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The Case For NATIONAL IDENTITY

Reflections on "Who Is a Jew"

The Vanishing Yeshiva Teacher

...Is the Yeshiva Movement In Danger?

**PUBLIC OPINION:
A Torah Approach**

THE JEWISH OBSERVER

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The Search for National Identity

Reflections on the current crisis

Political crises come and go. They seem to shake the world to its foundations while they last, but they are quickly overtaken by oblivion. This would certainly seem to be the case with the current controversy over "Who is a Jew."

On January 23 the Supreme Court of Israel upheld the demand of Lieutenant Commander Shalit and his non-Jewish wife that their children be registered as of Jewish nationality, even though they are not Jewish according to *halochah*. There was an immediate outcry against this decision, in *Eretz Yisroel* as well as abroad. On February 9 the government brought before the Knesseth amendments to the registration law that would give a traditional-religious definition to Jewish "nationality" and thereby nullify, for future cases, the Supreme Court's decision. On its first reading the government proposal was approved by an overwhelming majority and, as these lines are written, final Knesseth approval is assured. It would seem that all will soon be well again in the State of Israel.

Yet nothing could be more dangerous than to relegate this crisis to the past. On the contrary, it deserves our painstaking attention, for a variety of reasons. In the first place, it provides an insight into the momentous problem of Jewishness today; and, beyond that, the solution being offered at this time—far from solving the issue—provides assurance of new and even deeper crises in the future.

* * *

THERE HAS BEEN a great deal of confusion about the basic point of this crisis. It is *not* concerned with what makes a man a "citizen," the holder of a passport, of the State of Israel; that is adequately defined by the law. Nor is it concerned with what makes a man a Jew in the religious sense, in the eyes of the Rabbinic Courts; this is determined by these courts themselves, in accordance with *halochah*. The issue is rather: when is a man, or woman, or child, part of the Jewish nation which dwells in the State of Israel? When can they

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claim its nationality? This nationality we call for short "Jewish"—but what do we mean by that? Do we use this word in its full, traditional religious sense, to indicate that a national of the State of Israel must belong to the historic Jewish nation of old, *united and characterized by its Torah faith*? Or do we use it in a loose sense, to describe a new community, *united only by the common decision to dwell together on the ancient Jewish soil*? Put more simply: Is Jewish nationhood, in the State of Israel, tied to Jewish religion or divorced from it?

The question is not new. From the first days of the Zionist movement on, it demanded a reply—and never received it. On the one hand, thanks primarily to the Zionist leaders of Eastern Europe, the goal of the movement was the establishment of a Jewish state in *Eretz Yisroel*—and this demand was always based on the historical right of the people of the *T'nach* to the land of the *T'nach*. On the other hand, however, the Jewish state of the future was conceived very clearly as a western-type secular democracy, shorn of any specific traditional religious character.

For the elections to the Zionist Congress, David Litvak stressed at the time, "we say to everyone who comes to lend us his hand, may his religion or race be what they are, . . . you are our brother!" He pointed out that, in fact, three Christians participated in the first Zionist Congress. More interesting, because so very pertinent, are the following lines of Theodore Herzl himself (whose ideas about the secular nature of a Jewish state were clearly expressed in his "Altneuland"). They were written to his colleague in arms, Max Nordau, upon the latter's marriage to a Swedish Christian:

"Maybe your fears about how your marriage will be received in the circles of the religious fanatics are exaggerated. If our endeavor were already attained, and there were a State, then, certainly, a Jewish citizen could marry a non-Jewish woman . . . and she would thereby become Jewish, no matter what her religion, and so would the children that might be born."

Theodore Herzl was consistent and uncompromising in his philosophy of secular Zionism. Yet, two generations ago, Isaac Breuer, in *The Problem of the Jew*, brilliantly demonstrated its utter inadequacy—and now, after the emergence of the State, this is also acknowledged by the non-religious leadership. That is the first point to stress when we contemplate the current crisis. As Reuven Gross pointed out in the *Jerusalem Post* article quoted in this issue, the central question in the Shalit case was whether the nascent State of Israel wants to identify with the Israel of old. The Supreme Court majority was guided by Herzl's idea of a religiously neutral nation state, with nationality not governed by Torah but by the completely subjective criteria of each individual citizen—and it was this view that was decisively rejected by government and Knesseth when they sided instead with the court's minority.

"There is not in existence . . . a Jewish-Israeli nationality; and if there were, it would not necessarily be a secular nationality. . . . It is slanderous to say that our youth has freed itself from all allegiance to the heritage of our ancestors. On the contrary, what it seeks is primarily religious values and symbols.

"This heritage of our ancestors to which we all, or almost all, feel bound, is one of the foundations of our right to Eretz Yisroel. . . . Whoever separates Jewish nationality from its religious foun-

dations touches the heart of our political claim to Eretz Yisroel—a veritable act of treason.

"The search for a new criterion of Jewish identity means in effect the denial of the continued existence of the Jewish people . . . a desire to establish a new country, without history and tradition. "The sole criterion for determining the national identity of the Jew is the Halakic criterion which views a Jewish mother or conversion as the exclusive means of identification, and not the criterion which views a person's inclination to the Jewish-Israeli culture and values as the means of identification of a national Jew."

(From the opinion of Supreme Court Justice Silberg)

This position was adopted by the government—and according to Premier Meir, not as a concession to the religious parties or to keep the government coalition together but as a matter of principle; she stressed that she considered the Jewish people and its unity more important than the State of Israel or Zionism, and "there is no other explanation for our existence through the ages, despite all suffering, than the loyalty to the faith." It is remarkable how the large majority of political leaders in the Knesseth—secularists of all stripes—expressed similar feelings in the debate, ruling out a division between nation and religion. No wonder that a writer in the *Davar* bitterly complained that Herzl

A Voice from the Past

Zionist theory explains Jewish unity as national, in conscious opposition to the view that Jewish unity is solely a matter of common religious convictions. Of course, the originators of Zionism realized that religion is not in conflict with the nation but, like law and language, can rather be considered a valuable product of the national spirit. With all that, however, Zionism admitted with admirable frankness that Jewish nationhood (as it understood it, in the western liberal sense) did not permit the exclusive rule of any one religion (again in the western liberal sense).

The originators of Zionism, who themselves were completely immersed in the western way of thought, never stopped to ask whether Jewish "nationhood" and Jewish "religion" had, perhaps, a meaning different from those assigned by the other nations. By separating the Jewish nation

from its religion, Zionism sinned against the very spirit of history which it believed in: for the Jewish national structure never harbored any other cultural content than the Jewish religion.

In the western liberal sense, it is true, religion—as a matter of personal conviction—has nothing to do with nationhood—a product of communal experience. I claim, however, that only a nation can be carrier of the Jewish religion, for this religion is no religion in the ordinary sense at all. The Sinaitic revelation did not address itself to individuals as such; if it had, it could not have bound later ages. It was granted to the community, which gained its national unity by its readiness to accept it for its national law.

Condensed from The Problem of the Jew by Isaac Breuer (1917), published by Jewish Pocket Books (1947).

and the other great leaders of Zionism in the past had been disavowed.

* * *

AND YET: as we take a closer look at the government's proposals to end the crisis, we are seized by a profound sense of disappointment and apprehension: the new definition of Jewish nationhood is religious—but not *halachic*. We discover that when Mrs. Meir so fervently affirms the inseparable link between nation and religion, she does not necessarily mean “religion” in our sense, in the Torah sense. The proposals she put before the Knesseth, therefore, do not reflect the dictates of the Torah but the will and insights of the government coalition.

It is useful to recall in this context a famous remark of Ben-Gurion's: “Ours is a land of laws, not of *halochah*!” Even where the Torah's demands are legally recognized in the State of Israel, this does not represent submission to the Torah's authority but a political decision adopted by the free decision of a parliamentary majority. That is why it is so ludicrous to speak of *Medinath Yisroel* being in any way a theocracy: it is not ruled by G-d's law but by that of the Knesseth. The concessions granted to Torah Jewry, such as the jurisdiction of the Rabbinical courts, can be encroached upon—or they can be altogether done away with—if the realities of the democratic process so dictate.¹ Likewise the solutions to any particular problem, will only be as permanent, and as perfect, as the political situation indicates—and in the present crisis this fact has become very obvious indeed.

There is a clear commitment of the government majority to linking Jewish nationality to our religious heritage—for sentimental reasons, to cement our ties to our land, and to link the Jew of Israel with the diaspora Jew. But, for one not bound by *halochah*, there are also obvious reasons to limit this commitment. The

1. The constant struggle needed to preserve the “*status quo*” in the face of the many issues that arise in the life of the country is illustrated by a whole range of recent developments: the decision of the government to withdraw its objection to *Shabbos* television and to allow radio and television reception on *Shabbos* in army recreation centers; the submission of a bill regulating property relationships in marriage, which requires the rabbinic courts to abide by its provisions; a court ruling that officials cannot refuse to affix to a civil marriage contract the revenue stamps which are required on a legal document; and—on the other hand—rulings by the new Minister of Transport against new *Shabbos* violations by *El Al* and municipal transport. The government rejects a proposal to forbid operation of the secular courts on *Shabbos*—but the Minister of Justice declares that he will handle the matter administratively. The exact meaning of the “*status quo*” is ever again defined and redefined, in delicate political maneuvering. In fact, the concessions to the secular forces on the radio and television issues have been interpreted by some journalists as a *quid pro quo* for their cooperation on the question of “Who is a Jew.”

Conservative and Reform Jews have to be considered; they would not want *Torah* to dominate Jewish nationhood. And there are Jews who are secularists or have intermarried; they too should not be alienated. And so the government came up with an ingenious package deal.

As finally formulated, it provides that a Jew “is one born of a Jewish mother or converted”—but, in the first place, the burden of proof of Jewishness is removed from the applicant, and the registrar is instead required to *disprove* any claim of Jewishness; and, even more important, it was made clear that Reform and Conservative conversions, *halachically* invalid, would also be recognized:

“In the regulations of the Interior Ministry of January 1960 there was a clause that (in order to be registered as a Jew) one must be converted, ‘in accordance with halochah,’ but in this new law this phrase is omitted. It should be very clear that the purpose (for the omission) is very simple . . . We know that there are Liberals, Conservatives, and there are Reformers of all types who are performing conversions . . . We say that whoever comes here with a conversion certificate of any Jewish group, as long as he is not affiliated with a different religion . . . will be registered in his identity card as a Jew . . .” (Statement of the Justice Minister in the Knesseth)

Moreover, the “package deal” provides that the non-Jewish wife, children and grandchildren of a Jew will have all the privileges of the “Law of Return,” including automatic citizenship and full economic assistance; in fact, even the non-Jewish widow of a Jew would have these privileges. While these provisions are ostensibly aimed at smoothing the immigration to *Eretz Yisroel* of Russian and other Jews who had been isolated from Jewish life, they also make it possible for Israelis who want to marry non-Jewish wives—impossible for them in Israel—to do so abroad and bring their brides back as welcomed immigrants. To make the absorption of the non-Jewish immigrant easier, the government voiced a demand for simplifying the process of conversion in *Eretz Yisroel* and appointed a ministerial commission to promote this goal.

We can clearly perceive the political and social motives behind this “package,” as well as the underlying philosophy of the government: an acceptance of our religious heritage—up to a point. Mrs. Meir was quite explicit when she addressed a caucus of her party:

“The orthodox injure the cause of religion much more than the socialists—the misfortune of our

time is that there is today apparently no Jewish religious authority to determine what is necessary to be a Jew in 1970 rather than 2000 years ago. There are things that rouse anybody, even if he does not want to fight religion, such as the manner of conversion (ed. romans), or chalitzah which had its origins in the Middle Ages and is an unbearable indignity."

