

# THE JEWISH OBSERVER

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Yeshiva Youth,  
Careers, and the  
Colleges

letters



responses

Lomza

a yeshiva grew  
in Poland

“Der Pinteleh Yid”

as an archetype

The Labor Party  
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A Coalition

comment and

analysis . . .

(with and without quotations)

The Non-Vanishing  
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# THE JEWISH OBSERVER

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Dr. Bernard Fryshman's article in last month's JEWISH OBSERVER, "The Child You Lose May Be Your Own," which dealt with career preparation for Orthodox Youth vis-a-vis conditions on the contemporary college campus, generated a great deal of comment and an un-

usual number of letters. Some of these letters, with response where warranted, are printed below.

As the letters continue to arrive in the editorial office, some are being reserved for publication in future issues.

### College: More of a Problem Than Stated

To the Editor:

I was very impressed by Dr. Fryshman's discussion of college in the Adar Issue of JO. For although the evils of college have long been decried, this article presents one of the only true portraits of the modern college scene and its incumbent dangers I have seen.

Our worries lie not with those courses which by their very nature are contradictory to the Torah way of life. These dangers are fairly well documented and could conceivably be avoided. The problem lies with the innocent-looking courses: The sociology teacher who explains that *Matan Torah* was merely a case of a charismatic Moses . . . . The experienced English teacher who ridicules the notion that *Shir Hashirim* is anything but a beautiful love story . . . . and other incidents, much too unpleasant to be mentioned here, that I encountered while I was pursuing a science degree, studiously trying to avoid the so-called "treifah" courses.

Similarly, the author's references to the contents of the campus media, the quality of the teacher's language, and the absence of moral values in some of the assigned reading, are accurate and cannot be disputed by

anyone who has recently obtained "higher" education.

Clearly, Dr. Fryshman has done a most accurate job of portraying the scene on today's campus. I might go a step further than he does in his opening disclaimer, and suggest that all the ills catalogued, do indeed occur to some degree or another in each of the large schools.

The problems are compounded by the fact that nowadays many campuses are more inviting to the Jewish student than ever before. Whereas once a Jewish student in college felt like a "Yovon in Succah" and was probably on guard against possible corruption of his ideals, today's student is greeted with a plethora of Jewish clubs, newspapers and glatt kosher restaurants, plus a good sprinkling of teachers with *yarmulkes* or *sheitels*. He feels too much at home and is thus wide-open to attack. Who is to say that these repeated onslaughts fail to leave their indelible mark on a young person's *hashkafah*?

Thus, whether or not we are inclined to agree with the specific proposals the author presents, we can hardly disagree that the college campus is not the ideal place for the yeshiva boy or Bais Yaakov girl.

MOSHE E. RAPPOPORT  
Brooklyn, N.Y.

### College: A Problem of Overstatement

To the Editor:

Dr. Bernard Fryshman appears to be a self-appointed spokesman for Orthodox Jewry on the issue of college. After detailing many of the dangers and pitfalls associated with going to college, he firmly concludes, "College attendance should be considered an indication of compromise with principle (rather than a mark of distinction)." Such a blanket condemnation deserves a strong rebuttal. Admittedly, a 16 year old who enters college through an Early Admissions program, attends day session, completely leaves the yeshiva world, and schedules his classes to have all the most influencing and demoralizing teachers, will come out of college with his *yiras shomayim* and attitudes towards *Yiddishkeit* truly impaired.

But this does not mean that everyone who attends a college must be branded as one who has "compromised his principles." A large number of yeshiva students attending college do so in the evening, which utterly alters the picture. These "yeshiva bachurim" (and they do consider themselves foremost as "yeshiva bachurim") attend post-high school yeshivos or *Botai*

*Midrashos* by day, only venturing into college in the evening.

The "*bochurim*" attend college only as a means to a profession, never as an end in itself. In addition, their circle of friends remains their yeshiva chaverim and they don't even begin to socially indentify with their fellow college students on anything more than a superficial greetings level.

In addition, their yeshiva environment constantly counters the social ills which nobody can deny are bred and nurtured on the university campus. And isn't it far better to enter the non-Jewish secular world gradually, doing so at first only at night, while still within the warm security of the confines of Torah, than to leave the yeshiva all at once for a job, no matter at what age? Is it possible that Dr. Fryshman "accidentally" overlooked the case of the "yeshiva bachur" attending college at night so as to justify the purport of his contention?

Dr. Fryshman describes a common campus newspaper, complete with lurid photographs and illustrations and obscene language. Has he ever taken a look at a copy of *Time* magazine or *Newsweek*? One does not have to go to college to find vulgar newspapers and loose morals; they unfortunately are found everywhere.

Dr. Fryshman complains that many yeshiva high schools students who never had any intent of going to college nor belong there, do in fact go because the yeshiva high schools act as "recruiting centers for college." How does he ever expect yeshivos to find competent high school English Teachers that are imbued with "Torah *hashkafos*" and that would not urge their students on to college, if not from the ranks of those "yeshiva bachurim" who did attend college at night!

Dr. Fryshman ends his article with "To those who feel that some of the aspects of college life were unfairly presented, the author can only answer that the reader need only go to the local campus and judge for him — or herself." As a person who

did graduate from evening session college while learning in a Bais Hamedrash during the day, I think that Dr. Fryshman's absolute condemnation of the college attender is unwarranted and untrue.

JACKIE FULDA  
New York City

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### Editorial Comment:

*The above letters answer each other in large measure, as far as the actual situation in the colleges is concerned.*

*Mr. Fulda's contention—that attending college at night can be a relatively innocuous experience, provided one has firm anchorage in a yeshiva by day, and has only professional goals in mind — is a matter of judgment.*

*Applying his theory of immunization (proposing early gradual exposure to inevitable negative experiences) to areas covered by objective halachic prohibition, is a matter that would require fuller discussion.*

*Finally, the yeshivos' need for competent, religious teachers for their secular studies hardly justifies the great number of yeshiva students currently attending college, exposing them to a corrosive campus atmosphere.*

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### Two Cheers

To the Editor:

Two cheers for your February issue. So you're taking a hard-edged look at the rough features of *golus America*. The media, the college scene, yeshiva curriculum, the employment market — all are treated to your slightly arched Jewish Observations ("your" being Fryshman's, Wolpin's, Mrs. Ross-who-writes-letters-from-Ohio, et al). As part of the grass-roots Jewish America, it feels good to have been sighted by JO.

But suddenly you leave reality and plant both feet firmly in wishville. Which yeshiva high school will flourish on a (Fryshman-mandated) non-college oriented curriculum?

How many parents — even *ben Torah* parents — are willing to close the door firmly on college options for their children? Do they have the *right* to do so? Not every Yeshiva student who chooses college has abandoned a *kollel* career; he may have never been destined for *kollel* / teaching / rabbinate in the first place, and by going to college, has simply taken a logical step toward other career preparation. Even community colleges and vocational schools have entrance requirements.

Does Dr. Fryshman advocate typing and sorting kids at the ninth grade level (— *you to yeshiva*, — *you to college prep*)? And if that would be prudent (although to my thinking it would be disasterous to stigmatize children at so young an age), is it wise to segregate the *ben Torah* from the *ba'al habayis* from age thirteen onward? I would say that Yissochor and Zevulun should really get to know each other — even during their early teens.

It's nice to see JO visit reality long enough to erect some challenging obstacles to conventional thinking. Why not stick around long enough to clear the hurdles?

YERACHMIEL WAGNER  
East Meadow, Long Island

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### "The Child You Lose. . ." Not Realistic

To the Editor:

Dr. Fryshman seems to have evaded certain pertinent aspects of the Yeshiva-College "dilemma" (JO Feb. '74). Perhaps Dr. Fryshman has been so long "in the four ells of the ivory towers of academia" that he has seriously neglected the pragmatic aspects of college.

I certainly concur with his description of the campus as being far from a preserve of moral values, and that *limudei kodesh* and college-level secular studies cannot co-exist within the confines of a yeshiva. His points about "affirmative action," no jobs for those in the social sciences, and the presence of vocational schools are indeed well-

taken and justifiable. The situation in the job-market, however, is vastly different from Dr. Fryshman's portrayal. When one attempts to get a job, the first question asked by the prospective employer — Jewish or not, *frum* or otherwise — is: Do you have a college degree?

Joining the ranks of *rebbeim* and *mechanchim* is a noble calling, but how many are *really* needed? And how many of our *kollel* people want to leave the secure womb of New York City and other Jewish religious neighborhoods, for the vast hinterlands where *rebbeim* and *mechanchim* are in urgent need? More important, how many *kollel-leit* are "teaching material"?

Outside the fields of Torah dissemination, not everyone is the aggressive type, suitable for a successful business career (nor does everyone have the capital necessary for opening a business), or a "sales profession" (which, incidentally, includes your local insurance broker).

As for the vocational school: not every *kollel* fellow has the inclination or physical prowess to become a carpenter or a plumber. Computer programming requires a college degree for becoming a mere programmer (whose pay is quite low); the so-called computer schools cannot guarantee a job above a console operator or low-grade programmer. The vocational school alternative may have merit, but it offers only limited options to be a serious alternative for the *ben Torah* thinking about college.

Finally, the "Semicha-B.A." is not accepted in such hallowed halls of learning as N.Y.U. or CUNY, only in certain universities, mostly third or fourth rate (at best), whose M.A. is of dubious worth. Even in the "better" schools, the "Semicha-B.A." is only good for entry into such fields as Education (a dead-end for Jews as per "affirmative action" that Dr. Fryshman describes), Psychology (another dead end, for it is a "social science" that Dr. Fryshman says is devoid of jobs), and in some schools, Business Ad-

ministration (which is also not burgeoning with openings waiting for fillers). For the so-called "Jewish professions" as Accounting, the "Semicha B.A." is worthless. The only practical viewpoint is to postpone attending a college until reaching the age of twenty at least. Dr. Fryshman relegates this alternative to, at best, third-class consideration.

As a peripheral side light, covert (if not overt) heresy (*apikorsus*) is taught in the hallowed halls of our Mesifita-High Schools — even in those fostering an anti-college atmosphere — all under the guise of "it is necessary for the Regents." Where is the *heter* for teaching evolution in Biology classes without at least a refutation? Where is the *heter* to assign the reading of certain novels and poems to *bachurim*, or to interpret them with an attitude that Dr. Fryshman deplors in the colleges? He states the problem, but does not treat it in its proper perspective, by localizing it to the colleges.

