelis spend a period of several days to a week in the undisturbed atmosphere of a hotel setting, exploring their Judaism through a system of well-planned discussions and lectures. Some 10,000 people have already taken part in *Arachim's* programs, according to Srebernik, and two-thirds have actually come to practice of Judaism as a result. The session was chaired by **Rabbi Dovid Goldwasser**, Director of Chizuk—an outreach agency of Agudath Israel.



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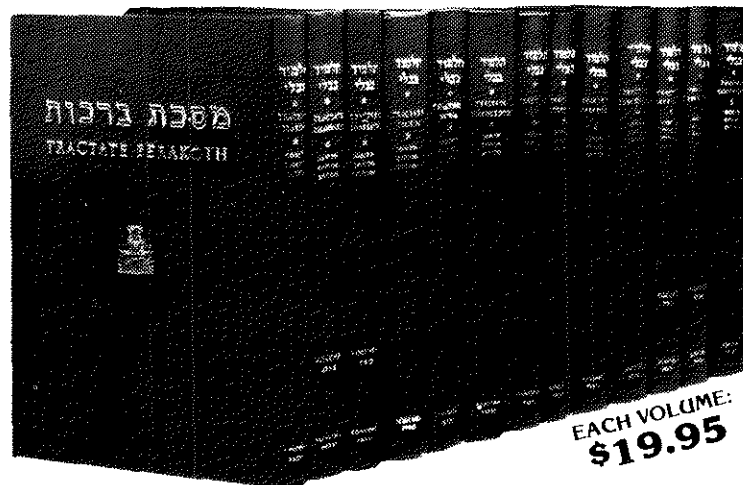
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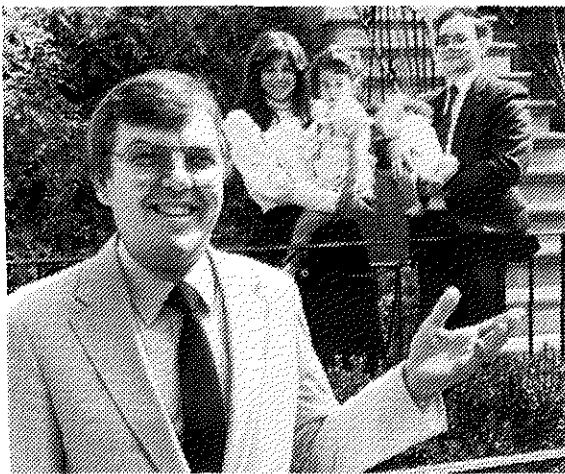
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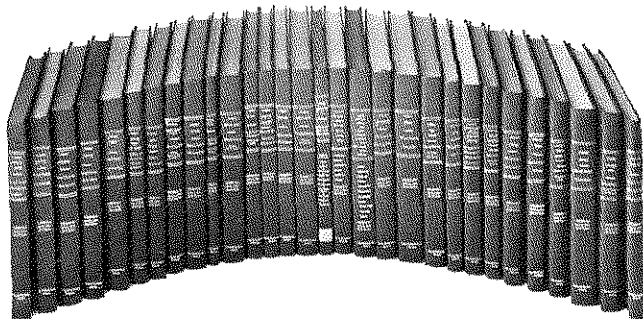
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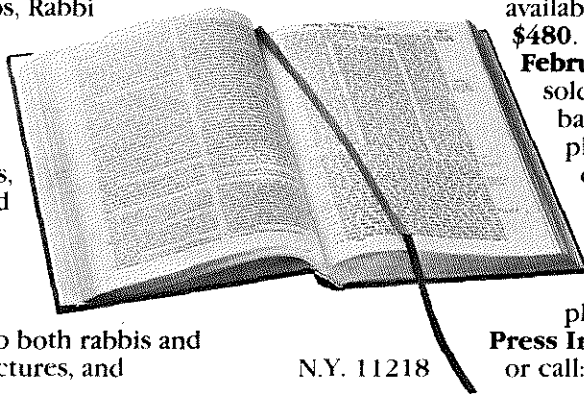
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