In fact, Justice Silberg, in his judgment, had accompanied his advocacy of *halachic* standards with the comment that "the bonds of *halochoh* have always linked the people, never strangled it. . . . The *halochoh* is the servant of the people, not its master. . . . I believe with perfect faith that when large-scale immigration will really begin from Communist countries . . . there will be found sages who will use their full authority and will make its absorption by our people *halachically* possible." The government did not believe that the rabbinic authorities could, or would, adapt the *halochoh* as needed, and instead formulated its proposals so as to smoothe the path for the unconverted or not properly converted.

* * *

INEVITABLY THE QUESTION arises: what could Torah Jewry do to block proposals that so obviously clash with Torah? Probably a great deal—if it were united. Unfortunately, however, it is not.

The "package deal" was worked out between Justice Minister Y. S. Shapiro (of the Labor Party) and Interior Minister M. C. Shapiro (of the Religious Zionists, *Mifdal*). The leaders of *Mifdal* had made it clear in advance that if the religious nature of Jewish nationality was not legally recognized, they would leave the government coalition. When this basic point was conceded, they felt in turn under pressure to make concessions too: the new amendments were not made retroactive (so that the Shalit children and some others were registered as Jewish, in defiance of a Chief Rabbinate *Issur*), and the other objectionable provisions were accepted by them.

Agudath Israel has declared that, unless these provisions are deleted before the final vote, it will vote against the government proposals. *Mifdal* has been urged in a joint cable by Rabbi Moshe Feinstein and Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik

"to insist upon clear provision in law that only Gerim Al Pi Din be registered as Jews. . . . Registration of false Gerim would flagrantly violate basic Torah law of Geruth, and endanger Orthodox Judaism at large and constitute menace to Achduth Ha'umah."

A similar cable was sent from an emergency session of the *Agudath Harabonim*, and by a similar Rabbinic conference in Europe. The Israeli press reports that, behind the scene, the Israeli Chief Rabbinate is also trying to bring about a change in the government proposals.² However, it seems that the *Mifdal* will feel bound to support the entire "package deal" and thus make possible its passage.

There is a tragic irony in this situation, as some writers have been quick to point out. There is good reason to think that all but the most rabid "anti-clericalist" government leaders did not need to be bribed by concessions, or greatly pressured, into a traditionalist religious definition of Jewish nationhood—as we stressed before, they themselves saw the importance of this concept.³ Where a battle was called for was over the principle that such a definition had to follow the rules of *halochoh* in full—that *halochoh* is not negotiable. Precisely this point, however, the *Mifdal* negotiators sacrificed.

Could they have found understanding for it among the non-religious? Perhaps yes—as shown by the words of a writer in "*Lamerchav*" (Feb. 3) that were also echoed by others in the secular press:

"The orthodox have a definition of Jewishness, from which they cannot stir, even at the price of a split in the nation. Since they cannot compromise, the decision must be made by the secular camp: what is worth more to us—the unity of the people, and respect for the faith of the religious minority, or the satisfaction of being able to say that a registrar may not determine a man's identity for him?"

2. As this article goes to press, the Chief Rabbinate Council has issued a strong statement (March 6) that "the definition of a Jew as one born of a Jewish mother . . . is bound to be made ineffective by the lack of clarity about what is conversion. The refusal to state clearly that conversion must be according to *halochoh* we see as an invitation to all kinds of rebels against the law to create fictitious conversions, to whom the State of Israel gives legal sanction. . . . The Chief Rabbinate Council calls on everybody to whom the honor of Israel is precious, not to give his support to the acceptance of these [proposals] whose harm is greater than their benefit." Harsh words these, but apparently of no influence upon the *Mifdal* leadership.

3. This has been made particularly clear in connection with President Pompidou's famous remark during his recent visit to the United States that Israel must cease being a "racial and religious state." The president of the American Jewish Congress responded that Pompidou "has challenged the very basis of the Jewish state . . . a state in which . . . Jewish culture may at long last flower on Jewish soil, in a Jewish atmosphere. . . . If Israel is not to be a Jewish state, it has indeed relinquished the purpose of its existence." As the American Jewish Committee put it, "the great majority of Jews in Israel, irrespective of their personal religious convictions, regard Israel as a distinctly 'Jewish state' for both historical and ideological reasons. It is so regarded also by most Jews and non-Jews throughout the world."

“Even those who in the secular world, are called the ‘highest judges’ cannot by their decision make the slightest change in the nature and essence of our people — it will not come to pass!”

A searching article in *“Panim el Panim”* (Feb. 13) concludes:

“As long as others see the strength of the faith in our hearts, they understand and bow their head; but when we ourselves belittle those that determine the halochoh, and their decisions, and show thereby that we ourselves have moved away from the world of Torah, why should they not belittle the Rabbis . . . ?”

Here the writer touches, of course, on another tragic aspect of the situation: the loss of standing suffered by the Rabbinate as a result of the “package deal.” At no point in the proceedings did the religious negotiators call upon the Chief Rabbinate for its opinion on whether the concessions they were ready to make were at all *halachically* defensible. On the contrary: when the Chief Rabbinate Council (unanimously) dared to forbid the issuance of “false identification cards” to the Shalit children, the Interior Minister—and chief *Mifdal* negotiator—let loose with a much-publicized blast at “the Chief Rabbinate which does not understand that we do not live anymore in some small town in Europe. We have a state and we have problems. The Rabbis have to consult before they take such serious decisions. . . . For thousands of years we knew to make rules and find ways to permit things—but now, whoever wants to make things harder, does so. . . . If there will not be changes in the Rabbinate in various areas of weakness, it alone will suffer from it.”

Obviously, such words—and open criticism of the way conversions are handled—from this source provide all the needed ammunition for those in the secular camp who want changes in the field of religion. Coming on the footsteps of the criticism levelled by some Supreme Court justices at Rabbis for expressing their opinions on the Shalit case—and an official enquiry by government attorneys whether these Rabbis broke any laws thereby—the words of Mosheh Shapiro and the appointment of a ministerial commission concerning conversion procedures represent an incredible belittling and intimidation of the Rabbinic authorities, forced to defend themselves against all these attacks.⁴

4. A statement, signed by all the *dayanim* of the Rabbinic Courts in Israel, stressed that “conversion is not a mere ritual but carries with it the profound meaning of association with *Klal Yisroel* through the acceptance of the *Mitzvos*. . . . [We]

Would any cabinet minister have dared to lecture the Supreme Court in the way the Chief Rabbinate Council was lectured—by a religious leader? What kind of precedent is established when ministers are appointed to check into purely religious activities of the Rabbinate? Even if there were nothing in the “package deal” as such to give us fear, these developments alone have done immense harm.

* * *

HOW BAD ARE THE CONSEQUENCES of the compromise deal itself? Its main objective was to do away with the Supreme Court’s divorce of national and religious identity—yet in actual fact it perpetuated it. In accepting as *Jews by nationality* Reform converts and applicants without proof of Jewishness, whom the Rabbinate cannot accept as *Jews by religion*, the new law has put

“on the statute books two separate definitions of who is a Jew, one for the purpose of admission to the nation of Israel, and one for purposes of rabbinic ritual”

(Jerusalem Post, Feb. 9)

Needless to say, it must be our fervent prayer that our fears should prove unfounded; however, in the nature of things, these are some consequences we must anticipate:

reject most forcefully the accusations as if unwarranted difficulties are placed in the way of prospective converts. . . . Those that are rejected are not qualified to enter the community of Israel. Only through careful observance of the *halachic* directives can the spiritual level and unique character of the Jewish people be safeguarded.” Likewise, Chief Rabbi Unterman affirmed that no difficulties are put in the way of *gerim*, but that it does not make sense to accept converts unless they really want to become Jewish rather than acting out a fiction.

The realities of the situation are mirrored in an official report on 4010 requests for conversions submitted in 1948-63: 75% were submitted by partners in mixed marriages, 4% by applicants who wanted to marry Jewish partners, and only 21% because of religious convictions. Yet of the 2460 applicants that appeared for a second interview, only 172 were rejected, on religious grounds (112) or for security reasons (60). Rabbi Unterman stressed that, in future, too, conversion procedures will have to be made easy for partners of intermarriage, particularly in the case of immigrants from Russia, though he rejected the establishment of special rabbinic courts for conversion. The other side of the situation is highlighted by the recent application of a young Haifa woman to have her conversion annulled. If she stays Jewish, she stands to lose certain reparation payments due to her as a former German; in her application for annulment she argued that she had been converted as a minor, with her mother, and had never kept any *Mitzvos*.

- In the first place, we “will gain a more liberal rabbinatē,” in the words of the Jerusalem Post, for there will be enormous pressure on the Rabbis either to recognize these “national Jews” also as religiously Jewish, or else drastically to simplify the conversion procedures. Otherwise, the rabbinatē realizes, these people will not be able to enter any form of religious marriage, and the pressure for civil marriage (anyway favored by the government) will become irresistible.

- At the same time, chances are that there will be enough who will be as stubborn as the Shalits and resist conversion—forcing the issue of civil marriage to the fore anyway. Rabbi Yitzchok Meir Lewin, in his address to the Knesseth, pointed out that the first and most crucial point in the “religious status quo” agreement of 1948 was religious control of marriage—and he stressed that, while the new law would presently only lead to non-Jews being registered as *nationally Jewish*, it would in the end inevitably lead to their marrying into the Jewish community.

- The acceptance of Reform and Conservative conversions, even if only for purposes of registering people as *nationally Jews*, will of course give a vastly new status to these trends, both in this country and especially

in *Eretz Yisroel*. After all, even a Reform Rabbi in Haifa will be able to issue conversion certificates. There are many among the non-orthodox parties who would like to see the orthodox “monopoly” on Judaism broken. There can be no doubt that the new law is the first step in that direction. The American Jewish Committee in fact expressed the conviction that the current developments will lead to the “acceptance of a more pluralistic concept of Jewish life in Israel.”

- Likewise, the pressure to simplify conversion is sure to strengthen any existing inclinations for making *halochoh* in general more liberal. American “modern orthodoxy” talks a great deal about the need to regain the *halachic* flexibility that, it is claimed, once existed. Minister Mosheh Shapiro’s words show that such talk can find an echo in unexpected places and that adaptation and development of *halochoh* is sure to be a live issue.⁵

- Then, of course, there are the as yet quite unforeseeable consequences of the hospitality extended to the partners in mixed marriages. Can there be any doubt that such marriages will become vastly more acceptable, both in the diaspora and, in due course, in *Eretz Yisroel*? There will, of course, be the greatest efforts to

If Benny Shalit’s children are legally Jewish, Adolph Eichmann was judicially murdered . . . The issue in the Shalit case is not, as intimated in most discussions, “Who is a Jew?”, but is, as stated by the editorial writer of the London “Sunday Telegraph,” “What is Israel?” . . . Is it the state to which the children of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are returning or is it a twentieth century phenomenon—a new nationality?

Obviously there can be no “Return” for those who were never exiled and the Shalit children are not part of the stream that was exiled. The exiles that left these lands nineteen centuries ago took Torah with them as their portable homeland, as their assurance of return as their deed and writ of inheritance to these lands and as their family record, connecting them with their dispersed brethren—even to those of their brethren who were forgetful of its commandments. With extraordinary liberality, the House of Israel accepts as members those who enter through any one of two doors: blood relationship, if only through descent from a Jewish mother, or through moral commitment to its faith. By the decision of their father, the Shalit children refused to enter through either door. Yet

he demands their acceptance as Jews. Only by separating the People of the State of Israel from the House of Israel and by creating a new definition of “Jew” would this have been possible. There would be implied in such a new definition that Israel is a new state, not conceived in the womb of Jewish history, Jewish thought and Torah. . . .