I do not propose to *kasher* College, only to take a more pragmatic attitude and to give our yeshiva people a viable and realistic alternative so that when they leave yeshiva surroundings they will not have remorse — as many that I have known — for "staying at learning" as long as they did. Instead of merely criticizing without offering any genuinely workable suggestions, Dr. Fryshman should face the grim reality without window dressing. If a *talmid* / Yeshiva *bachur* wants to become a *rebbe* or a *Rosh Yeshiva* and has the ability to do so, it would

be a gross injustice, indeed, if he were to go to college. If he does not, however, then much more soul-searching has to be done.

Though not totally analogous, the Civil Service exams for Sanitation Men require a High School diploma, though I do not see *pi*, the Pythagorean Theorem, or trigonometry as essential to sweeping debris or manipulating the lever that dumps refuse into the truck. But, the diploma is still required. Similarly, certain employers require college degrees. The only manpower accepting a "Semicha-B.A." is the Federal Government, and at that, GS-5 pays only about \$8,000 a year — hardly enough to support a family of three or four today.

I hope that Dr. Fryshman will consider these arguments, reassess his own points, and turn from idealism to pragmatism — for our *yeshiva-leit* need action-plans, not rhetoric. The foul language, sexual permissiveness, which is the rule rather than the exception among Dr. Fryshman's colleagues on campus, offer a big and bitter bite to swallow. Somehow, the best of us manage to side-step the dictum "Keep distance from a bad neighbor," as a compromise of sorts to earn a living by teaching on campus. Others of us find it necessary to step around other implications of the same rotten campus situation to gain the training essential for us to be able to support our (prospective) families in other ways.

SHMUEL HIRSCH  
Brooklyn, N.Y.

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*Dr. Fryshman Replies:*

### The Options Are There It is For the Interested Party to Seek Them

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The peripheral issues raised by both Messrs. Wagner and Hirsch would best be answered by a careful re-reading of my article. They do, however, point out one area of concern that does merit extended comment.

Is going to college a "logical step toward other career preparation"? Is it necessary to go to the campus to "gain the training essential for us to be able to support our families"?

The first question is easily answered. Harsh reality has shown

us that investing four to ten years of one's life in a college career does not necessarily result in a secure position. There is virtually no field immune to the turn-a-round suffered in physics, engineering, and education; any area, including law, can move from a situation of great demand to one of glut in a period of five years. There are hundreds of thousands of college graduates who look back at their college years as a complete waste insofar as preparation for securing employment is concerned.

The second question touches on a more serious issue. If one argues, as I do, that the college campus is not necessary for career preparation, the logical response becomes, "What alternatives do you propose?" I will make an attempt to outline some of these alternatives in these columns. — Actually, the topic is of vital concern to many in the community and is deserving of a serious, detailed treatment in a regular article.

The graduate of a college-oriented yeshiva high school is in a poor position to seek a job. As a rule, he has no experience; few, if any, marketable skills; and in many instances, can neither speak nor write English effectively. (Hopefully, yeshiva high schools that leave the "college track" will assume the responsibility of devoting time to produce graduates who possess these basic skills.) Indeed, few high school graduates do take employment at this stage. Most continue their yeshiva careers — and many also go on to college.

Certainly, if college is no longer an acceptable alternative, many more of our young people will spend more full-time years in a yeshiva. Those who do not will probably find their wisest choice to be a vocational school.

#### *The Vocational-School Track*

It is vital that we correct the distorted image of vocational (or occupational) education prevalent in the community. For one, the vocational school is no longer a

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## Vocational School —for more than "plumbers, carpenters, and computer programmers."

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"dead-end" route. More often than not, a vocational education provides the student with the flexibility that enables him to progress to his fullest potential.

Consider a student who senses that there are openings in the field of typewriter-repair. With some care, he chooses a school which is both reputable and appropriate for an Orthodox Jew. (Care must be exercised in going into any new environment; there are vocational schools which should be avoided — as there are business establishments whose atmosphere is far worse than that of the college campus. The eventual answer probably lies in the schools such as the Shevet Y'Hudah Institute of Technology, which was started by Rabbi S. Z. Schneerson, to provide a vocational education within a Torah environment.) A year later, the student can be earning a living in this field.

The individual whose capabilities do not go beyond simple typewriter-repair will certainly have difficulty earning a substantial salary. But the individual who has the initiative and intelligence to consider going to college will probably turn his skill into business — or will progress to the repair of more sophisticated machines, eventually, perhaps, to type-setting devices. Others will eventually teach the skill — or perhaps go on to college to obtain an engineering degree.

#### *On to Higher Education*

This last path is not an unusual one. Thus, students at the RCA electronics school were able to receive about 70 transfer credits in the Brooklyn Polytechnic Institute — a first-rate engineering school. The electronics program at Shevet Y'Hudah is every bit as good as RCA's and its graduates not only earn a State recognized diploma, but also save about two years of college

work. Recent developments indicate that many vocational schools will be allowed to grant an Associates degree (AOS) in Occupational Science; holders of this degree will be able to go to work — or go on to college — or do both simultaneously.

Briefly, then, the vocational student risks no more than two years in an attempt to enter the labor market (in contrast to 4-10 years of the college student). While working, he can progress to whatever level his abilities allow.

#### *Toward New Employment Criteria*

Mr. Hirsch is correct in saying that many employers currently demand a college degree. Two facts, however, make it almost certain that today's high-school graduate will find his Semicha (four years hence) almost as useful as a BA in applying for a job. For one, there are some very effective steps being taken to establish the Semicha as educationally equivalent to the BA for further education, and this can result in direct open acceptance in the employment field. This is going on at an accelerating pace at all levels of American society. Were yeshiva students to desert the campuses in meaningful numbers, we would find the process accelerating even faster.

For another, the Federal Government, as part of its program to combat discrimination, is examining criteria used to hire applicants. Tests and educational standards will increasingly become job-related. Employers will not be allowed to demand a BA degree if it is not needed for the actual performance of the job. This pressure is being exerted to help "minorities" — but it is to be expected that the general public, including yeshiva students, will benefit as well.

It might be appropriate to men-

tion, too, that the Semicha is already being accepted at some excellent schools for Master's Programs (in fields where there are jobs). True, not all schools accept the Semicha, but if the increased acceptance of this past year is any indication, eventually the holder of a Semicha should be able to enter almost any school open to the holder of a BA.

Surprisingly there are professions such as architecture — and until recently law — which one can enter without ever attending college. The time involved to obtain the professional license is somewhat longer, and there are attempts by the professionals to close these avenues, but as of this writing, these possibilities exist. Every effort should be made to keep these professions open to those who do not choose to go to college — and to make it easier to obtain professional standing. This can be done by exerting a modicum of political pressure. We need only ask . . . .

#### *Over A Thousand Programs*

Vocational education is not limited to "plumbers, carpenter, and computer programmers." The College Blue Book on Occupational Education (in any library) lists over 1,000 different programs that fall into the category of vocational education. Not every category is appropriate for the *Shomer Shabbos*, but many are. And each category can be expanded into a large number of different positions. Thus, an electronics technician can anticipate teaching at a vocational school, owning a TV repair shop, working in a hospital, in an industrial firm, for the military, in security electronics, for a manufacturer — or he can go on to an engineering school.

Many educators, government agencies, colleges and the like have recognized the potential of this field, and have been "tooling-up" for a vast expansion of this area. It would be most unwise if the Orthodox Jewish Community did not take full advantage of this approach.

We will not dwell on the many yeshiva students who will go into business. Nor will we speak of the many positions open to the bearers of Semicha. Those who are in the Yeshiva are familiar with these openings.

But I cannot pass on Mr. Hirsch's remarks on *chinuch* without commenting. Why must the yeshiva graduates (of his reference) *only* think in terms of New York City? New York *Yiddishkeit* is a frame of mind that is not limited to the shadows of Manhattan towers or the Verazzano Bridge. It can flourish in the South and Far West, too, as many yeshiva graduates have had the guts to prove.

People not cut out for teaching are wise to stay away from the classroom. That should not rule out school administration, fund-raising, and other, newer areas of community service. While this, in itself, is a legitimate topic for another article — for every yeshiva graduate has an unpaid debt to *klal* — I cannot refrain from at least mentioning this in passing.

#### *Other Paths . . .*

I have devoted considerable space in my article to describing the alternatives open to those who want a regular Bachelor's degree, notwithstanding all of the above. There is no need to attend a conventional college campus to earn a BA or a BS. The trend in Higher Education is towards ever-increasing flexibility in format, and there is no reason Orthodox Jews should not take full advantage of this trend.

#### *. . . Other Goals*

I have outlined only a few of the broad paths open to one who does not want to go to college. Certainly, there is no lack of fields. The Dictionary of Occupational Titles (1965) has 809 pages, each describing an average of 20 different jobs, or perhaps 15,000 different jobs in all. In the final analysis, it is up to the yeshiva student and his parents to devote time and effort to making

the correct decision.

. . . . .

While most of this discussion was devoted to post-high school vocational planning, a short aside to Mr. Wagner is in order, regarding segregation of children during the early stages of their education. He seems to be concerned with some children possibly being forced out of the college track at an early stage; my concern is with the fact that all children are currently being forced *into* the college track at an early age.

Hopefully, my article and this exchange will stimulate further investigation into the whole problem of employment for our young people — without the necessity of a college degree.

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### **"The Child You Lose . . ." and Yeshiva University**

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It has been brought to our attention that the inclusion of Yeshiva University's seal among four others in the illustration accompanying Dr. Fryshman's article "The Child Your Lose . . ." could be understood to imply that this school is "beset by a deteriorating moral climate" equally with the other schools represented. This was not the intention of the illustration, and Dr. Fryshman's text also clearly stated otherwise. The seals were chosen at random from schools available to Jewish students referred to directly or indirectly in this article. As such, Yeshiva University's symbol was in place. This and no more was the extent of the symbolism intended.

In clarifying this point, it is only fair to note that, as Dr. Fryshman stated in his article, "These schools (Y. U. and Touro) also raise a number of questions that are beyond the purview of this article," which in turn can present problems which confront the student enrolled in these schools.