The judgment upon Eichmann was accepted solely because the world recognizes Israel as the *goel hadam*, the redeemer of the blood of its six million slaughtered kin. But if Israel is truly a new nation, what connection does it have with the martyrs of the Holocaust? That the majority of its citizens are of the same religious persuasion? Is Italy or Spain then the avenger of every murdered Catholic, or England the font of justice for every wronged Protestant? Such would be an impossible situation. That his victims were of *Poom Yehudi* is the jurisdictional basis for the Eichmann judgment—a status that from 70 to 1970 had but one definition, the *halachic definition*. This definition excludes Benny Shalit’s children even as it excludes Righteous Gentile heroes and heroines of the Frightful Days.

Reuben Cross/Jerusalem Post/Feb. 9, 1970

convert as many as possible of the Gentile Partners, in the most painless and undemanding manner. There will be the pressure for civil marriages from this group of immigrants, too, for not all will want to convert. And there will be yet others who will bring with them and cultivate their Christian heritage (in 1950 a group of Yugoslav immigrants brought with them their non-Jewish wives who promptly demanded that a church be built for them in *Ein Karem*).

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THESE PROSPECTS ARE PROFOUNDLY unsettling—and it is particularly saddening that they flow from what is, after all, essentially a positive achievement: the recognition by government and Knesseth that Jewish nationhood must be based on religious foundations. To round off our understanding of this momentous crisis we must also realize that there were and are forces in Israel that violently dissent even from this basic principle. At the very time that the seasoned political personalities in the Knesseth expressed their support of the government proposals and their recognition of the role Jewish tradition has to play in a Jewish state, a tumultuous demonstration was going on outside the Knesseth building. Possibly as many as two thousand people, mostly young, came to protest what they considered capitulation to the clericals. Posters such as “We have two enemies—Egypt and religious coercion!” and offensive caricatures fairly describe the mood of the protestors. Yet it would be wrong to see in them just a bunch of wild eyed radicals.

In an interview in *Maariv*, the chairman of the Knesseth's Education Committee, himself a former high school teacher, tried to explain the violent opposition.

“In our classes in general history and citizenship we impress upon our pupils that progress means separation between state and religion; we prove to them that the enlightened, truly democratic countries are countries governed by the law—and the law is, of course, secular. . . . The result is an apparent contradiction to which the pupils point at once: on one hand, the attachment to a religious tradition that preserved us through the passing of the generations, and on the other hand, the idea of the State of Israel as a modern country of law, which stands under the sign of technological progress that, by and large, does not fit to the outdated religious concepts. . . . Thus emerge the question marks.”

The truth is that today's youth grew up in the spirit of Herzl's ideas, without even that instinctive bond to our heritage that many a *Bundist* in the Polish *shtetl* somehow developed. Many observers have commented

The identity card of Commander Shalit's daughter, after the Interior Ministry registered her as a "Jew" in accordance with the Supreme Court ruling.

upon the narrow parochialism of the *Sabra* who does not feel any inner relationship to the universal sweep of Jewish history and destiny. To him, indeed, the State of Israel is inhabited by a new nation—and herein lies the danger to the permanence of any solution adopted today. When Meir Yaari, the grand old man of "*Hashomer Hatzair*," tried to address the demonstrators outside the Knesseth, they shouted him down, "Yaari, retire!" What patience will they ever have to listen to others?

When the nature of Jewish nationhood will once again become an issue—as it undoubtedly must—and the younger generation will be called upon to respond, will the decisive vote be cast by such as those students and lecturers at Tel Aviv University who decided to burn their identity cards if the government proposals pass? Or by those—and there are many of them—who are moved by their own sense of spiritual need and the experience of Divine Providence to seek the way of Torah? This is a vital question—and, while we must ask ourselves what we can do to make sure of the right answer when the time comes, we may also find some comfort in the words of Rabbi Y. M. Lewin,

in reply to the Supreme Court judgment, when he declared:

"The Jewish people have already withstood many trials, and we are not afraid. . . . Even those who, in the secular world, are called the 'highest judges' cannot, by their decision, make the slightest change in the nature and essence of our people—it will not come to pass! The essence of our nation is only the Torah which will not change in any manner. On Torah alone depends our survival. . . ."

Postscript

On Tuesday, March 10, the Knesseth passed the government proposals by a large majority, with only Agudath Israel, Poalei Agudath Israel, the Israeli Communist Party, and "Haolam Hazeh," voting against the new law (the latter two parties because they considered it too much of a concession to religion!). The *Mifdal* joined the majority in voting for it.

On the same day, a few hours later, Mrs. Meir addressed the convention of the American Reform

Rabbinate in Jerusalem and appealed to the Reform Rabbis for patience over the status of Reform Judaism in Israel, stressing that "progress was being made in easing orthodox rigidity" and that "only a short time ago the passage of the new law, recognizing Reform conversions abroad, would have been considered impossible." (JTA Reports, 3/11/70)

Only one day later, Supreme Court Justice Berenson issued an order requiring the Interior Minister to show cause why an American woman converted to Judaism by a Reform Rabbi—in Israel—should not be registered as Jewish by nationality. The woman in question came to Israel as a tourist in 1964, married a Jew through a civil marriage arranged in Mexico, was converted to Judaism by a Reform Rabbi in Tel Aviv and also underwent a Reform marriage ceremony there.

The case was initiated some time ago—but now it has suddenly been put into a new perspective, through the passage of the new law. Thus it has taken less than 24 hours to drive home, to everybody concerned, the disastrous implications of the tragic "package deal."

RETURN TO ZION – 2300 YEARS AGO

On the first of Nissan, in the year 3411, Ezra the Scribe left Babylonia with a small army of followers to join the Jews who had returned earlier from the Babylonian exile and, a few months before, had dedicated the Second Temple. The Book of Ezra relates:

"It was after these events, during the rule of Artachshasta, the King of Persia, that Ezra . . . went up from Babylonia. He was a scribe, versed in the Torah of Mosheh, . . . and he came to Yerushalayim in the fifth month, in the seventh year of the king; for on the first day of the first month [Nissan] had begun the ascent from Babylonia. . . . Ezra set his heart to seek the Torah of G-d and to do it, and to teach in Israel law and statutes." (Chapter 7)

But he had hardly arrived when, as he reports, "there approached me the princes to tell me that the people of Israel, and the Priests and the Levites, had not separated themselves from the people of the lands, with their abominations, . . . for they had taken of their daughters, for themselves and their sons, and—of holy descent—had mingled with the people of the lands; and the hand of the princes and officials had been foremost in this betrayal.

"When I heard this thing, I rent my garment and coat, and tore from the hair of my head and beard, and sat desolate. There gathered to me all those that trembled before the words of the G-d of Israel, because of the betrayal by the exiles; and I sat desolate until the time of the evening sacrifice . . . [Then] I rose from

my fast, kneeled down and lifted up my hands to G-d, my G-d, and spoke:

"My G-d, I am ashamed to raise my face to You, my G-d, for our sins have grown over our heads. . . . For our sins we, our kings and our Priests, had been given into the hand of the kings of the nations, through the sword, enslavement, plundering, and shame, as of this day. And now, for a short while, there has been kindness from G-d, our G-d, to leave us over a remnant and to give us a hold in the place of His holiness . . . —and now, what shall we say, our G-d, after this, when we have forsaken Your commandments? . . . Shall we again break Your commandments and intermarry with these people with their abominations? Will You not be angry against us unto destruction, so there will be neither remnant nor escape?" (Chapter 9)

"And as Ezra prayed and confessed, casting himself down in tears before the House of G-d, there assembled around him a very large multitude of Israel, men, women and children; for the people broke into a great crying. And Schechanyah . . . said, We have betrayed our G-d and have taken alien women from the people of the land; but there is still hope for Israel over this. Let us now make a covenant with our G-d, to send away all the women and such as are born to them, by the advice of my master and of those who are trembling before the commandment of our G-d. Let it be done according to the Torah." (Chapter 10) □

Our Attitude Toward Public Opinion: *an eminent rosh yeshiva speaks*

It was in the last decade of the 19th century, during the outbreak of various "blood accusations" against the Jews, that a prominent Hebrew writer found some consolation in this distressing situation. The fact that such accusations could be launched showed to him that "a whole world may be wrong, and the Jew—right. A Jew and blood, could there be a stronger contradiction? And yet this contradiction enjoys the popularity of a general belief." Thus the blood accusation undermines the belief in public opinion, and it is in this fact, that that writer found a degree of consolation.

His remarks bear witness to the enormous pressure that public opinion, as found in the non-Jewish world,

This essay was written by the Gaon Rav Yitzchak Hutner שליט"א, Rosh Yeshiva of Kollel Gur Aryeh and Mesifra Rabbi Chaim Berlin; its point should be of the most direct concern to all our readers.

began to exert upon the Jewish mind in modern times. Is it not remarkable that a national tragedy, such as the blood libel represents, has to be used as a tool to free oneself from the enslaving oppression of public opinion? Indeed, the weight of the authority of public opinion of the outside world upon the modern Jewish mentality has been all too heavy.

Let us remember that this was not always that way in Israel.

* * *

The surname of our first father, Avrohom, was *Holvri*. In its simplest meaning, this name merely describes the geographic origin of our race, whose cradle was in *Ever Hanohor*. However, there is a deeper meaning to this name that eclipses its simple significance. According to a Midrashic saying the name *Holvri* does not have a mere geographic connotation but derives from the word *ever*, meaning "side," in general; and so the name of Avrohom *Holvri* expressed the idea that Avrohom was always on one side, for himself, while the rest of the world, was on the other side: Avrohom would take a position in life that would be the reverse of the entire world's position. This name *Holvri* retained this meaning for all the genera-

tions to come. In those generations, the name was gradually applied to a widening circle; from being the name of an individual it became, in succession, that of a family, a tribe, and an entire nation. At every stage however, the name *Ivri* denoted that its carrier did not fear to choose one side all alone, even if it was the opposite of the side taken by all the rest of mankind. Single-handedly did the first *Ivri* destroy the idols of Terach; single-handedly did his descendants stand up to the Roman emperors and refuse to pay divine honors to them. As we turn the pages of Jewish history, you find them full of events which underline the association between the *Ivri* and single-handedness. It does not take a very penetrating insight to realize that such an attitude on the part of the Jew involved necessarily a very special state of mind—a disregard, nay, disrespect for public opinion. Such an attitude was not directly cultivated in our educational program; it was rather a result of the strength of our convictions and feelings. A man's reverence for the accepted conventional ideas of his environment suffers a fatal blow after he has personally witnessed a fact which is absolutely denied and disregarded by those surrounding him. This was the case with Israel. The outside world denied and disregarded those very realities which the Jew himself had experienced; hence, the accepted conventions of this outside world enjoyed but little popularity with him.

* * *

I spoke so far of the attitude held by the Jewish people, as a whole, toward the opinions of the outside world. However, these observations also apply to the attitude of one part of the Jewish people towards another. I refer to the relationship of that part of our nation for whom the thunder of Sinai is still reverberating with all its original vigor, towards the rest of Jewry for whom this thunder is no longer audible. Those for whom the overwhelming experience of Mount Sinai has faded away in the long expanse of Galus darkness, are today the moulders of public opinion within the Jewish community. And it is therefore, inevitable that all those within our people whose daily life and innermost soul are shaped by the truths of Torah, have also developed what we can call dis-

regard for *Jewish* public opinion. Here, again, we have to remember that this has not been a deliberate, conscious and premeditated effort by the educators; it is rather, as in the case of the Jewish nation as a whole, discussed before, the natural outcome of a given situation. The main factor in this situation is the circumstance that that very reality which to the Torah-Jew is the backbone of Israel's existence is disregarded by those Jewish circles which play the biggest part in determining Jewish public opinion. This reality is, of course, the Sinai experience. The authority of a public opinion that disregards this experience is necessarily quite meaningless to the Torah-conscious Jew.

* * *

When we speak of the Torah-conscious Jew, we refer of course to that type of Torah-Jew who has had the happy opportunity to immerse himself in the ocean of Torah, and whose Torah-consciousness was created through a continuous process of absorbing Torah ideals and ideas from the original source. It is only of such a Jew that we can say with assurance that the proud independence of the *Ivri* still marks him, and that therefore the idols of public opinion have no meaning for him. But such Jews are rare, and it would be utopian to build our educational program upon the assumption that you will only have to deal with this ideal type. Needless to say, the goal of our educational scheme must always be the creation of the ideal total Torah personality; but we must also keep in mind that we have to deal with large numbers of Jewish youth, boys and girls, who may lack the opportunity of coming into the closest contact with Torah itself but feel themselves drawn toward its teaching and are ready to submit to its ordinances. In dealing with them, on the lower levels of our educational structure, we must face this question:

Is it not the demand of the hour to develop within our educational system an approach which will cast the proper light upon the ways and methods of our modern public opinion industry? Is it not an urgent task to illuminate the ways in which public opinion is created, in order to eliminate the danger of an unthinking yielding to public opinion?

* * *

In answer, I would like to formulate three propositions based upon what has been said:

1. An independent, suspicious and negative attitude toward the authority of public opinion follows normally

from the development of a healthy Torah-consciousness in our days of spiritual chaos and confusion.

2. The only way to develop a healthy Torah-consciousness is through a continuous process of intimate contact with the original Torah sources.

3. Where this normal process does not take place, we must take recourse to special efforts to create the necessary immunity to the pressure of public opinion.

This point may be illustrated by the common experience that, in the case of a healthy organism, no special efforts have to be made to stimulate its normal functioning; but in case of ill health, we must come to nature's aid with artificial means. This can readily be applied to our educational program.

On the higher levels of our educational program we can reasonably expect that a healthy state of Torah-consciousness and Torah-understanding will be developed among our youth, and we can rely on this to produce its normal and expected result—protection against the mass hypnosis of public opinion and the public opinion media. However, on the lower levels of our educational system, we would be negligent if we were to rely on the automatic development of this attitude. Here it is our duty directly and purposefully to cultivate the right state of mind, a non-susceptibility to the pressure of public opinion. On one hand, the concept of the *Ivri*, as we saw it in the life of Avrohom, should be applied to the present and the future as well as the past, reinforced by the idea of the historic uniqueness of Israel. On the other hand, it should be made clear that there is nothing spontaneous, nothing natural and self-understood in public opinion, as we find it today.

Modern public opinion is in large measure deliberately manufactured; like every other industry, it has its product designers, its engineers, its manufacturing plants, and its production is planned in accordance with the needs of the market and the predilections of the manufacturer. We may therefore speak of public opinion as we speak of other products of our society—at best as a reflection of the transitory spirit of an age, but never as the expression and revelation of objective ideological or ethical values. Among the manufacturers of public opinion the press is of course one of the biggest. Insofar as it represents the higher interests of the community, it may be compared with the pulpit orator or the schoolmaster. Insofar as it exists to advertise particular objectives, it is but like the town crier or the public announcer, informing the public through its countless voices where a watch chain has been lost or where the best tobacco is to be procured. These two

functions are mated in our press; the product is public opinion.

A proper understanding of public opinion and the public opinion media must be part of our educational

program, for it will serve to help undermine the tyranny of public opinion. The more independent we are in the face of its pressure, the closer we come to the true ideal of the *Ivri*. □

The VANISHING Yeshiva Teacher

The Yeshiva Movement In Danger

It may not be pleasant—but the time has come for us to face certain facts that can no longer be overlooked:

- According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, a family of four in the New York City area needs \$11,236 a year to maintain a “moderate” standard of living; \$6,771 a year is required for *subsistence*.
- Salaries paid to Hebrew teachers in New York City Yeshivos range from \$3,000 to \$6,000 per year; if they are employed till 3:00 or 4:00 in the afternoon, they *may* receive as much as \$8,000—but, on the other hand, in some schools beginning women teachers are paid as little as \$1,800 a year for a morning’s work.
- For the last couple of years, the annual increments normally received by Hebrew teachers have been significantly less than the yearly increase in the cost of living; salaries, in other words, have been shrinking, as far as purchasing power is concerned.

What do these facts mean? In the first place, they throw a frightening light upon the poverty which we impose upon the teachers of our children. Secondly, they explain why it becomes increasingly difficult to secure competent teachers for our schools. Lastly, they thus make clear the fact that the Yeshivah movement faces the gravest danger since its inception.

How Bad is the Situation?

Actually, the figures quoted do not tell the whole story. The Bureau of Labor Statistics figures were compiled in December, before the recent fare hike; they apply to families with two children; they do not make allowance for the much higher cost of *kosher* food,

for Yeshivah tuition for children, and for a great many other expenses that fall specifically upon the Orthodox Jew. It is obvious, therefore, that present Yeshivah salary levels force a teacher to exist well below the subsistence level.

Of course, it will be said, they only work half a day; let them take another job in the afternoon. Except for women who are not the main breadwinners in the family, all teachers are forced to do so. But the work available, by and large, is uncertain and pays poorly, such as selling insurance, say, or real estate. Even teaching in the general studies departments of most Yeshivos adds only another \$2,000 to \$4,000 to a teacher’s salary, while burdening him with a teaching schedule extending from early in the morning till late in the afternoon (in comparison, a beginning public school teacher starts with \$7,950 for 6 hours and 20 minutes, which include lunch and free periods, and can reach a top salary of \$12,000). Almost the only type of work providing sufficient additional income is one that is surely unacceptable to us: teaching in non-Orthodox Talmud Torahs.

As a result, the rank and file teacher all too often has to take on two or three jobs that inevitably sap his energy and enthusiasm for his work; frequently feels he has to accept jobs that undermine his self-esteem or place him in schools that he knows he should not help prosper; and, after all that, is still left with an inadequate income. So he tries to earn a few dollars by teaching a *shiur* in a nearby synagogue, has his wife make a little money through some projects that can be done at home, cuts expenses right to the bone, and finally, precariously balances his budget.

The situation is, of course, somewhat different outside the major metropolitan areas. There the cost of living is frequently lower and—demand for Hebrew teachers being more intense—salaries are much more

satisfactory; amounts of \$10,000-12,000 for teaching two classes, till 4 p.m., are not uncommon. Positions are always readily available. But the decision to go out of town is a very difficult one. It means not only moving away from one's circle of family and friends, but from the intense Torah milieu to which he is accustomed—closeness to his *Rosh Yeshiva*, *Chaverim* to study and daven with, the ready availability of top-notch Yeshivos for his children, of reliable *Mikvahs* and *Kashruth*, and (perhaps above all else) a degree of isolation from the most pervasive and offensive aspects of contemporary civilization. Actually the New York bred *Ben Torah* has usually a far too negative picture of Torah life in the larger provincial communities; and he rarely realizes the satisfactions, and also opportunities for spiritual growth, that are inherent in working for Yiddishkeit outside the established Torah centers. The spiritual welfare of American Jewry urgently demands that there should be a better understanding of our responsibility and opportunities on the wider American scene. But meanwhile we have to face the situation as it is: *Bnai Torah* are extremely hesitant to leave, say New York—and there, as we said, the *Chinuch* scene starkly discourages them.

“I am bitter about the fact that the teachers in our Hebrew schools, day schools, and religious schools continue to receive salaries scarcely above the poverty level. . . . It might just be a healthy project for some of the members of the boards of the Jewish Welfare Fund, the Associated Talmud Torahs, and the Board of Jewish Education to experiment for a month or two with feeding, clothing, housing and educating their own families on the salaries which they pay the teachers in the Jewish educational systems.

“If some of the illustrious accountants who serve on these boards could scrutinize the family budgets of these committed teachers with the same professional acuteness they lavish on those of million-dollar agencies, they would really gain an understanding of what “tight budgeting” and deficit financing mean. Often, it is only by holding two or even three jobs that a barely adequate income is achieved. The wonder is not that we do not attract new people to the profession, but that so many able and competent people stay in it. The truth is that unless something is done, many of them will be forced to leave it.”

Chicago Jewish Sentinel, February 19, 1970

The Flight From Teaching

Small wonder, then, that many men—and women—capable of earning a living outside the field of *Chinuch*, will gravitate into other occupations, such as public school teaching or business (a paradoxical result of this flight from teaching is that there is a serious shortage of qualified and experienced educators to fill responsible administrative positions where salaries are, by and large, more adequate). Many other promising *Bnai Yeshivah* will never enter the Yeshivah teaching field in the first place.

It is, of course, true that other factors play a role in this decision, too. The young man who has spent years of devoted study in a *Yeshivah Gedolah*, does not really feel equipped to teach anything other than *Gemoroh*, nor does he want to: by teaching in a *Mesifita* or *Beth Hamidrash* he can find a degree of satisfaction as well as possibilities for his own continued scholarly growth which teaching elementary grades does not offer to him. For the same reasons—and more—he bypasses those openings in the educational field, say, in girls high schools, where there are fewer qualified applicants and salaries therefore tend to be somewhat better. Instead, if he does not find a way to make a living teaching a *Gemoroh* class, he opts for a career in, say, programming, where he can come home before evening and, free of professional and financial worries, concentrate on his own continued Torah study. Those young men in the Yeshivos, on the other hand, who are not so singlemindedly committed to the pursuit of Torah, have their sights set upon college; they see their future in the professions that seem to them to promise a life of *Shmirath Hamitsvos* combining useful and intellectually challenging activity with economic security and social status. Teaching is not likely to attract them.

But why do we not at least hold those men in *Chinuch* who have responded to the repeated calls of the *Roshey Yeshivoh* to go out into the wider field of Torah education, and who may have prepared themselves through, say, attending one of the training courses operated by Torah Umesorah? They start with great enthusiasm; but all too often they give up the financial struggle and leave the field when their families' needs become too pressing. Two case histories may suffice. A graduate of a Beth Jacob Seminary, after taking a two-year course, could have had a teaching position at about \$2,300 a year; instead, she took a three-months' course in computer programming and immediately secured a position paying \$7,300 as a starting salary. A young man stayed in a *Kollel* as long as he could hold out financially; then he, too, took

up programming and now, after three years, earns, \$12,000 a year. Admittedly, both these people are bright and very capable—but is it not this kind that we need and want most in *Chinuch*?

The problem, moreover, is not only one for the Hebrew departments of the *Yeshivos* but also for the general studies departments. For years, Yeshivah educators dreamed of the day when general studies, too, would be taught by teachers who shared the Torah outlook of the Yeshivah. Today, such teachers are quite common—but, more often than not, they can be found in the public school system of New York City (or the suburbs where salaries are even higher). In fact, it has lately become almost impossible for inner city Yeshivos to secure qualified general studies teachers, particularly for the high schools. (It is worthwhile noting that a woman teacher, by merely substituting twice a week in the public schools, can earn at least as much as by teaching daily in a Yeshivah.)

The Need For Action

If it is true—and who can deny it?—that the quality of an educational system depends in the first place upon its teachers, it becomes clear that the Yeshivah movement is indeed in danger. What solutions have been offered in this time of crisis? Obviously, the funds presently available to Yeshivos cannot, by themselves, make possible the necessary revolution in teachers' salaries. How can they be drastically increased?