THE EDITOR

# Israel's Labor Party Forms a Coalition

## *A Report and Analysis (with and without quotations)*

### Keeping The Promise

ISRAEL IS NOW HEADED by a new Labor-led coalition that includes the National Religious Party (Mizrachi-Hapoel HaMizrachi). This in itself is nothing new — in its twenty-six years of existence, the State of Israel has almost always been governed by a coalition that included the NRP. Nonetheless eyebrows were raised.

Four years ago, when the NRP voted for the Law of Return (which grants converts recognition as Jews without specifying that the conversion be in accordance with *halachah*), the Party claimed that a negative vote on this issue, then or at any time until a new government is formed, would be an empty gesture. When a new government would be formed, they said, the circumstances would be different: Thus, at its fall '73 convention, the National Religious Party's Central Committee (the official policy-making body) resolved: "In regard to Mihu Yehudi — 'Who is a Jew' — the leaders of the Mafdal (NRP) in the Knesset and the government must

*not be responsible for this defective law; nor can they lend it their support by joining the forthcoming government unless the situation is corrected to ascertain that no non-Jew will be registered as a Jew — only, exclusively those who are Jewish by halachic criteria. This requires amendment of the Law of Return."*

quoted in HATZOFEH - March 4, '74

Another NRP condition to joining the government (pushed strongly by the Kibbutz Hadati faction of the party) was that West Bank territories not be subject to negotiation for submission to Arab control. Unless these two conditions were met, the NRP would not join the Labor Coalition.

The rest of the story is surely familiar: Because of the NRP's intransigence, Mrs. Meir could not form a coalition. (Even the N.Y. *Times* dubbed the party as "ultra-Orthodox" — a label heretofore only applied to the Agudath Israel and various "Hassidic groups.") The Labor plurality applied pressure, and the NRP leaders Michael Hazani and Yitzchak

Raphael consulted the Chief Rabbinate. Chief Rabbi Shlomo Goren in turn telephoned Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik in Boston, and the decision was rendered: "No joining without the *halachah* clause in 'Who is a Jew'!"

Mrs. Meir threatened to resign; but then she reconsidered her decision and announced a readiness to form a minority government . . . Syrian troops amassed on the border, defectors from Labor returned to the ranks as party faithful, followed by the NRP who also announced a change of heart: it *would* join, after all.

As stated, the story is a familiar one, and this brief retelling is of little significance — except that in its unfolding, a number of questions were raised, and some clarification resulted in the outlook of various parties (political and otherwise) regarding the role religion is to play in the governing of the Holy Land. It is a story best told by making maximum use of the direct quotation of the spoken word, and the indirect quotation of the news story.\*

### Politics: Is it a Matter for the Rabbis?

(comment)

"RENDER UNTO CAESAR THAT . . ." has been a favorite phrase among those committed to a separation of religion and state. By contrast, the Jewish People cannot view their existence except in terms of Torah teachings and ideals. Just as the individual Jew must consult the Torah for guidance in all aspects of his personal life, so must the Jewish community seek guidance for its course

EZRIEL TOSHAVI, *observes the Israeli scene for our readers in these columns.*

of action from the Torah, as explained and interpreted by *gedolei haTorah* (great Torah leaders). This has always been the central conviction of Agudath Israel, and indeed "the Agudah is dedicated to finding the solution of all problems of the Jewish people . . . in the spirit of the Torah." It has thus consistently referred policy matters to its *Moetzes Gedolei HaTorah* (Council of Torah Sages) for decision.

\*Some of these events were analyzed in the Feb. issue of JO ("To Join or Not to Join — More Than a Matter of Politics"). But much has transpired since.

It was in character, then, for the Israeli Agudah to consult this body when it was offered a place in the Labor-led coalition — with the inviting dividends of two ministerial posts and significant concessions on religious issues. It was in character, too, that it stayed out when so advised by this Council, for the Labor Party refused to yield on two cardinal conditions: abolition of draft of women, as well as “Who is a Jew.” And consistent with this approach, it was in response to the specific directives articulated by the members of this Council that the Agudah abstained from giving the newly-formed government its vote of confidence— at the same time, not joining Likud in voting against the government.

While the NRP is committed to promoting the flourishing of a Torah *Yishuv* in *Eretz Yisroel* (“Eretz Yisroel for the Jewish People in accordance with Torah”), it has found it ideologically tenable to attempt as much as possible to function on two levels — the religious and the political — with apparent mutual exclusivity, for in its view, political considerations have a religious validity unto themselves. (It has been postulated that since the NRP views the very existence of a Jewish State as bearing Messianic implication, religious participation in the government of the State — namely the Mizrachi’s — is an essential feature. This one aspect can outweigh many other considerations. A full analysis of this concept was developed in David Meyer’s “The Tragedy of Religious Zionism,” featured in the March ’73 *Jewish Observer*).

Because of this propensity to divide the communal (or political) from the personal, the NRP has not bound its decisions to the advice of its Torah leadership. Thus, when then-Chief Rabbi Unterman directed the NRP to vote for a *giyur kehalachah* amendment to the Law of Return in July ’72, the party deemed it wiser to abstain, staying in the governing coalition.

Now, however, a promise to the electorate had to be fulfilled. And — more than an Agudah-or Lubavitch-dramatized issue of only limited implications — the question “Who Is a Jew” was clearly understood by the clergy of deviationist groups, as well as by the broad spectrum of world Orthodoxy, to reflect universal guidelines for such key concepts as *Jewry*, *conversion*, *halachah*, and *Jewish religion*. Here was a question of granting open legitimacy to Reform and Conservative conversions, stamping “*Yehudi*” on identification papers of individuals whose entry into Judaism was without *halachic* validity.

RABBI JOSEPH B. GLASSER, executive vice president of the Central Conference of American (Reformed) Rabbis: “This is a question of the legitimacy of the entire reform movement.”  
*quoted by Harry Trimbom, in “A Question for Israel: Who Is a Jew?” N. Y. POST - March 28, ’74*

Indeed, it was because of the clarity of the issues at

stake that the lay group, Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations of America, found it imperative to divorce itself from the Synagogue Council of America. Membership in this organization involves inter-group relations in a religious framework, which results in granting implied recognition to the other members — a recognition the Conservative and Reform were capitalizing on, and the UOJC claims to have never intended to confer. So it suspended its membership.

It seemed to some onlookers that, pressed as it was to join the government, the NRP actually recognized the issue as a fully religious one, and for that reason its leadership chose to consult its rabbinical body — the Chief Rabbinate. Not everyone saw the justice in this move.

### A Plea for “Moratorium” . . .

FOR ONE, the British Chief Rabbi, Dr. Immanuel Jakobovits, made his opposition known in an address to religious and lay-leaders of the United Synagogue in early February. In an article headlined: “*Shelve ‘Who Is a Jew’ Now, Says Chief Rabbi,*” the *London Jewish Chronicle* reports that Dr. Jakobovits:

**suggested for the present emergency, when religious faith and national unity are such indispensable assets to Jewish survival, to press for some regular religious instruction and practice in all schools.**

**“In return would be a moratorium on all new legislation of religious significance, such as that concerning conversions, civil marriage, public Sabbath observance or autopsies — all subjects on which fierce divisive controversies continue to rage.”**

(London) JEWISH CHRONICLE - Feb. ’74

(comment)

Incredibly, Dr. Jakobovits treats purely religious matters as though they were political issues that can be permitted to lie unresolved, in moratorium: In effect, bogus converts should be admitted as Jews, unquestioned; unauthorized autopsies should continue, unchallenged; Sabbath should be desecrated, without stop — all for the sake of “unity.”

It would seem as though Dr. Jakobovits had for the moment forgotten that the ideal of unity for Jewry is expressed in the High Holiday prayer: “*Ve’asu kulam . . . And they all shall form one unit to wholeheartedly fulfill Thy will*”; — as though Dr. Jakobovits were proposing that the G-d-given *halachic* definition of the Jewish unit could be sidestepped for some other kind of unity of some other definition. And the reward would be “more religious instruction and practice in all schools.” — Under whose tutelage? — and with what kind of long-range effect? Unfortunately, the smattering of religious awareness thus far promoted in the Israeli *Mamlachti* public schools has proven to be of very little value and of very short duration.

. . . And an Order From the Courts

The Supreme Courts ordered the rabbinical authorities today to cease and desist from interfering with the formation of a government coalition. The order nisi, directed to the Chief Rabbinate Council and Tel Aviv Rabbinical Court, gave those bodies two weeks to show cause why they should not reverse their ban on the National Religious Party from joining a coalition. The Supreme Court also issued a temporary injunction barring the rabbinical authorities from enforcing their ban pending the Court's final decision in the matter . . . .

It was uncertain . . . what action the NRP would take in view of the Supreme Court's order . . . .

Avraham Verdiger, an MK of the Agudah bloc filed an urgent agenda motion in the Knesset today claiming that the Supreme Court was interfering with the work of the rabbinical courts.

JTA March 5

In the meantime, it was predicted that Rabbi Goren will simply ignore the court's show-case order for it was no longer relevant; and the court, in turn, will drop its claim. After all, the rabbinical decision did not actually "ban" the NRP from joining the government. Indeed,

Interior Minister Yosef Burg insisted today that the decision to join the Meir government did not run counter to the Chief Rabbinate's ruling. According to Burg, that ruling was aimed against certain specific proposals. The NRP, he said, has since received somewhat changed proposals for a compromise and these, coupled with the deteriorating security situation on the Syrian front created new facts on which the party voted, he said.

JTA - March 7

Whether the rabbis saw their ruling as violated or honored was another matter, as expressed by their own statements, quoted later in this article.

(comment)

The court's challenge itself does dramatize several basic issues that run like a San Adrean Fault through the structure of Israeli society: Most religious authorities find the idea of a secular-appointed rabbinical body, along the lines of Israel's Chief Rabbinate, most reprehensible, robbing a religious body of its independence . . . . The Mizrahi has always felt that by "cooperating" with secular groups, the others will eventually be influenced to subscribe to religious convictions; thus, in their view, it pays to go along with their designs rather than rupture their association and doom the Zionist State to an existence without a "full religious involvement," no matter how compromised\* . . . . The secularists, in turn, maintain that the Chief Rabbinate exists by administrative fiat and has no legitimacy

\* Again, the reader is advised to refer to Rabbi Meyer's piece in the Mar. '73 JO.

superseding its creator's authority.