Of the two present main sources of Yeshivah financing it is clear that not much more can be raised from *tuition*; we have already reached the point where significant numbers of Jewish children do not go to Yeshivos simply because their parents do not feel that they can meet the tuition bills. As for the other source of Yeshivah funds, outright solicitations of *contributions*, undoubtedly the amounts raised will continue to grow, as they should. Contributors, large and small, must be made aware of the desperate teachers crisis. They must understand that, if we want to have teachers, we must pay them adequately and in a dignified manner (there can still be found Yeshivah board members who are extremely insensitive to this point). If these efforts are sufficiently pushed, additional funds for higher teacher salaries will surely become available.

Government Aid?

Yet it is very doubtful whether the generosity of Yeshivah supporters can alone solve the present crisis.

In the circumstances, eyes are turning to the government. Without any formal constitutional action, private religious schools have increasingly come to share in the bounty of government money. Lunch and transportation programs were the beginning; the National Defense Education Act and later laws added a number of other auxiliary services. As the government becomes increasingly active in ameliorating the social evils and meeting the social needs of the country, it also becomes ever more obvious that it would be utterly wrong to exclude children attending private religious schools from the benefits of government action. Hence the theory of aid to the child, rather than the school, which side-steps the entire question of separation of church and state.

In addition to federal help, there has been a good deal of progress on the state level. Despite the particularly stringent constitutional restrictions in New York State (the Blaine Amendment), the textbook bill provided some relief and raised hopes for further assistance. At the moment that these lines are written, the New York State Legislature has before it the Parent-Aid Bill which provides for annual tuition grants to elementary students of up to \$150, and to high school students of up to \$250 (the amount depending on the net taxable income of the parents). The bill was carefully designed to evade constitutional problems; it is—of course—opposed by the usual coterie of Jewish organizations, but the real obstacle to its passage is the burden that it will put on the state budget—four million dollars a year for Yeshivah children alone, and a lot more for Catholic parochial schools.

Chances look better for the repeal of the Blaine Amendment, which has been approved by the Legislature; but it has to be passed once more by the Legislature next year, and then requires approval through a state-wide referendum, so that it cannot become effective before November 1971. Even then, it will merely make the passage of aid legislation easier, rather than bringing any immediate financial relief. It is this very fact, however, which makes the repeal proposal more acceptable to the political powers in the state. At the same time, its opponents point out that the next step after repeal would be the demand for "parity"—the same expenditure by the state per pupil in parochial schools as is spent per pupil in public schools. According to PEARL (Committee for Public Education and Religious Liberty, composed of 25 organizations, 10 of them Jewish, opposed to Blaine repeal), the cost to the state for parity would be \$1,218 per pupil; according to the more realistic

estimate of Citizens for Educational Freedom it would be \$650 per pupil.

The attainment of such support by the Yeshivos is a long way off, at best, even though Pennsylvania, Connecticut, Ohio and Rhode Island have already adopted legislation to reimburse parochial schools for at least part of the salaries of lay teachers. The efforts to obtain government help must undoubtedly be pushed in every way; the dangers seen by some in possible state interference in our schools can fairly be discounted, even if aid were to be given to the school instead of to the child. But can we hold out till such help reaches us in adequate amounts?

Help From Federation?

Faced with the present crisis, those responsible for Yeshiva financing have come to turn their attention to the agency that proudly considers itself *the* central organization in the Jewish community—Federation. Over the last two decades, day schools have sought financial aid from local Welfare Federations all over the country; yet of all the big cities, only Cleveland saw these efforts crowned with significant success. In New York City, where the Federation of Jewish Philanthropies raised twenty-four million dollars in 1968, and where almost 50,000 pupils attend Yeshivos, less than one dollar per pupil is disbursed by Federation, through its Jewish Education Committee. The time has come, it is felt, where this situation can and must be changed.

Historically, Federations have been hostile to the very idea of “parochial schools,” which they labelled un-American and unacceptable to the wider Jewish community. However, conditions have changed somewhat: one by one, the main outlets of Federation charity—hospitals and social service agencies—have become non-sectarian recipients of government financing; the afternoon Hebrew schools have glaringly and woefully failed to meet the community’s educational needs; and even Conservatives (and lately some Reformers) have accepted the crucial role of Day Schools on the American Jewish scene. It is against this background that, last summer, the New York Association of Yeshivah Principals (a local affiliate of Torah Umesorah) launched a determined campaign to obtain meaningful support from Federation.

Such a campaign was projected two years ago in an article by Judah Dick (*The Tuition Squeeze on Yeshiva Parents*, Jewish Observer, March 1968), which proposed a *Yeshiva-Aid* program: parents unable to pay the roughly \$650 per child which represent the actual cost of the Yeshiva, would apply to Federa-

tion for a grant based on their financial status, to be paid directly to the Yeshiva involved. Such a program obviously would involve very many profound difficulties in execution, even if Federation were in principle ready to help. The leaders of the present campaign are pressing, instead, for a straight Federation subsidy to Yeshivos based on a per capita figure of not less than \$100.

Will Federation respond to this demand? Undoubtedly more Federation leaders have some understanding for Yeshivos today than in former years; and, in any case, all of them realize that to rebuff the Yeshivos means to give that much more impetus to Yeshivah demands for government aid—something which is totally unacceptable to the Federation establishment. Moreover, the dramatic confrontation sought by the Yeshivah leaders would very likely lead to a public outcry in favor of the persuasive Yeshivah demand, and against Federation “discrimination” and must be a source of concern to Federation leadership. It is thus not unreasonable to hope for some success in this campaign.

The real problem, which must be faced squarely, is the danger to the independence of the Yeshivah movement if Federation does provide financial support. For many years, all education outlays have been channelled by Federation through the Jewish Education Committee which is a supervisory and licensing agency. The J.E.C. seeks to serve “all trends in Jewish education”; it does not oppose orthodox education in the abstract, but its basic philosophy and value judgments are such that J.E.C. control must necessarily negate the effectiveness of Yeshivah education. And, in any case, can we, directly or indirectly, put our Yeshivos into the power of *any* agency not controlled by Torah Jewry, and not committed to Torah but to “all trends in Jewish education?”

It is in order to forestall J.E.C. control that the Yeshivah-Aid program was devised and that the present campaign asks for outright per-pupil grants to the Yeshivos. Yet Federation is firmly committed to J.E.C. as its educational agency. What will happen if Federation—as a result of successful public pressure—should capitulate and offer generous financial help . . . *through J.E.C. channels?* Will there not be immense pressure on many Yeshivos to accept such a compromise? Boards of directors will not readily see the dangers involved; the burden of unpaid debts and salary arrears will help “persuade” Yeshivah administrators; and there will always be the ready argument that “we won’t let them tell us what to do”—an argument possibly valid in a few big institutions but mere

“Lack of funds has nothing to do with the lack of appreciation, occasional sniping from the sidelines, and even indignities to which a teacher may find himself exposed. The Torah demands a basic respect for him and his work.”

self-deception for all the small ones that would follow in their footsteps.

The leaders of the Yeshivos' campaign stress therefore that “we *must* maintain unity in our ranks. . . . As a united group which elects and chooses its own leadership, we can maintain the ideological integrity which is so crucial to our philosophy as Torah Jews. . . . The negotiations between Federation and the Yeshivah community should be with leadership which was chosen by the Yeshivah community itself. We cannot agree to negotiations between Federation leadership and those who are not duly authorized to speak in our cause.” Will this position be adopted by *all* Yeshivos?

Some years ago, New York Yeshivos had to decide whether they wanted to be represented in certain government programs by the J.E.C. or Torah Umesorah. Even though J.E.C. subsidies to a number of Yeshivos (then as now) were very small, ranging from one hundred to one thousand dollars at the very most, it took a major effort to get *all* Yeshivos to sign up with Torah Umesorah. How successful will such an effort be if large sums of money are at stake? It would seem obvious that as a *prior* condition of a continued unified campaign for Federation aid,

the leading Roshey Yeshivah and Rabbinic authorities should be asked to issue a forthright declaration against accepting Federation support through J.E.C.; and all Yeshivos should be asked to sign.

If this cannot be achieved, then the handwriting is clearly on the wall: to campaign for Federation support means to open the door for a “sell-out” of Yeshivah education.

In Conclusion

No immediate *major* infusions of government funds can be expected by the Day Schools. Federation sup-

port, if it can be obtained, may be unacceptable because it may endanger our educational independence. Yet the funds raised by the Yeshivos themselves are clearly insufficient to provide adequately—potential pupils are lost because too much tuition must be demanded and, above all, teachers are driven away by inadequate salaries. A grim picture indeed!

Yet, naturally, we cannot fold our hands in resignation. Efforts for government aid and—with proper safeguards—Federation funds must continue. Above all, Yeshiva fund-raising itself must be intensified; the inflation rampant today in all economic areas should also be reflected in the amounts contributed to Yeshivos.

Meanwhile, in all fairness, we can take pride—and also hope—when we see our *Chinuch* carried forward, even under the present difficulties, by men and women who are idealistic enough to dedicate themselves to this task; who could not see themselves in any other field of endeavor, however lucrative; who sense the deep satisfaction that can only be experienced by one who implants Torah in our children and thus moulds the future of our people; and who are willing to bring the material sacrifices required, at least until, with experience and time, they can advance to positions of leadership that provide more adequate remuneration.

While we must endeavor to find some solutions to the financial problems of our teachers, we must also be aware that actually no amount of money can be considered sufficient recompense for the dedicated and indispensable work that they do for *Klal Yisroel*. This is often acknowledged—but all too frequently merely as a form of lip service. Otherwise parents, directors and administrators of Yeshivos, and the community as a whole, could make the teacher's position vastly more satisfactory—and effective—than it is at present. A great deal can be done that would not cost a penny! Lack of funds has nothing to do with the lack of appreciation, occasional sniping from the

sidelines, and even indignities to which a teacher may find himself exposed. The Torah demands a basic respect for him and his work which, regrettably, is missing too often.

It is absolutely essential for us truly to give the

recognition to our teachers that they are so fully entitled to. Then we will find the way to solving their practical problems—and, at the same time, give them the support and encouragement they need to persevere in the sacred work they do for us. □

Why Government Aid For Non-Public Schools

“The Orthodox Jewish community in the United States today strongly and unequivocally favors public financial assistance to non-public schools, including religious schools of all denominations.

* * *

Our constitutional position . . . is, simply, that the United States Constitution permits—and may, in fact, require—a program of public support for primary and secondary schools whereby the secular (or non-religious) education of *all* children, no matter where enrolled, is funded on an equal basis. . . . If the matter is closely analyzed, we think it plain that [here] the staunch defense of the wall between church and state is nothing more than a surreptitious breach; it is plain and simple discrimination against those who, like Orthodox Jews and devout Catholics, believe that their religion requires religious training of their children in a religious school. If my neighbor's child is entitled to use, at public expense and in a public school, a student's edition of Dicken's *David Copperfield* or a bunsen burner for his chemistry course, why should not my child, attending, to be sure, a school where half the day is devoted to religious training, be entitled to use, also at public expense, the very same book and the very same model burner? Or, indeed, why may both children not be taught by the same publicly paid English or Chemistry teacher—my neighbor's in the morning at the public school and my child's in the late afternoon, in the building occupied by his religious school? Or by different teachers similarly qualified, both funded out of the public treasury? Limiting the book or the laboratory equipment or the teacher's services to the public school is about as even-handed as the majestic equality of the law derided by Anatole France because it equally forbids rich and poor to sleep under bridges.