The three-way confrontation triggered by the election crisis had tremendous dramatic potential; but then the NRP backed out and left many secularists with the impression that, indeed, the rabbis' word is not binding, only advisory, and thus not cause for concern . . . . Dr. Burg's explanation may have salved his conscience, but readers of the N.Y. *Times* only knew of the government's impending crisis because of a "rabbinical ban," and its subsequent swift resolution; while the Israeli reader acquainted with Burg's rationale also read the rabbinical protests that followed.

## The Explanation

THE REASON FOR THE NRP'S sudden (and, to many, not unexpected) reversal was (as Dr. Burg said) much the same as Dayan's and Peres's the previous day:

**A suddenly developed security threat on the Syrian front — a reported massive build-up of forces . . . No details were released on the reported sudden military build-up . . . .**

**Initial public reaction was one of skepticism, however. Many Israelis, disenchanted of late with politics and politicians, regarded the alleged emergency as a put up job intended to allow Dayan and Peres to return to the fold without losing face.**

JTA - March 7

This security threat also figured prominently in the NRP's actions: Unity, the NRP explained, is of paramount importance at a time of national peril.

(comment)

The questions that immediately come to mind are: "Why is national unity based on Torah-defined criteria of lesser importance than a political unity?" — and "Why must the National Religious Party discard its cardinal principles for the sake of national unity when no other group — not Labor in deference to a religious definition of Jewry, nor Likud in regard to the geographic definition of Israel — felt compelled to do the same?"

## The Rabbinical Reaction

BEING IGNORED is insulting treatment. Being defied can be injurious, as well. And the rabbinate did not respond tolerantly to either.

Rabbi Zvi Yehuda Kook, son of (first) Chief Rabbi Avrohom Yitzchok Kook ccc, and rabbinical mentor to the NRP, spared no words denouncing the party:

**Dr. Burg knows well that the security problem is totally unrelated to his decision (to join the coalition); he promised me explicitly that he would not join the coalition. The very next day what happened — to their great shame and defiance! The Mizrahi has lost every reason for its existence.**

quoted in DER ALGEMEINER JOURNAL March 14

In addition:

Chief Rabbi Shlomo Goren attacked the NRP forcefully and publicly for failing to heed his injunction against joining the new Cabinet because of the "Who Is a Jew" issue.

The NRP decision gravely injured the prestige, authority, and status of the Chief Rabbinate, he declared. It was ironic, as it was tragic, that the very movement which had founded the Chief Rabbinate in Israel had acted thus to violate its authority, he added.

JTA - March 10

And:

Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik of Boston: "My opinion is the same as a few weeks ago. It is prohibited to enter the government because it concerns an issue which determines whether *halachah* can be affected in public life in Israel . . . All achievements the NRP is boasting about have no value if they want to justify their entrance in the government because it was a 'time of crisis' . . . the question arises, why didn't Premier Golda Meir become frightened? She did not overlook anything and remained by her stubbornness."

JTA - March 24 '74

### Dr. Burg's Program: To Improve a "Perfect Record"

AMID THE FLURRY of cries of betrayal and accusations of expediency, several questions emerge regarding the future course of Israel's "*Mihu Yehudi*" policy: *What are Dr. Burg's intentions?* (As Minister of Interior he is in charge of enforcing the Law of Return.) *Can Dr. Burg's avowed intentions be taken at face value? What does Mrs. Meir have in mind? Can the Minister of Interior set up purely halachic criteria for Jewishness? And with the best of intentions, can he effectively enforce them?*

One can only evaluate Dr. Burg's integrity of word and efficiency of performance on the basis of past performance . . . *How had he fared in the past?* Early in March, before the government crisis was resolved:

The latest compromise offered by Labor on the Who Is a Jew issue would have Premier Golda Meir announce in her first Knesset speech that the Interior Minister had informed her that *he had not in the past and would not in the future register non-Jews as Jews.* Once a new government is formed, a ministerial committee would be appointed to seek a permanent legal solution to the problem.

JTA - March 6

(It is assumed Mrs. Meir received clearance from Dr. Burg before planning her announcement.)

After the political crisis was over, however:

Israel's Minister of Interior said today that he had directed his officials to refuse to register as Jews immigrants who were converted abroad unless their conversions had been in accordance with the orthodox interpretation of Jewish law.

However, the minister, Yosef Burg, conceded that some people converted by Reform and Conservative rabbis abroad had probably been listed as Jews in the official population register without his knowledge.

N.Y. TIMES - March 21

As for past performance, whom is one to believe, Dr. Burg . . . or Dr. Burg?

Perhaps one must accept Dr. Burg's explanation that there were registrations "without his knowledge." This has apparently happened in the past, in registering non-"converted" Gentiles as Jews. A story in Israel's daily *Ha'aretz* (18 Adar, 5734) proclaimed:

RABBINICAL SOURCES: HUNDREDS OF INCIDENTS OF REGISTERING NON-JEWS AS JEWS

Mr. Judah Feldy, Chairman of the Committee for the National Integrity, sent the Minister of Interior a list of 160 people who (he alleged) were registered as Jews in spite of being Gentiles. Mr. Feldy has not yet had a response from the Ministry . . . He has more lists that he is ready to submit.

For example, he cited the case of . . . who applied for conversion at the Tel Aviv Rabbinical Court in May '71, even though she and her four children already had been registered as Jews upon entry into Israel in March '71.

So the explanation is credible, but the efficiency record is not impressive.

### How Does One Spell "Halachah"?

ASSUMING DR. BURG SUCCEEDED in tightening control over his Ministry's efficiency, what would its guidelines be? There should be no doubt that, as a leader in a religious party, his long-range intentions are basically for a *halachic* criterion for determining Jewishness. The Prime Minister, however, has ideas of her own.

Prime Minister Golda Meir appealed on Friday to the annual convention of U.S. Reform Rabbis, (which was held in Jerusalem) for continued patience and tolerance on their part while efforts go on to find a solution to the problem of conversions.

Addressing the 350-odd rabbis and several hundred of their congregants . . . Mrs. Meir declared that the ministerial committee which she would set up to seek a solution to the problem would consult with all streams of world Jewry. The committee — whose establishment is a part of the new Labour-National Religious-Independent Liberal coalition agreement — would seek the advice of "the best minds of Jewish life on all sides," the Premier said.

JERUSALEM POST - March 19

*What solution do the Reform Rabbis desire? What will these "best minds" decide? And, to what extent can Mrs. Meir expect to fulfill their hope?*

America's Reform Rabbis made a public overture in Jerusalem last week to the Orthodox and Conservative streams in Judaism to consult with Reform in seeking a commonly acceptable solution to the

problem of conversion — the proposed committee would probably consider the possible formation of tripartite Orthodox-Conservative-Reform conversion boards, which would perform conversions under a unified and agreed practice.

JERUSALEM POST - March 19

(comment)

First one must realize that "a unified and agreed" practice of conversion involving Reform and Conservative rabbis is a patent impossibility, because it is a contradiction of terms for a Reform or Conservative Rabbi to perform a halachic conversion: if the rabbinical court officiating over the conversion includes rabbis who deny the divinity of the Torah, the actions of this court cannot be considered in accordance with Torah law (*halachah*) . . . . Does it make sense for individuals preaching a doctrine in opposition to Torah Judaism to usher converts into Torah Judaism?

But, even if an acceptable approach is somehow formulated in regard to future procedure, an uncertain peace would reign. In his statement to David Landau of the *Jerusalem Post*, Rabbi Robert I. Kahn of Houston, Texas, President of the Central Conference of American Rabbis

. . . stressed that if the three streams of Judaism achieved an agreed conversion process, the Reform movement and CCAR would insist that persons who had been converted in the past by Reform rabbis not in accordance with halachah be recognized retroactively as Jew. He himself had converted over 40 persons in Houston without the halachic requirements of circumcision (for males) and ritual immersion. It would be unthinkable, he said, if now, years or even decades later, these persons were to have their Jewishness questioned by the State of Israel.

Ibid

### What Can the Minister Do?

(comment)

IT IS DIFFICULT TO ENVISION how Dr. Burg would treat the existing converts already "ushered into Judaism" by Rabbi Kahn. It is also difficult to envision how he will handle prospective "halachic" converts trained for Judaism by Rabbi Kahn. Perhaps this is idle speculation, since — as Mrs. Meir promised — "a committee would be appointed . . ." and the decision is not to be Dr. Burg's alone.

Now if that committee would consist of leading Talmudic authorities, a definitive guideline in keeping with halachic definition of Jewishness could be anticipated. But Mrs. Meir has already announced her choice:

The members of the overseas conversions committee are Justice Minister Zadok (Labour), Religions Minister Raphael and Interior Minister Burg (National Religious Party), Health Minister Shemtov (Mapam) and Minister-without-Portfolio Hausner (Independent Liberals).

Jerusalem Post, (*ibid*)

Zadok is an old-time Mapai member . . . . Mr. Shemtov is an avowed left-wing radical . . . . Mr. Hausner is the father of the motion to legitimize civil marriages for those who do not qualify for *halachic* marriages . . . . And the chairman of the committee?

The Prime Minister herself is to chair the ministerial committee set up under the coalition agreement to examine the problem of conversions abroad.

*Ibid*

### An Issue That Touches All of Jewry

(comment)

AN ISSUE THAT TOUCHES ON the very definition of Jewry is a Torah issue. It is a major one when it has practical applications touching the integrity of the Jewish population in Israel, and ramifications affecting Jews all over the world.

A Torah issue *must* be determined along halachic guidelines, by those who are expert in the field: rabbinical authorities. And once rabbinical authorities have been consulted, their word must be honored. When any of these conditions are violated, only *chilul Hashem* can result.

On such occasions, party labels should indeed be forgotten. — Even before girding oneself for the battles that lie ahead to restore integrity to Jewry and dignity to the rabbinate, all should pause and join together in mourning. □

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WHEN ONLY NINE. Reb Lazar was orphaned, and an uncle summoned him from Kolno to come live with him in Lomza. His uncle eventually sent him to the Volozhin Yeshiva. He married at 18, and received 3,000 rubles nadan (a fortune in those days), plus a promise of support for the next ten years. He went on to learn in Kelm where he became a follower of Reb Yisroel Salanter, later entering a business partnership with another talmid chochom. Needless to say, the two had their minds more on the Gemora than on their business affairs, and half of his dowry was soon lost. In the meantime, his uncle died and left him another 3,000 rubles.