* * *

“No one today can seriously believe that the mere fact that an expense is incurred by the public treasury for some purpose associated with a religious organization is a violation of the First Amendment. . . . It was designed to prevent the ‘power and prestige’ of government from standing behind any or all religions. It was surely not designed to prevent government from affording to those who are sincerely and devoutly religious the very same benefits it accords to those who are not religious. Indeed, the Constitutional mandate that Congress is to make no law ‘prohibiting the free exercise’ of religion forbids such distinctions.

* * *

“What has also been overlooked is the greatly expanded role of government and the public treasury in matters which in 1789, as well as a century-and-a-half later, were exclusively within what has come to be known as the “private sector.” For that reason alone, the oftheard reliance on tradition and history—i.e., the claim that there is no historical precedent for public financing of private education—is unsound. There is, similarly, no historical precedent for Medicare or poverty programs, and there was none forty years ago for Social Security. Public welfare legislation has resulted in far greater dependency on the public treasury on the part of many institutions in our society which once relied exclusively on private support. Education is foremost among these; and to single out educational institutions which teach religion along with a standard secular curriculum, and require them to stand or fall on private support when all others are able to rely, to some degree, on the public treasury is to sign their death warrant.”

From a brief submitted by attorney Nathan Lewin of Washington, D.C., Vice-President of the National Jewish Commission on Law and Public Affairs, to the Maryland Commission to Study State Aid to Non-Public Education (January 12, 1970).

Who Should Guide Us?

A lesson from our past: a letter to a questioner

Your words indicate that you think that all the great men of Israel, outstanding in their wisdom as well as their saintliness, whose statements and decisions without any doubt reflect G-d's being with them, committed a major error, G-d forbid—the Chofetz Chaim, Reb Chaim Ozer, Reb Chaim Brisker, Reb Boruch Ber, and even those who preceded them, such as the saintly Reb Yisroel Salanter, and his followers, may their memory be for a blessing. Such words should not be heard, let alone said; I will only reply to you because I understand that you heard these ideas from others who are called *Bnei Torah* but rebel against their teachers and desecrate the name of G-d.

Let me say, first of all, that I had the privilege to know some of these great men in person and to see them at public assemblies. Let me tell you that, even with our limited understanding, we perceived how penetrating their wisdom was—and, also, how profound their sense of responsibility, when they sat in counsel to consider the problems of *Klal Yisroel*. Whoever saw them on such occasions, knew clearly that the *Shechinah* rested on the work of their hands.

Chazal tell us that we have to listen to the words of our sages even if they say of what is left that it is right. We should not say that they surely erred because our senses show us their mistake, but that what our senses show us means nothing in comparison to the clarity of their insight . . . what appears to be the evidence of the senses is only a creature of our imagina-

tion, of our wishful thinking. This is the Torah's view concerning faith in the sages, and I will bring a proof to my words which I have heard in the name of the *Gaon* Reb Simcha Sissel Ziv ("*der Alter fun Kelm*"), may the memory of the *Tzaddik* be a blessing.

The *Megillath Esther* spans events extending over nine years, from the third year of Achashverosh's rule to the twelfth. We—and greater ones than we—would never have understood that they all belong together; only Mordechai knew, with his measure of divine inspiration (for divine inspiration, *Ruach Hakodesh*, is not alike in all cases). He forbade the Jews to go to Achashverosh's banquet, "so that the *Soton* should not be able to accuse you"; but they did not listen to him—many argued that here was a case of life danger, for Achashverosh might kill the Jews if they, alone of all his people, stayed away from his celebration. Nothing happened to them, even though they went.

Nine years later, Homon rose to power and ordered that all should bow down to him—but Mordechai would not do so, even though our sages point out that this was not a matter of idolatry but merely might have possibly appeared as such. Many Jews protested that he was putting the Jewish people in mortal danger through his excessive personal piety. He did not listen to them, and their predictions came true: Homon issued his murderous edict. What would we have said? To what would we have ascribed this edict? To Mordechai's jeopardizing of his people's security, or to the Jews' transgression of nine years before, when they participated in Achashverosh's banquet? Surely, we would have said that it was obvious beyond contradiction that Mordechai had caused Homon's anger and the edict of destruction. But this would not have been true, but a mere delusion, the *Soton's* doing. The sin of nine years earlier was the cause of the Jews' danger, not Mordechai's actions.

(It may be that Mordechai was so particular about anything that even distantly appeared like idolatry, because there was such an urgent need to impress this lesson upon the Jews who, at the banquet, had taken

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liberties in this very respect, and who had bowed down—albeit only for appearance's sake—to an idol in the days of Nevuchadnezar; it was just by driving home this lesson, that Mordechai came to save his people.)

As long as the Jews of Mordechai's time clung to the delusion that their troubles were due to him—believing as they did in the “evidence” before them—they were actually heading for disaster. However, when Homon's edict was issued, they came to recognize the truth; instead of holding on to their wrong ideas, and revenging themselves on Mordechai, they all responded to his call for repentance. Even when Esther, whom they knew to be Mordechai's relative, seemed to side with Homon, twice calling him to a banquet at that time of crisis for Israel, they did not listen to the blandishments of the *Yetzer Horah* not to follow Mordechai anymore; instead, they joined with Mordechai in fasting and penitence for their sin in obeying the dictates of what seemed to be common sense—and then the miracle happened, then they were saved.

Here we can learn what it is that brings disasters: the “errors” of the great men of the generation—or the fact that people let themselves be misled by the *Soton's* temptation, according to what he seems to show them with their senses, to interfere with their faith in the sages? . . . A lack of understanding for the need to subordinate ourselves to our teachers, is the root of all sin and the beginning of all destruction, G-d forbid; and all merits cannot equal that which is the root of all: faith in the sages.

We must understand that our reasoning does not give us reliable guidance in matters of conduct except to the degree to which we have cleansed ourselves of our bias and preconceived wishes. Where, then, does a blind man find directions on how to proceed? He must find a guide who sees well—in our case, the Torah sages to whom the immersion in Torah has given clarity of perception. We must learn to use them as our eyes—and then even our own insight will become sharpened and truthful.

Adapted from *Michtav M'Ellyohu*, Vol. 1 p. 75 ff. (the last paragraph is based upon p. 59).

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BOOKS

Reviewed by Yaakov Jacobs

From Assimilation to Group Survival, A Political and Sociological Study of an Australian Jewish Community by P. Y. Medding (Hart Publishing Company, New York: 1969).

This work demonstrates that scholarly efforts to understand Jewish life can be literate and objective without distorting Orthodox beliefs and values—a rare combination. Of special interest is the introduction to this work by the American sociologist Marshall Sklare. Sklare's claim to fame—in our opinion—is his monumental work, *Conservative Judaism*. The book has the earmark of a classic: it gets to the heart of what ails American Jewry, and it is practically ignored by most “experts” on American Jewish life.

Sklare reacts to the paradox that sociology is almost preponderantly a Jewish field, while there is so little work available on the sociology of the Jew. There have, of course, been numerous studies of anti-Semitism, but few on what Sklare describes as “the essential problem which modern society creates for the Jew . . . the retention of his Jewish identity.” Jewish sociologists shy away from examining Jewish problems, and even when they do they assume a stance of “alienation” beyond the objectivity expected of a social scientist. Sklare interestingly attributes this to, “the need to . . . emphasize that interest in a Jewish topic does not mean disloyalty to academic commitments, particularly to the conception of *academia* as a community.” Sklare sees in Mr. Medding's work a new trend wherein the Jewish social scientist will “not feel a need to show obeisance to *academia* by demonstrating alienation from the Jewish community.”

What significance does a study of the Jews of Melbourne have for understanding American Jewish life?—“. . . in the United States,” Sklare notes, “what is regarded as a Jewish style of life resembles the style of life followed by the upper-middle-class in certain sections of the country. The small size of Australian Jewry means that it is in no position to impose or to significantly influence cultural styles—a process which does occur in the United States.” In this study, Medding is concerned with Jewish survival as a social scientist

and as a Jew: he wants to understand the dynamics of assimilation so that Jews everywhere can more effectively resist its corrosive effects.

Forty years ago it was believed that the Jewish community of Melbourne was headed for extinction, and Orthodoxy was at a low ebb. Today, while intermarriage and assimilation are still very much evident, the Jewish community looks a good deal healthier, and Orthodoxy is very much alive. In April 1924 the *Jewish Herald* reported the opinion of a prominent Orthodox rabbi that it was impossible “to raise in this country a Jewish community which is strictly Orthodox,” and he therefore placed his hope for the survival of Orthodoxy in . . . compromise. So successful was this plea for compromise that in 1930 it became institutionalized by the formation in Melbourne of the first Liberal (Reform) Temple in Australia. All things being equal, a community composed of Orthodox, who saw compromise as their only hope, and Reform which saw compromise as its essence, should have by now disappeared. Yet today, as a result of the arrival of observant immigrants from Eastern and Central Europe, Orthodoxy is the dominant religious influence in Australian Jewry's communal life. More so: Liberal Judaism is fighting a rear-guard action for recognition, and against their “pariah-status” in the Jewish community. Medding states the Orthodox position in terms one is unaccustomed to in most sociological studies.

“Orthodox rabbis in Melbourne believe that Liberal Judaism represents a danger to the Jewish people, both religiously and ethnically. The abrogation by Liberal Judaism of traditional observances and the fact that these are sanctioned by a religious institution promoting Judaism, are seen as a potential threat to Orthodoxy by attracting Jews to a less demanding form of Judaism. Furthermore, Orthodoxy is opposed, in particular, to the Liberal marriage and divorce laws which have lifted the ban on certain marriages prohibited by Jewish law and do not insist on a rabbinic divorce [*get*] in addition to a civil divorce.”

Yet in spite of this opposition, Medding notes, “there was in the 1930's and 1940's a degree of co-operation between the Orthodox and Liberal rabbis on non-religious issues.” And he continues: “Since the late 1940's, however, . . . Orthodox rabbis have begun to take a hard line even in matters of communal interest outside religious doctrine; they have, for some years now, generally refused to share public platforms with their counterparts. To do so might be taken as acceptance on their part of Liberal Judaism as a recognized trend within Judaism, an impression they strongly wish

to avoid. They even go so far as to maintain that "sharing a platform does violence to their conscientious convictions. The Liberals, on the other hand, have retaliated with pleas for unity, charging the Orthodox with being divisive, and claiming that they [the Liberals] are subjected to bigotry, prejudice, discrimination, even religious "Apartheid."

In 1959, Melbourne's Temple Beth Israel withdrew from the Jewish Board of Deputies, a lay representative body, charging discrimination against them by the Orthodox. They demanded "full recognition as a religious denomination within the larger framework of Jewish religious belief," and insisted that the Board desist from references to the "Liberal trend . . . Suggesting a minor or insignificant role. . ." Medding sees these demands "not as a conflict to gain basic democratic rights which are denied, but as a struggle for power, a political battle by Liberal Judaism to elevate its communal status." The author describes the struggle between Orthodoxy and Reform engendered when the Attorney General of Australia drew up a Marriage Bill and asked the Jewish community to state its preference as to who should be authorized to perform Jewish marriages. The Liberals insisted on their right to perform marriages and pressed for recognition as a separate denomination, contrary to their normal demand that they be recognized as a legitimate expression of the Jewish faith.

From Assimilation to Group Survival is by no means an Orthodox tract, yet it is most refreshing that Mr. Medding, while being the objective social scientist, can speak of Orthodoxy without the sneer bordering on ridicule which characterizes most such writing on Judaism. He brings the same objectivity and fresh approach to his study of other aspects of the communal life of the Australian Jew. Mr. Medding is now writing a study of the Mapai party, after a fifteen-month first hand investigation. We are looking forward to reading it. This kind of sociological study can lead to better understanding of Jewish life, as well as, hopefully, better understanding between Jews.