Then in Shevat, 5643, Reb Lazar learned that his beloved Rebbe, Reb Yisroel Salanter, passed away. Reb Lazar decided to build a yeshiva in Lomza al kivro — to perpetuate Reb Yisroel's memory. So he gathered his remaining funds — the inheritance plus the other half of his dowry — 4,500 rubles in all, to invest in the "Yeshiva business." Just as one consults an experienced businessman before embarking on a new venture, when about to invest in Torah, whom does one consult but the Stavisker Tzaddik.

The two men were amazed, for without setting foot outside the room, their prayers were answered.

Reb Lazar's concerns were more than financial. He had hoped to bring a Lithuanian-type Yeshiva, complete with its *mussar* program (concentrated study of Torah ethics) to Chassidic Poland — would it work? The two *tzaddikim* gave him their assurances coupled with their blessings and promised to help him in every way — a promise they fulfilled to the last days of their lives.<sup>2</sup> So Reb Lazar returned to Lomza, purchased a lot, and began construction of the Yeshiva building — but entered the deed in the name of Reb Chaim Leib Mishkovski, Stavisker Tzaddik.

1. He had bemoaned the neglect of the study of Dinei Nefashos (laws regarding capital punishment) since the Jews had lost their authority to enforce capital punishment. He thus dedicated his time and effort to that branch of halacha and he became known as the only person of his generation qualified to render decisions in the field. His sefer פני ארני החי, is impossible to find anywhere.

The Stavisker's son Reb Chezkiya Mishkovski married the daughter of the famous ba'al mussar Reb Yitzchok Blazar, the Rav of Petersburg. Reb Chezkiya Mishkovski (known as the Krinker Rav) was a leader of Agudath Israel and was active in hatzala during the Second World War. His widow, Reb Itzele's daughter, lives presently in K'far Chassidim with her two sons.

2. After the Stavisker died, his widow asked for a room in the Yeshiva which her husband had loved so much. She was given an apartment where she spent the rest of her days.

# LOMZA:

## A Yeshiva

# Grew in Poland

### Encounter In Stavisk

THE YEAR WAS 1883. Beginning with the landmark founding of the Volozhner Yeshiva in 1803, yeshivos were flourishing in both Russia and Lithuania, but Poland was still in the pre-Volozhin era. Each town had its own *Beis Midrash* or *shtiebel* where a number of boys studied Torah, and the local Rabbi served as both Rav and Rosh Yeshiva. Something had to be done. So the Chofetz Chaim took a trip to Stavisk to see how the situation could be corrected.

Stavisk was only a small town near Lomza, but its Rav, Reb Chaim Leib Mishkovski, known as the *Stavisker Tzaddik*, was famous as a *Gaon* and *Posek*.<sup>1</sup> And the Chofetz Chaim, a great admirer of the *Stavisker*, would often visit him — in fact, he had consulted him on difficult decisions while working on his monumental *Mishneh B'rurah*.

The two *tzaddikim* were sitting in the "Beis Din" room of Stavisk discussing the situation, when a knock on the door interrupted them: It was Reb Lazar Shulavitz.

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CHAIM SHAPIRO'S reminiscences of Jewish life in Europe before World War II is a source of delight to 10 readers. He acknowledges a debt of gratitude to Rabbi Moses Yoshor for much of the information in this article.

## Lomza Welcomes the Yeshiva

THE JEWS OF LOMZA greeted the projected Yeshiva with enthusiasm and financial support.—A wealthy widow donated her entire fortune, and moved into the public old-age home.—A local brick manufacturer donated 35,000 bricks without informing his wife. When she learned of his contribution, she was infuriated, for without her advice and consent, she doubted if she had a share in the *mitzvah*. So she donated an additional 35,000 bricks on her own.

With love and affection, the Jews of Lomza watched their Yeshiva grow.<sup>3</sup>

### The Lomza Plan

AS A BA'AL MUSSAR, Reb Lazar felt that he had to be in full charge of his students' environment and that could only be accomplished by housing them in dormitories. In those days, yeshiva dormitories, with their own cooking and eating facilities on the premises, were unheard of. But he ignored precedent, and endowed Lomza with the largest building any Yeshiva in Poland ever had — with the possible exception of Yeshivas Chachmei Lublin, which Horav Meir Shapiro opened in the 'thirties.

Reb Lazar pointed to the Talmudic adage "*Im ein g'diyim, ein t'yoshim* — if there are no spring-lambs, there will be no rams," and he established no less than twelve yeshiva preparatory schools in as many neighboring towns, so he would have a steady supply of new young students for the Yeshiva Gedola. He personally appointed the Rebbis of these "farm schools" and financially underwrote the budget of the full dozen.

### Short Stop in Novograd

ON ONE OF HIS MANY TRAVELS, the Chofetz Chaim once arrived in the small town of Novograd at three in the morning. As was his custom, he did not go to the local "hotel" at such a late hour, but went directly to the *Beis Hamidrash* to learn until *Shacharis*. To his great surprise, he found a group of teenagers there studying *Gemora*. When he inquired why they had not yet gone to sleep, they replied, "We don't dare! Reb Lazar is coming next week to test us and we'd better be ready!"

In the morning, the Chofetz Chaim completely "forgot" the purpose of his trip and left immediately for Lomza, walked into the Yeshiva and kissed Reb Lazar for his activities for Torah.

<sup>3</sup> The townspeople even found Biblical support for their enterprise: ". . . ותאמר . . . למה זה אנכי?" — (Lomza anochi) — "If so, wherefore am I? — and she went (to the Yeshiva of Shem and Eiver) to seek G-d."

## Winter Clearing

WHENEVER THE CHOFETZ CHAIM was in the Lomza vicinity, he made it his business to visit the Yeshiva. Thus, one winter night, upon arriving in Lomza, his first stop was the Yeshiva. A heavy snow had fallen and walking was difficult. Yet, when he came to the Yeshiva, he found the walks clean. In the morning, he commended the *shammos* for clearing the snow, to enable the *bnei Torah* to come to davening without difficulty. Reb Avrohom Moshe, the *shammos*, denied credit. "I was sick last night. It was Reb Lazar who cleared the snow."

No surprise, then, that when Reb Lazar's daughter once visited Vilna and presented herself to the Gaon Horav Chaim Ozer Grodzenski, he rose to his feet and declared to all present, "One has to stand up for Reb Lazar's daughter!"

### Growing Pains

REB LAZAR WAS AN INNOVATOR. Unlike other yeshivos where the entire student body was like one large class, with only one Rosh Yeshiva lecturing, Lomza had five levels, each with its own Rosh Yeshiva. Eventually, Reb Lazar made two groups at the third level, Gimmel-Alef and Gimmel-Beis, increasing educational effectiveness and overhead expenses.

His approach became famous, and the Chassidic Rebbes of Ger, Alexander and Sochatshov each called on him for advice on how to set up a yeshiva. Rabbi Yoseif J. Hurvitz, founder of the Novardoker Mussar Movement, also spent time in Lomza and then built his yeshiva network along identical lines.

Soon the Yeshiva admitted its 400th student, and the local community found the tremendous financial burden too much to carry.

Reb Lazar was desperate and rumors were flying that he might be forced to close the Yeshiva. When the Stavisker heard this, he immediately came to Lomza. That evening the *Tzaddik* took a stroll with Reb Lazar. While discussing a Torah topic, they passed one *Beis Midrash* after another. All were closed because of the late hour. Suddenly the Stavisker stopped and said, "Reb Lazar, what do you hear?"

In the stillness of the night only the voices of the *bnei Torah* were ringing over the entire vicinity.

"I hear the *kol haTorah*," replied Reb Lazar.

"Where do the voices come from? From the *shuls* we just passed?" asked the Stavisker.

"No, they are all closed...dark...silent," replied Reb Lazar.

"And now you want to close the last *kol haTorah*, the Yeshiva?" asked the Stavisker.

With renewed vigor, Reb Lazar began to work harder

yet. The Stavisker, the Chofetz Chaim, and countless other *Gedolim* issued appeals on behalf of the Lomza Yeshiva. The Jewish community in neighboring Koenigsberg, East Prussia, responded with help. In Germany-proper, Rabbi Dr. Ezriel Hildesheimer, Rabbi Dr. Breuer of Frankfurt, even Baron Rothschild, all answered the appeal. The yoke eased for a while but the response still was not enough, so Reb Lazar dispatched *meshulachim* to every corner of the globe.

Then the famous joke was born: Whenever the newspapers carried a discussion among philosophers and scientists whether human life exists on Mars (somehow they left the moon for poets), the Jews of Lomza laughed: If Reb Lazar Shulavitz has no *meshulach* on Mars, you can be sure that no one lives there!

In those days banks and checks were unknown. Funds arrived from all over the world by mail — in cash! How could the funds be protected? secured from thieves? The Rosh Yeshiva found a safe place by entrusting all the cash into the hands of Reb Avrohom Moshe, the *shammos* (Reb Avrohom Moshe was a student in the Yeshiva, married and remained in the Yeshiva all his life), for who would ever suspect that the mattress of a poor *shammos* was stuffed with such treasure?

#### Life on a Shoestring

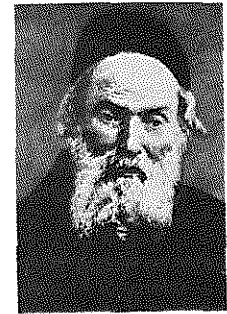
REB LAZAR'S WIFE complained to the Chofetz Chaim that their meager income was insufficient for feeding their family as well as all the guests Reb Lazar would bring home every day. She asked the Chofetz Chaim to intervene on her behalf to increase their weekly stipend by a few rubles. The Chofetz Chaim replied, "If Reb Lazar would accept a raise, he would have to raise the salaries of all the faculty members, and Reb Lazar could not afford that. . . ."

#### Assistants and Heirs

WHEN HIS DAUGHTERS grew up, he asked his old friend Reb Nosson Tzvi Finkel (the Alter of Slobodke) to recommend two suitable sons-in-law. He suggested the "Iluy of Trok," Reb Yechiel Mordechai Gordon, later known as the "Prince of all Roshei Yeshivos"; and Reb Yehoshua Zelig Ruch, "The Rokishker," who was recognized as the greatest *masmid* in the yeshivos of Telshe and Slobodke. When these two great men came to Lomza, they proved to be a great blessing for the Yeshiva.—The enrollment leaped to over 500.