The Autobiography of Nahum Goldmann (Holt, Rinehart and Winston, New York, 1969)

This autobiography tells the life story of the president of the World Jewish Congress and the former president of the World Zionist Organization. For most of his lifetime Goldmann has been a professional Jewish leader, and he remains a powerful force in Jewish life.

Goldmann writes of his early childhood. Of his maternal grandfather, dayyan of Vilna, he recalls that it was his custom on the days when "many poor people . . . were relegated to the back benches because the synagogue was so crowded, my grandfather would sit on the very last bench so that no one would feel humiliated or slighted." Having rejected his grandfather's way of life, Goldmann has apparently rejected his humility as well. *The Autobiography* is replete with the kind of self-praise that one normally sees in an "authorized biography." As Goldmann would have it, he was a natural-born leader.

"My memories of those early years [living with his paternal grandfather] are unclouded by a single unhappy incident, and I attribute much of my self-confidence as an adult, a quality that proved more valuable

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than any other in my later political work, to the harmony and serenity of early childhood. Even as a child I showed many of my later characteristics. I can remember organizing a gang of children and leading them into all kinds of escapades. . . .

“. . . One of my most vivid memories is riding into the synagogue on the back of my St. Bernard dog one Sabbath morning. This produced complete panic, . . . Women up in the gallery fainted; men rushed outside shouting. . . .”

He goes on to cite other examples of his precocity as a child, and his tone hardly changes as he tells of his later conquests in scholarship, in oratory, and in outwitting his enemies. He even retells a goodly number of his favorite jokes which may sound good after a chicken-dinner but look awfully flat on the printed page. It is not here our purpose to deflate Dr. Goldmann or to negate his role in Jewish life in recent decades; but for a responsible leader he shows a remarkable inability to see himself objectively. One might say of his *Autobiography* what he says of Dr. Weizmann:

“When he once asked me what I thought of his autobiography, I replied: “This autobiography will not be a document in the history of Zionism, but it will be a wonderful source for the history of Dr. Weizmann.” Yet it would be unfair to say, as some do, that Weizmann falsified facts. He recorded the past as he saw it. Anything that was disturbing to him simply put his memory out of action. To some extent this is true of everybody, but it was especially pronounced in Weizmann. . . .”

Goldmann’s analysis of American Jewry shows another lapse of objectivity, and—in spite of its perceptiveness—is a classic example of the talmudic axiom that one sees most keenly in others, one’s own shortcomings.

“Any organization representing all of American Jewry must, by its very nature, be democratic. The handful of big givers will never assent to this. . . . The more numerous the separate organizations, the more easily every philanthropist can acquire his own little world in which to be a leader. The result is a harmful splintering of American Jewry, dissipation of energy and money, duplication of effort in many areas, and ultimately a serious lowering of achievement. . . . This is what makes exaggerated advertising necessary. Dependent on voluntary contributions and fund raising, they must try to attract attention because they have to keep people aware of their importance. . . . You need publicity; whether or not *The New York Times* will publish a report becomes a fundamental problem.”

Go through the *Annual Index of The New York Times* of any recent year, as this writer has often done, and take note of the huge listings under “Goldmann, Nahum”—would Dr. Goldmann have us believe that Times reporters wrung these stories from him? And Goldmann speaks of the emergence of “a whole class of well-paid ‘professional Jews’ [who] . . . are steadily gaining the upper hand in the direction of their organizations.” He warns that “American Jewry faces the danger of becoming professionalized and bureaucratized, with all of the moral and intellectual disadvantages such a process inevitably involves.”

Having written most of his book with arrogance, Goldmann closes it with *chutzpah*, in an oracular statement of what Orthodoxy must do to alleviate the conflict between “the non-Orthodox majority and the Orthodox minority.”

First, he counsels a recognized body representing Orthodoxy should be established—a kind of take-me-to-your-leader attitude: “you fellows stop quibbling among yourselves and then we’ll talk to you.” Such a body—“preferably in the classic form of a Sanhedrin”—would have the “courage” to institute changes in Halacha, apparently to spruce up decrepit Orthodoxy for the second phase of the Goldmann program for Orthodoxy. “Such an authority would have to be prepared to enter into a dialogue with the non-Orthodox majority and to set up a sort of ecumenical council for all shades of Jewish religious opinion.” And what would such an “ecumenical council” do?—they would decide upon “a minimum of common Jewish rites consonant with the spirit of Judaism.”

The Autobiography of Nahum Goldmann will not be a historic document, but it does tell us a great deal about Nahum Goldmann. □

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second looks at the jewish scene

The Strange Case of Larry Goldberg

The conduct of the Israeli Ministry of the Interior has been like that of Czarist Russia or contemporary Syria. Thus declared the Supreme Court of Israel in connection with the case of poor Lawrence Goldberg. This young American had arrived in Israel in 1965. In 1968, he applied for immigrant papers under the law of Israel, declaring that he was a Jew and wanted to throw in his lot with the Jewish people in Israel. Not only did the Interior Minister refuse to grant the application, but he even refused to extend the temporary residence visa of Mr. Goldberg.

Truly shocking—but wait a minute. There are some other aspects to the case. Mr. Goldberg's father is Jewish but his mother is Protestant. Hence, the Minister was right in ruling that he was not halachically a Jew and therefore the Law of Return did not apply to him. Moreover, in 1966 he married a non-Jewish girl in a Protestant ceremony in Yerushalayim—thereby putting on record his own Protestantism. And now it transpires—as shown by the invitation here reprinted from the "HaModia" of February 9th—that this innocent immigrant is actually a Christian Missionary!

Mr. Goldberg, in fact, has lately

become quite loquacious about himself. In an interview that appeared in "Maariv" on February 12, he explained that "I came here from Chicago with a group of students belonging to an evangelist sect, to distribute pamphlets about Christianity . . . and to tell the Jews that the founder of Christianity wants to help them." As he told it, he became baptized at a mature age, feeling drawn to Christianity, but at the same time still considers himself a Jew, entitled to the privileges

of the Law of Return. Meanwhile, he admitted quite frankly that his studies at the Hebrew University were only a pretext to enable him to stay in Israel undisturbed. It would certainly seem that the Minister of Interior had good reason to challenge Mr. Goldberg.

This episode inevitably forces us to reflect upon the attitude of the Supreme Court to matters involving Jewish religious tradition, and one cannot help but feel that here is a case of an essentially secular tribunal, weighed down by essentially secular pre-conceptions, all too often involved in judgment on religious values and concepts for which there is little understanding and less sympathy. There are of course some judges who are themselves *Shomrei Mitzvos* and do know what it is all about; but it is for instance interesting that some of those voting with the majority in the Shalit case included in their opinions strong criticisms of all those—including government employees (which meant rabbis)—who wrote to them urging that *halacha* should remain the criterion of Jew-

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Invitation to "day of prayer and evangelism" at the Emmanuel Church in Yaffo sent by "student" Larry Goldberg.

ishness. As Reuven Gross pointed out in an article in the "Jerusalem Post," far from labelling such letters an unwarranted effort to influence the court, the judges should have solicited the views of the Rabbinate as the experts in the field and the keepers of our ancient law and wisdom.

The violent and intemperate remarks of Justice Cohen, and his comparison of the *halacha* with the Nuremberg laws, are not readily forgotten; they are perhaps understandable when coming from a judge who himself went abroad in order to enter into a marriage illegal in the State of Israel which he serves on the highest bench. Perhaps the strictures of the Supreme Court in the Goldberg Case must be equally understood in the light of the fact that it was Justice Berenson—the same judge who hastened on a Friday night to convene court in order to make possible television on Shabbos—who made these critical remarks; as Rabbi Menachem Porush pointed out in the debate in the Knesseth Judge Berenson himself received his education in a Christian school, the Scottish College in Safed. The remarks of Rabbi Porush evoked a storm on the Knesseth floor. The speaker was asked to withdraw them since they reflected upon the judge; but he argued, rather logically, that he had only quoted from the judge's own biography in "Who is Who in Israel" and that if there was anything derogatory about his statement, the correction should also be made in this reference work.

Needless to say, Rabbi Porush did not win the argument. The uproar subsided with the Chairman of the Knesseth ordering the expunging of the remarks in question. A Knesseth protocol can easily be corrected—but that does not really change the facts, and they speak for themselves.

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What in-flight reading material, do you think, a national airline considers of concern to its vast and varied passenger body? Think again—and you will still not guess the answer. The January 1970 issue of *The American Way*, published by American Airlines, features a major article on "Orthodox Judaism in America."

The article, sent to us by one of our devoted readers, is lavishly illustrated. It contains a number of factual mistakes—but they are really unimportant as against the major insights that are offered:

"Surprisingly enough, Orthodoxy by most accounts is the fastest growing of Judaism's branches. . . . To the faithful, Orthodoxy offers tangible rewards: an enviable family stability; an almost non-existent rate of juvenile delinquency; an accommodation with, and respect for, authority, and a rich tradition of scholar-worship. There is the security of the old faith. . . . And, unlike some of the rest of us, the Orthodox Jew has a firm grasp of his identity; he is aware that his roots derive from Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

"Orthodoxy, Hasidic or otherwise, involves the whole man and his entire framework of existence, actually the deepest reason for its great appeal in an insecure age. . . . All the attention to the observance of forms is an outward sign of the inner faith summed up in the *Shema* prayer. . . . No gesture is really empty. Each prayer and each act are to serve as reminders of the splendor of the L-rd or an event in Jewish history.

"If there's any sure demonstration of the relevance of Orthodoxy, it's the way it is retaining youngsters. . . . The greatest commitment within the Orthodox movement today is from young people. . . . Young people are opposed to a shallow institutionalism. Orthodoxy offers an encompassing way of life. Its demands, its commitments and its consistency make sense to young people."

We fervently wish that things were as simple as all that. We know they are a lot more complicated. But it does seem that Orthodoxy isn't as badly off as we are tempted to think in our more depressed moments when we wrestle with its problems. Perhaps it takes

observers looking in from the outside to make us realize this.

A year ago there appeared a book, *The American Jews—Portrait of A Split Personality* by James Yaffe, which attracted considerable attention. Superficial but eminently readable, it set out to chronicle the contradictions that riddle American Jews, highly adapted to American life, yet at the same time, profoundly alienated and insecure. The author offers a wealth of data, many of them amusing, quite a few of them tragic, and a good many incorrect or highly misleading. This is particularly so when he tries to deal with Orthodoxy; to correct him in this area would be a major enterprise. And yet—somehow, there emerges a remarkable

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tribute, half unwittingly, half wittingly, to Torah Judaism.

The author vividly describes the American Jew as driven by the widening contradictions of his life into neurosis and mental disease. He predicts that American Jewry will survive only (and what a survival!) by moving toward a total synthesis of Judaism and Christianity. But he does see that there is something special about Orthodoxy.

"One thing I feel certain about, no pressure from the outside—especially not the carping of unbelievers—will destroy Orthodoxy in the foreseeable future" (p. 127). The author pinpoints the inner feeling of being different and separate that characterizes the Orthodox Jew, the "quality of loyalty and dedication to an ideal that belongs . . . to all the committed Orthodox" (p. 121). His tribute to the moral self-control of the Orthodox boy and girl is downright lyrical. He does see dangers to Orthodox survival, but only from the inside—and here, the knowledgeable reader quickly realizes it is a matter of Mr. Jaffe's psychological speculations making him see spooks.