Knowing that he could trust the Yeshiva in their hands, Reb Lazar left Poland for Jerusalem.

One cannot talk about Lomza Yeshiva without men-



**The Chofetz Chaim:**  
*"No yeshiva in Poland... something must be done."*

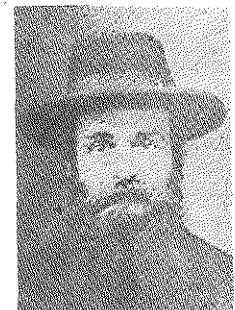


**Reb Chaim Ozer Grodzensky:**  
*"One must stand up for Reb Lazar's daughter!"*



**Reb Yechiel Mordechai Gordon**

and



**Reb Yehoshua Zelig Ruch:**  
*They came to Lomza, and the enrollment leaped to over 500.*



**Reb Moshe Rosenstein**  
*"Five hours of uninterrupted thinking for five minutes pure thought."*

tioning the following three: *The Mashgiach*, *Reb Moshe Rosenstein*, a "graduate" of Kelm, who fasted for thirty years. . . . He would taste a bit of food at night after *Ma'ariv*, and , of course, on *Shabbos* and holidays. It was his habit to march up and down the aisle of the Beis Hamidrash for five or six hours at a stretch; he would explain that it takes five uninterrupted hours of concentrated thinking to produce five minutes of pure thought. . . . He was up every morning at dawn. Seeing the sun rise, he would say, is to witness Creation anew every day.

*Reb Shabsi Vernikovske* (brother-in-law of Horav Yaakov Kaminetzky שליט"א), the *Rebbi of Gimmel-Alef*. Almost seven feet tall, he would bend down to the height of the smallest student to answer his question. And he would not straighten his back until the conversation was completed, and the boy was totally satisfied.

Then "*Der Alter*", *Reb Yisroel Leib Ogulski*. He had been the *Mashgiach* for a time, then became a *rebbe*. In my days he was old and retired, but would still test the boys. He was the only *talmid chochom* I ever knew who

would take exception to *shoklen zich*—shaking during davening.<sup>4</sup>

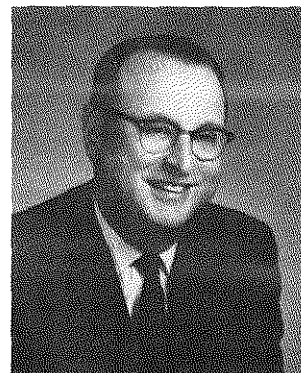
As *Shivas Zion* became a reality, and the Jews began returning to *Eretz Yisroel*, a similar movement began in the Yeshiva world; the Torah must return with the people. The first one to "return" was the "Alter of Slobodke," who took a group of *bnei Torah* with him and founded the Slobodke Yeshiva in Hebron. After the pogrom in 1929, the Yeshiva moved to Jerusalem where the Yeshiva of Chevron is flourishing to this day.

The second to move to *Eretz Yisroel* was Yeshivas Lomza. Reb Lazar was already there, and in 1926 his son-in-law Reb Yechiel Mordechai Gordon sent fifty students to join him. In those days, all yeshivos were located in Jerusalem and vicinity. Reb Lazar, always an innovator, chose Petach Tikvah, the "mother" of the new *yishuv*. Reb Lazar died at the age of 82, but his Yeshiva is still flourishing in Petach Tikvah, under his grandson, Reb Lazar Ozer. □

4 As a Litvak, he could not pronounce the *shin* so he could smilingly admonish his students: "אָה סאַר סאָל'ט זיך, נישט אַ מענטז." "Ah sair sokl't zich, nist a mentz."

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## “Der Pinteleh Yid”: An Archetype

*What awakens the errant Jew to his sacred heritage? How does one understand the force that can make every Jew closer to his glorious past than to pressing distractions of the day?*

*“But where shall wisdom be found?  
Where is the place of understanding?”*

*Job 28:12*

EVERY LANGUAGE has its favorite idioms. While Yiddish is no less famous for its numerous pungent expressions — many of which defy translation — there is one we hear very often these days: the ubiquitous phrase, *der pinteleh Yid*.

It is mentioned in reference to many situations: Many Russian Jews who hitherto had no background in religion or in any form of Jewish education suddenly revived some sense of identity with the Jewish people and their homeland. They then risk their entire established life in the Soviet Union and emigrate to Israel. Why does this occur? How does this occur? The answer that is usually given is no more than the Delphic pronouncement: “Their *pinteleh Yid* came through.”

Similarly, behold the story of the *ba'al teshuva*, the penitent, who, after a life of non-religious orientation with, perhaps, little Jewish identity, also reanimates some sense of identity and of belonging to the Jewish community.<sup>1</sup> He too is said to have exercised his *pinteleh Yid*.

The popular conception of this *pinteleh* is to see it as a type of vital essence of Jewishness that is indigenous to one's personality. If developed to its fullest, it need not remain a mere potential essence, but rather become the complete being of the individual Jew. If neglected, however, it may recede from one's conscious awareness . . . but never disappear entirely. It can be revitalized when the subject evolves the proper intent and desire to identify with Jewishness or Judaism proper.<sup>2</sup> It is in this manner that this concept is thought of in common usage and reference.

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MOSHE HALEVY SPERO of Cleveland Heights, Ohio, is a frequent contributor to Anglo-Jewish publications. His “Wisdom as the Cock Crows,” appeared in the Oct. '72 JO.

But what gives the *pinteleh* the power to survive in the most errant of personalities, waiting for the signal to be activated? Moreover, how can we explain the apparent universality of this phenomenon, that it appears in every Jewish personality?

While rabbinical scholars have dealt extensively and definitively with the phenomenon over the ages, I would suggest that the modern ear may well respond to an explanation coached in terms of the Psychoanalytic concept of the archetype as proposed by Carl Gustav Jung. It might help us conceptualize the idea of what is meant by the *pinteleh Yid*.

### Some Standard Archetypes

A FEW EXAMPLES may serve well as introduction to the idea of archetypes: There are many concepts that we accept as being learned in the course of our life experiences and education processes. The most obvious of these are motherhood, brotherhood, fatherhood, kingship, birth, rebirth, death and the like. However, theorized Jung, these categories of experience are actually a product of humanity's experience with the real world. That is to say, they are inherited characteristics that we receive from our earliest ancestors who had the first basic experiences with motherhood, fatherhood, birth, death and kingship. These experiences are much the same as those that any individual living in any age and in any part of the world might have. This racial datum is conceptualized in a universal thought-form which is an inborn characteristic of the human psyche. This thought-form creates mental images or schema that correspond to some aspect of our environment. Jung called this thought-form the archetype.

Thus, the archetype of “mother” produces a preconception of the characteristics of motherhood e.g., attention, warmth, nurturance and affection, that is available to the cognitive mind so that it can be identified with a real mother. The child inherits a schema of

the mother image which can be influential in determining how the child will perceive his real mother. The child's experience and manifest behavior towards its mother will be a byproduct of 1) an inner disposition towards perceiving the world in a certain manner, indicated by the specific archetype, and 2) the actual nature of the world. In this example, we would be referring to the combination of the archetypal interpretation of motherhood *and the child's experiences* with its real mother. The same process applies for all archetypes. They predispose one in relating to and apprehending its contents in the real world.

Perhaps one other example might be helpful in understanding this theoretical concept. Jung felt that man's inherited experience with various energy forms such as storms, floods and earthquakes, formed a predisposition in man toward perceiving and being fascinated by energy and power. This is what drives man to desire control and to create power and energy. It explains the child's fascination with firecrackers, the youth's interest in fast cars, and the adult's preoccupation with the task of releasing the hidden energies of nature.

The point of interest is that the archetype is not a learned characteristic of personality but is already present in the substrata of the individual's psyche.

### The Archetypal Learning Experience

SHOULD THIS IDEA seem foreign to the reader, let him reflect upon the following Talmudic teaching.<sup>4</sup> We are told that before a Jewish child is born, an angel comes to it and teaches it the entire Torah. Once this is accomplished the angel taps the child on its upper lip, thus causing the child to forget all that it had been taught. This, it is often interpreted, is what enables one to understand the intricacies of the Torah when it is studied in the "real world" for, in actuality, one is merely *relearning* that material — having been previously exposed to it while yet in utero. The same interpretation can be observed of the archetype in that it prepares us to relate to its actual content when we "re-encounter" it in the real world.

With this in mind, we are prepared to understand a well known Talmudic concept that might be interpreted as an archetype — of specific relevance to the Jew. Consider the following maxim: מעשי אבות סימן לבנים "The deeds of the Fathers are a sign for the children."<sup>5</sup> This would seem to imply that the forefathers of Judaism: Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses et al, are to be held as the ethical exemplars for the Jewish People, for it was with the forefathers that the G-d - Man dialogue that defines the relationship of each Jew to his Creator began. G-d's favorite was not Nimrod, "The first man on earth to be a hunter,"<sup>6</sup> but Abraham, "I have known him to the end that he will command his children and his household after him; that they may keep the way of the L-rd; to do righteousness and Justice."<sup>7</sup>

In other words, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob do not merely serve as representatives of principles to be comprehended. They are lives to be continued. One who emulates the ways of Abraham, in effect, continues the life of Abraham. For the present is not new and distinct from the past. "Abraham is still standing before G-d" (*Bereishis 18:22*). Living with our patriarchs, we *become* Abraham, Isaac, Jacob.

The existential responsibility that man has to G-d and the related sense of duty, our ingrained national abhorrence for Amaleik and, as historical evidence tends to indicate, our passion for social justice are all components of this schema. In any situation that involves a moral or religious conflict, the Jew may look to the historical precedents set by the Fathers in their similar circumstances and try to emulate their actions. We are relating to TORAH, G-D, HOLINESS, KINGSHIP in a way previously experienced by our Forefathers, and even by ourselves, through our archetypes. They do not represent mere reference material — the information that we draw on is part of our Jewish historic past that has become ingrained in our personalities. We do not live *in* the past; we live *with* it. The Jew comes into the real world with this archetype of the deeds of the Fathers; a preprogrammed image with which one can function as a Torah Jew. It is a category of being as a form that reaches out to be filled, as a model of the soul.