Perhaps we sometimes need to be reminded that, after all, there is something very special about the Torah Jew; that, in the flux of history, as all of man's creations founder on their human imperfections and weaknesses, there remains, towering among it all, G-d's Word—and that small band of people who stubbornly and loyally cling to it. They survive, and by their survival force a wondering world to acknowledge their unique message: "Ye are my witnesses, saith G-d" (Yeshayah). □

Human Destiny and Scientific Presumption

It is almost 200 years since Thomas Robert Malthus first warned that our planet is headed for a vast catastrophe caused by overpopulation and the exhaustion of natural resources. Such fears are presently expressed more urgently than ever before.

"A big change is taking place in the language of politics (writes James Reston in *The New York Times* of January 21). Officials . . . are talking about 'control of the growth of population.' They are saying, in short, that the United States will not be able to 'control' pollution of the atmosphere or the rivers and the seas, unless it 'controls' the population of the United States, and this word 'control' is now being used quite consciously as a substitute for 'family planning.'"

Mr. Reston quotes a speech by Dr. Roger Egeberg approved by President Nixon personally, in which he declared,

"We talk about family planning. We champion the principles of free choice . . . but what does freedom of choice in family planning imply in the present state of society? It implies enormous population growth. . . ."

In the same vein, the president's science adviser, Dr. Dubridge, warns that,

"for the first time in earth's history, there has emerged one creature for which fertility is not a blessing but a curse. That creature is man. . . . Can we reverse the cultural traditions of thousands of years of human civilization? We can."

If a massive educational program fails, and mankind's members will continue to increase, then, according to Population Biologist, Paul Ehrlich quoted in *Time* (February 2, 1970), "there can only be death, war, pestilence, and famine to reduce the number." Even more bluntly, a director of the Sierra Club is quoted by *Time* as stating: "We have already run out of earth, and nothing we can do will keep humankind in existence for as long as another two centuries."

In a letter commenting on James Reston's article, one of our readers points out that apparently "earth can now finally be made a suitable habitat for science, industry and economics, but not for people," if we are to believe the pundits. There lies immense pre-

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sumption and arrogance behind their warnings, which deserve our thoughtful attention.

In the first place, scientists have been remarkably successful in exploiting man's world and developing it—but they have also been markedly unsuccessful in foretelling the effects of their labors (in fact, this is how the present danger to our environment has arisen). Before we accept all the warnings thrown at us, we should remember, for instance, that even as we were told about the approaching exhaustion of the earth's petroleum resources, new reserves were discovered that nobody had dreamt of. We have been told time and again

“of a future in which famine stalks a world too populous for the planet to feed. On the contrary, there is evidence that the future may not be so dire. This year's worldwide harvest is the greatest in history for the second straight year. And there are hopeful glimmers from the Rockefeller Foundation's experts that the world is making great strides towards feeding itself. . . . The world's food experts are taking heart, though the sense of urgency remains . . .

“Nations push their own food supply. Meanwhile, laboratories continue to cultivate new ideas. The latest range from weeding row crops with flame throwers and laying asphalt hardpans for instant upland rice paddies all the way to the science-fiction realm. One scheme being seriously examined in pilot plants involves making protein food from oil.” (*Time*, December 22, 1967)

Just as there are vast technological possibilities for developing new food sources—for instance, from the oceans—there are also new approaches to pollution control. As our correspondent points out, “one day after James Reston's article appeared, *The New York Times* carried a report on a ‘Fusion Torch’ which apparently has possibilities of recovering metals and at the same time generating electricity, while not adding significantly to pollution.” The recycling of all wastes and revolutionizing of the packaging industry are other technological developments that can be adopted.

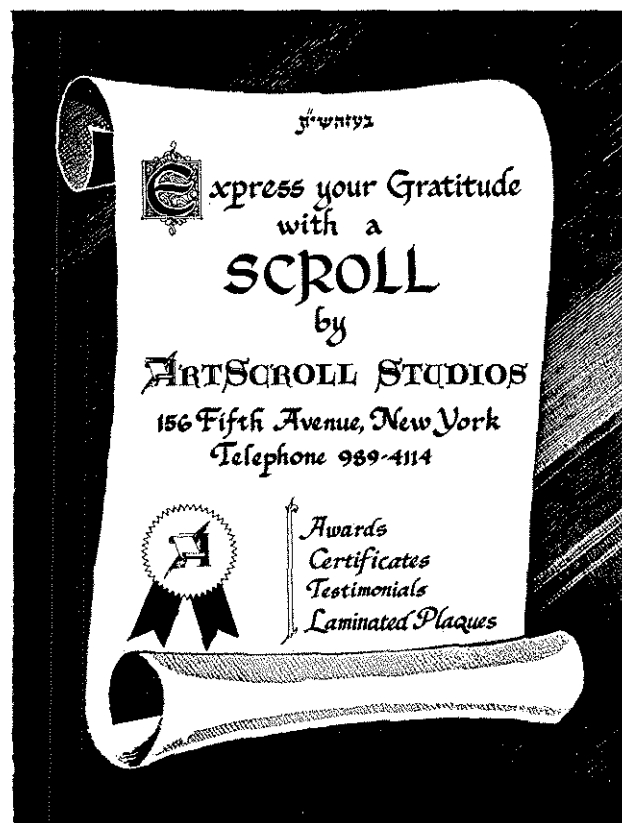
But there is another, deeper reason why it does not make sense to try to solve our problems through population control. Again, our correspondent puts it succinctly:

“Population control, whatever that phrase means, and it has some unpleasant connotations . . . will in all probability lead to higher per capita consumption, and thus not help at all in the solution

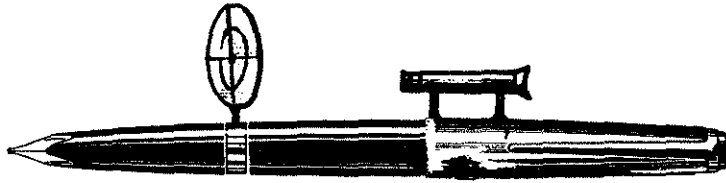
of our problems of dwindling resources and environmental pollution.

“Several alternative approaches should perhaps be explored. . . . It may be possible to convince people, as a matter of enlightened self-interest, to expect and consume less. In other words, share the pie without increasing pollution. Whatever methods are to be employed in ‘Population Control,’ be they education, moral (?) suasion, or whatever, might perhaps be employed to convince people to consume realistically.”

What is involved here, in the last resort, are the values that mankind cherishes most. The modern world is dedicated to the belief in progress as measured in material terms, expanding production and consumption. This philosophy has had its disastrous effects in nurturing an unrestrained self-serving hedonism and undermining the entire concept of moral duty which Judaism introduced into the civilized world. Perhaps the time has come for people to realize that, not only for spiritual reasons, but also for practical material ones, a total revamping of priorities is needed: Do we care more for ever-increasing luxury, at any price? Or for living on in our children, content with cultivating—and passing on—the truly good life? □



Letters to the Editor



On Orthodox Historians

To the Editor:

Shmuel Singer's point, in his article "Wanted: Orthodox Jewish Historians" (December, 1969), is well taken.

May I suggest to him that at least one English text has been published: *Behold a People*, by Rav Avigdor Miller. This work, "A Didactic History of Scriptural Times," exposes the false theories of Graetz and his school of thought. Hopefully, a second volume, on modern times, will be published. In addition, Rav Miller's previous work, *Rejoice O Youth!* deals in part with the interpretation of Jewish History.

One more suggestion: Anyone able and willing to undertake the translation of "Doros Harishonim" by Rav Yitzchok Isak Halevi Rabinowitz, and "Zichron Yaakov," by the Kovner Rav's Secretary, would be doing Klal Yisroel a tremendous service.

Name withheld by request.

On Rav Yitzchak I. Halevi

To the Editor:

I recently noticed a recurrent mistake in various publications and reports (see also "Wanted Orthodox Jewish Historians" in your December '69 issue).

Rav Yitzchok Isak Halevi of the *Doros Harishonim* lived in Hamburg and not in Bad Homburg.

I assume that the mistake is caused by the fact that a meeting was held in Bad Homburg—which is not far from Frankfurt a/Main—where it was decided to convene the Kattowitz founding conference of Agudath Israel. Rav Halevi

attended this meeting in Bad Homburg, but he did not live there.

Thanking you,

Sincerely yours,

J. H. BAUMINGER

Editor's note: Rav Yitzchak Isak Halevi was indeed "Klausrabbiner" in Hamburg, but Bad Homburg was his summer residence. That the conference in question took place there in fact is seen as a "testimony to Halevi's role in arranging it" (O. A. Reichel, Isaac Halevi, p. 108).

"Hebrew Names Are Beautiful"

To the Editor:

"To the immigrant Jew, the most English of all names was Shirley. Sheldon ran it a close second. Today every novelist who wants to write about a Jewish girl calls her Shirley.

When the Jew adopted Shirley and Sheldon en masse, the Gentiles dropped these names like hot potatoes. Now the Jews are dropping Shirley and Shelly is gaining popularity along with Robin and Penny.

Down in the South names like Herschel and Mendel persevere among the Presbyterians and the Baptists, but the Jews are going to Jonathan and Scott." (Taken from "Only in America" by Harry Golden.)

It is a shame and a lack of national pride that while non-Jews keep names like Herschel, Mendel and Jacob, Jews prefer to call themselves Harry, Manny and Jay. In this double nomenclature there is an unwholesome trend of assimilation and an attempt to hide one's identity.

The first problem a Jewish mother of a new-born baby in hospital has to

tackle is to find out what the tentative Hebrew name will be in English. And as the Hebrew name stays for Jewish records and only the English name is used, it often happens that the child has to run to the grandparents to find out what is his Hebrew name.

There is no necessity for double names. Names like Jean, Betty, Edith, Barbara, etc., should be eliminated. A guide of Hebrew names in English spelling that phonetically corresponds to the Hebrew sound of the name should be established and propagated. Children in school should be urged to use between themselves their Hebrew names only.

This is a request for editorial articles in your periodical on the "HEBREW NAMES ARE BEAUTIFUL" theme.

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The National Assembly opened with a public Forum, chaired by Rabbi Jonah Blumenfrucht, Rabbi Nachman Bulman, distinguished Orthodox thinker and edu-

cator, urged the young Torah activists to "first acquire truth before attempting to disseminate it," and called upon the reactivated Zeirei Agudath Israel to generate interest among Torah-loyal youth for working for K'lal Yisroel. Rabbi Yehuda Oelbaum, prominent Yeshiva *M'chanech*, urged the assemblage to prepare themselves now through proper programs of self-improvement to assume leadership roles, first in Zeirei Agudath Israel and then in the adult Agudath Israel movement.

At the Dinner Session, chaired by David Friedman, the venerable head of the Moetzes Gedolei Hatorah (Council of Torah Sages of Agudath Israel) Rabbi Moshe Feinstein called upon "Torah students regardless of their differing outlooks on personal study programs, to unite within Zeirei Agudath Israel, and to set aside specific hours regularly for working with less Torah-oriented youths."

The eminent Rosh Hayeshiva of the Telse Yeshiva of Wickliffe, Rabbi Mordechai Gifter, delivered a moving address on the necessity of unity among the Torah-loyal youth, and decried individualism as a bane of our Orthodox society. He expounded on the vitality of such a Torah movement as Agudath

Israel and its youth groups within the framework of the worldwide struggle to save K'lal Yisroel for genuine Torah values.

Greetings from the parent-organization of Agudath Israel of America were extended by its executive president, Rabbi Moshe Sherer, who, declared that "Orthodoxy will no longer tolerate being classed as lower-rate citizens by the Jewish Establishment."

A new administration will be elected in the near future to implement a broad range of programs that Zeirei Agudath Israel will undertake in the coming months.

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