### Survival - Back to the Archetype

SINCE THE PARTIARCHS — in their fidelity to Torah — represent the essence of Jewishness, it should be expected that living in their ways is the key to their children's survival. Interestingly, Nathan Glazer — not especially known for his Torah orientation — also asserts in his study that the survival of Judaism as an entity depends on the survival of Orthodox Judaism, and not any variation thereof, because the practices and the ingrained beliefs and ways of Orthodoxy provide meaning to life for the Jewish People.<sup>8</sup> Yet, he also states, that despite the failure of Conservative and Reform Judaism to effect any real, lasting or meaningful results in their attempts to "revitalize" the religion, there was always some latent force at work, some underlying power that kept most of their ilk from assimilating *totally* into the mainstream of American culture. In describing what that force was, Glazer seems to come close to anticipating our concept of the archetypal foundation in Judaism.

All Jews, he insists, have a subconscious tendency to want to maintain themselves as a *people* — not merely as a religion.<sup>9</sup> This point is vital, for a people can keep themselves and their religion alive. No matter how shallow the belief of these early American and German Jews was, they were still prepared *to be Jews*. Something in them set them to this attitude of spirit and state of mind . . . this staunch refusal to become non-Jewish.<sup>10</sup>

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**Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are not merely representatives of principles to be emulated. They are lives to be continued. Living with our patriarchs, we become Abraham, Isaac, Jacob.**

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Despite all that Reform and Conservatism rejected in the Jewish way of life, Glazer points out that they retained the rite of circumcision because it represented the minimum tie with Judaism in their efforts to, at least, avoid becoming non-Jewish.

Because of this staying power, even the minimal acts of the errant Jew still have potential religious meaning. They are related to the archetype that demands to be realized — if not fully, at least to some degree. It seeks expression in real life and, if not in one particular generation, the determination remains, waiting to be reanimated by a dedication and consecration of one's self to G-d and His People.

In Judaism, it is not necessarily a direct experience with G-d, encountered after an inner search, that changes man; but the example (archetype) of the good and holy life, presented by the present and past communities of Israel as an ideal, can turn a man around: The community, expressed in every Jewish personality, can also bring people to faith. The archetype demands to seek faith through concrete examples of Jewish life. No fresh emotional stirring or newfound intellectual awareness can substitute for the revelation — for prophetic events — for the unique events that happened at particular moments in Jewish history.

These events form the mainstay of Jewish thought — not abstract thoughts or a generalized morality. And since not all of the Jewish people can have prophetic experiences or even the type of relationships that the forefathers had with G-d, the archetype allows us to draw on these experiences, these vital histories.

This, incidentally, is why conversion to Judaism is more than simply joining a religion . . . it is the act of entering into a people so that the initiate can draw on the myriad examples from Judaism's historic past in formulating his own connection with them and G-d — the same a born Jew accomplishes when referring to the archetype.

It is this particular archetype, then — the deeds of the fathers as a sign for the children — that, in fact, is the power and content of the mysterious *pinteleh Yid*. This concept is an inherent, sometimes suppressed, part of the collective unconscious of the Jews. One functions with it in one's attempts to become a realized self and in achieving *shleimus* — wholeness — man-with-man and man-with-G-d. We can only reach this solidarity of soul when we ourselves, our experiences and our interactions with life, are worthy of becoming part of the total content of this group soul data — this historic inheritance — *der pinteleh Yid*.

#### Addenda

FOR TWO MORE EXAMPLES of the potency of the archetype's influence on Jewish history, we can refer directly to the Torah itself. Hopefully, they will demonstrate how this theory supplies us with the makings of a tenable epistemology, or theory of knowledge, for Jewish history.

Tradition tells us that all of the children of Israel and the souls of those who were to exist were assembled at Sinai to hear Moses give the *Asseres Hadibros* (Med. Rabbah, Yisro XXIII:4). Indeed, there is a practical application that is based on this tradition: a Jewish slave who does not wish to accept his release from servitude at the appropriate time has his ear bored through against the doorpost (*mezzuzah*). The commentaries explain that "the ear that heard at Sinai" (*Kiddushin 22b*) that man shall have no master over himself other than G-d deserves to be so castigated — measure for measure. Obviously, the basis for this reasoning is that all Israel *was*, indeed, at Sinai.

While one would certainly not deny the literal interpretation of this tradition, let it be suggested that the latter can be given a fuller meaning if understood as a reference to an archetype. That is to say, all Israel's experience at Sinai is borne as an archetypal "sign" that is ever active in the depths of every Jewish psyche. It might be the force behind every Jew who so passionately and violently resists moral stagnation, social decay and political mendacity. This revelation at Sinai is not something we read about or were told about, it is something that *was* and it is something that still *is*. The past is kept constantly alive in the present through the timeless archetypes.

. . . Reflect upon yet another example of the long-range effects of the archetypal predispositions on Jewish history and personality. When, on the eve of his historic re-encounter with his estranged brother, Esau, Jacob prepared his *malachim* for what they were to say, Jacob instructed them to preface all specific statements with the phrase ". . . so says your servant, Jacob." He did so, perhaps, to appease Esau and, by so doing, hoped to make negotiations with his brother less difficult.

The medrashic literature relates a similar story concerning R. Yehudah haNassi and the Emperor Antoninus.<sup>12</sup> In a letter addressed to the emperor, R. Yehudah saluted him by referring to himself as ". . . your servant, Yehudah, to the Emperor Antoninus." When R. Yehudah's colleagues asked him why he so — denigrated himself to a mere temporal ruler, he respond-

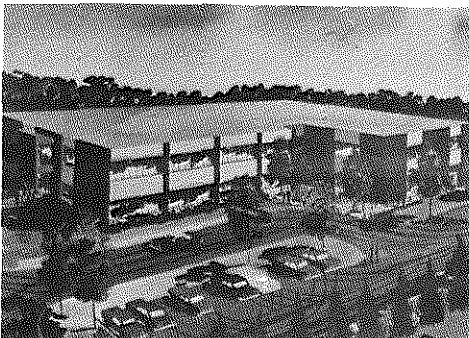
ed, "Am I better than our father, Jacob, who called himself 'servant' in deference to Esau?"

Certain commentators have asked why R. Yehudah haNassi felt that the situation of Jacob and Esau could serve as a justification for the Rabbi's act since the Midrash mentions that Tannaic opinion did not look upon Jacob's humility with complete approval. The response that one of the commentators makes is another example of the potent meaning of the maxim of the deeds of the fathers as a "sign" for the children.<sup>13</sup> That is, once Jacob opted to humble himself in the presence of Esau — the initial experience for the archetype of such action throughout Jewish history originated. Moreover, this experience concretized itself with the repetition and reinforcement of this defensive attitude towards Esau throughout history. Thus, R. Yehudah, although he lived some fifteen hundred years after Jacob, acted as he was predisposed to act by a powerful but latent archetype for such behavior. He, after conscious reflection of subliminal prompting, chose to follow its suggestion. Indeed, R. Yehudah would have

been truly able to claim that he "knew" what Jacob meant when he said "... your servant, Jacob," for he had drawn upon the inclinations of an archetype and had reenacted a past patriarchal action. He, in this manner, made the historic event "known" to his mind.

**Notes**

1. This state of lack of identity can be described as *anomic Jewishness*. It is not enough for the Jewish soul to be only cognitively aware that he is, by birth, a Jew. There is a conative and emotional commitment that is necessary as well. The personal involvement of Man with the Jewish People is *sine que non* for a fulfilled identity and sense of well being.
2. Cf. Glazer, Nathan, *American Judaism*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1972, p. 91-105., wherein he discusses the diffused and not necessarily religious nature of *Jewishness* as opposed to *Judaism*.
3. Hall, Calvin S. and Gardner Lindzay, *Theories of Personality*, New York, John Wiley and Sons Inc., 1970, p. 83-4
4. Niddah 30:b
5. Sotah 34:b, also cf. Ramban Bereishis 12:6
6. Bereishis 10:9
7. Bereishis 18:19
8. Glazer, *op. cit.* p. 136-7
9. *Ibid.*, p. 54-5.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 144.
11. Bereishis 32:5
12. *Bereishis Rabbah* 75:6. Scholars dispute the exact identity of this Emperor Antoninus; he may have been the Roman Antoninus Pius (138-161)
13. *Avnei Eizal*



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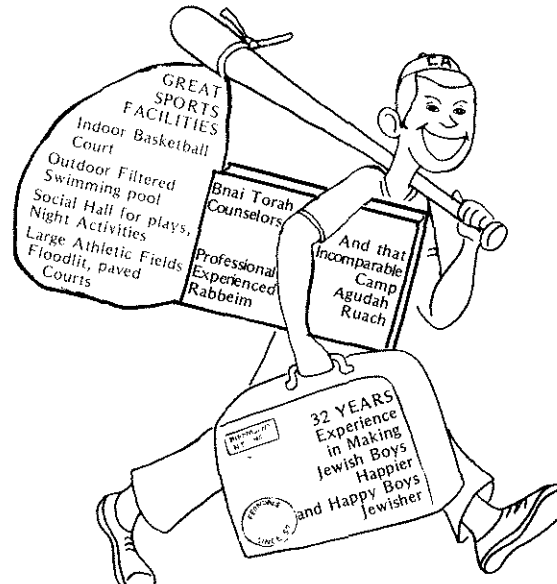
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# The Non-Vanishing American Jew

## *a profile in five points*

### **Pinteleh One: Mark**

WHEN I opened the door, I was more than a little taken aback by Mark's shoulder-length hair. Of course, I invited him in. We were told that he was enrolled in YU's JSS program for late starters. Don't they have a dress code, or hair code there?

He set his bags down, and the easy smile and pleasant drawl placed him in Georgia, where indeed he came from. "Jes' wanted to see what Yiddishkeit is like in Burro Park," he said apologetically . . . .

During the meals he volunteered some information about NCSY Shabbatones and his gradual swing to Orthodoxy, and he joined us in some *zemiro*s in a slightly off-key baritone.

After Shabbos lunch, some classmates picked him up. A number of hours passed, and he returned to the house in something of a daze. I tried not to think the worst, but after all, he was a high school kid from the sticks with only a minimal background. "You O.K., Mark? You look dizzy."

"Dizzy?" he repeated. "I think I'm drunk — or high, maybe."

He slumped into a chair without taking off his coat, his eyes glazed and smiled: "We musta' seen thousands of religious Jews . . . ten thousand, at least. Hey, the only time I ever saw a *minyán* that walked to *shul* on Shabbos back home was the time it snowed three years ago!"

### **Pinteleh Two: Adrienne**

"THE young lady at the switchboard said that you might help me," she said in a voice so lush and theatrical that I wasn't surprised by what followed:

"I'm a professional musician — voice, and cello. I play with the NY Philharmonic in Lincoln Center, and I sing at night club engagements. Did you catch that rave in the *Times* last month for my opening at . . . . .?"

"No, I didn't."

"Well," she said, with a convincing touch of modesty, "my teacher — (she referred to a name well known in music circles, but unfamiliar to me) thought me good enough to go on tour. But, now that I've become

*\*Only the names are fictitious*

religious, I'm out of the Philharmonic and I can't take these night spot engagements because of Friday nights, and late Saturdays soon. So I thought you might be able to direct me to some other channel of performance."

— N'shei luncheons? — B'nos gatherings? I couldn't think of anything at the moment. But I wished her well before hanging up. Then I thanked her for calling, and she didn't understand why I should thank *her*.

### **Pinteleh Three: Josh**

DECEMBER 1973: Posters bedeck the hallways of the highrise apartment houses, and they quickly become the topic of conversation. The word gets out "The Jewish are Coming," referring to the volunteer yeshiva boys of the Jewish Education Program of Zeirei Agudath Israel of America who were coming to Co-op City to celebrate Chanuka. Bands, prizes, lighting the Menorah — to the children the JEP program was a novelty, fun. To their parents: nostalgia, emotion, and even reflection.

February 1974: A JEP volunteer follows up, telephoning parents of the more than 200 children who filled the Young Israel of Co-op City for the Chanuka rally, calling them urging them to enroll their children in an hour-a-week release hour program in public school. Response to one phone call: "Sorry, but you're much too late. Josh is in yeshiva for three weeks, now."

### **Pinteleh Four: Mr. Richter**

HE HANDED me his card: *Standard Press, Inc., Stanley Richter, Vice President*. I looked at the slight, bearded chap in the pinched black hat — the type of fellow I daven next to in Boro Park's "Sfar-dishe Shul" without a second thought — and then at the Back Home address of Standard Press. "We could do the job better, quicker, and cheaper," he said with a New England twang that reverberated with penny-pinching efficiency and economy.

I wasn't open to changing printers at the moment, but I was curious, so I steered him to other topics. Stanley Richter divides his time between his printing plant in Maine and an apartment he maintains in the

Eastern Parkway section of Brooklyn.

"Lubavitch?"

"No," he said. "Just a plain Jew. I admire them, but I have no affiliations."

"What about back home?"

"Well," he replied slowly, "we do have a *minyan* on Rosh Hashanah-Yom Kippur, but the rest of the year it's a struggle." He smiled like I should know what he means.

"You mean there isn't a *minyan* of religious Jews in your town?"

"Well, I wouldn't be that uncharitable. They're getting there, a bit at a time. . . . Sort of like I did two years back."

"Lubavitch?" I asked again.

"Not really. Sort of self-awakening, you might say."

"How about your - uh - family? Do they go along with your change in life-style?"

"Nope. Sorry to say, they don't. My wife and I —



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ANDREW FIER

we're married twenty-two years now — were very close — separated a little over a year ago . . . . Rough going," he said softly, adding a sigh that I was sure shook the very walls of the building.

**Pinteleh Five: Bruce**

I TOOK Dr. Leonard's warning seriously, and I tried to ignore the long, blue satin robe Bruce was wearing and concentrated on his reputed intelligence, but it wasn't easy. The robe contrasted strangely with the blond fluff of curls that protruded from all sides of his over-sized brown hat. In the East Village, maybe; but it was all so very incongruous with the rest of the trappings in the middle-class "professional" shul where we had just welcomed the Shabbos.

"Bruce is from Indianapolis," the Doctor said. "He's in the middle of his junior year in college," he added, naming a prestigious college in Upstate New York. "Only nineteen, at that."

The grave look in his slate-grey eyes expressed an intelligence that his words were slow to reinforce. But the doc said he's a brilliant kid, so we decided to give him a chance.

On the way home, we passed a group of Bobover Chassidim, and I overheard one of them, glancing over his shoulder at the pant legs, the blue "gown" hanging beneath the knee-length coat, the curls, the hat — "*A mahn tzie ah froh?*"

After the Friday night meal, Bruce's host Shmuel asked him, "Why the robe?"

"I had to wear something, and I haven't got a jacket," he explained.

Shmuel went to his teen-age son's wardrobe, and returned with a sport jacket. "Try this."

Bruce stood up, untied the robe, and slipped it off his shoulders, revealing a brown jacket.

"But you're wearing a jacket!" Shmuel all-but shouted in surprise.

"Yes," Bruce answered, "but it's my week-day jacket. I don't have a *Shabbos* jacket." □

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(Congressman Carey represents the 15th Congressional District, which includes Borough Park, Bensonhurst, and surrounding communities. He has recently announced his candidacy for Governor of New York.)

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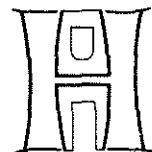
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# *A Parable*

## *told by* Rabbi Simon Schwab

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### REMEMBER THE STORY OF COLUMBUS?

FIVE HUNDRED YEARS he conceived the idea of sailing westward from Europe to reach the East Coast of India in order to prove his contention that the world was round. When he and his 120 men finally sighted land, they were fully convinced that they had indeed reached the other side of the Globe. All they really did was to land on some island in the Bahamas. Yet, Columbus sincerely believed that he had set foot on Indian soil. He subsequently named the red-skinned aborigines he encountered "Indians," a misnomer which has survived until this day. There was no doubt in anybody's mind in those days that the islands which he had discovered were located in the east of the Indian subcontinent and the label "East Indies" has stuck to this geographic region ever since.

AS A MATTER OF FACT, all of this eventually turned out to be a most embarrassing mistake. Surely, the world was round, but India was still a far distance away and it took some time until the new and unknown continent was traversed and another immense body of water — the Pacific Ocean — was discovered which proved to be much larger than its Atlantic counterpart. Not until a great many years later was the East Coast of India finally reached by courageous navigators.

WHAT COLUMBUS HAD DISCOVERED was not the shore of Asia, his real goal, but a new continent, a New World. However, until he died it never dawned on him that he was caught in an error. Anybody within his generation who had dared at that time to doubt the commonly accepted belief would have met with derision of outright antagonism.

ALL THIS is by now history and familiar to every school child. Why rehash it? Because it may serve as a fitting parable to our own historic experience.

IN OUR OWN DAYS, there are a great many of our contemporaries who believe deeply and sincerely that the rise of the Jewish State in Eretz Israel is identical with the beginning of the messianic redemption. They believe this wholeheartedly, religiously, and, sometimes, fanatically. And those who dispute this dogma are looked upon with suspicion, bordering on animosity.

HOWEVER, TO ALL who have learned their Tanach well

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RABBI SCHWAB is *rav* of K'hall Adath Jeshurun of Washington Heights, New York.

— and there are not too many around — to all those who are intimately versed in the sayings of our Sages, to all those who earnestly search for the truth of authentic Torah philosophy, it is obvious that our generation has fallen prey to an historic illusion. True, there is some kind of an "in-gathering of exiles," the desert blooms again, the swamps have turned into gardens, new towns and cities have replaced the ruins. It looks very much like the real thing; but it isn't.

ON THE SURFACE some of the glowing biblical predictions have been fulfilled - but merely on the surface.

OUR JEWISH PEOPLE, which 2,000 years ago embarked on its Golus journey, has indeed discovered a "New World" which is exciting and still somehow mysterious, but it has by no means arrived at the shorelines of *אתחלתא דגאולה*. The Jewish State is not even distantly related to the messianic promise for which we yearn and pray.

A SECULAR JEWISH STATE, its remarkable accomplishments notwithstanding, even with allowances made for a thriving Torah life, is at its best a Golus phenomenon. It can be likened to a heavily fortified island surrounded by a stormy sea of unspeakable hatred, bloody intrigues and political conspiracies by hundreds of millions of sworn enemies.

NO, THE GOLUS has not even begun to end as long as the ominous cloud of nuclear self-annihilation hovers over the human race. The Jewish people is still very deeply caught within the tragic grasp of the Golus and, by the way, so is all of mankind. The sovereign Jewish State is the most recent development of our 2,000 year old Golus history and by no means the answer to our prayers, let alone the self contradiction of a secular "Israel" with all its insoluble problems: Jewish identity (Mihu Yehudi), the religious educational dilemma, autopsies, conscription of girls, missionaries, to name but a few.

THE HORIZONS OF MANKIND are covered with black darkness and we still scan the heavens for the first faint glimmer of dawn.

AS FAR AS WE ARE CONCERNED the first sign that would initiate the end of Golus would be: the absence of bloodshed. Imagine, for the first time in 2,000 years no Jews are killed by Jew-haters! No Jewish blood will be spilled anymore, once and for all! But instead of the

fulfillment of this basic requirement we face a stark, raving-mad alliance of sworn enemies busily turning their plowshares into swords and their scientific know-how into ever deadlier missiles.

ON THE OTHER HAND, let us spell out some of the true characteristics of the ultimate Geulah, the promised redemption we yearn and pray for.

It means the restoration of the Jewish people as a Kingdom of Priests and a Holy Nation.

It means the supreme rule of the Divine Torah over Am Yisroel and Eretz Yisroel.

It means the complete abolishment of all traces of G-dlessness, heresy and idolatry from the Holy Land.

It means the pacification of mankind and the end of the reign of violence and terror.

It means the unification of all men in justice and righteousness, to recognize the G-d of Yisroel as the Supreme Ruler of all human affairs.

IN SHORT, it means: "Hashem shall reign as King over all the Earth."

LET US THEREFORE CONTINUE to support with all our might all honest efforts to help secure the life and fortune of our embattled brethren in Eretz Israel. Let us double and triple our sacrifices to support all endeavors that encourage and fortify Torah life in our Holy Land. Let us beware of dismay and disillusionment because of recent defeats and disappointments. These are the ups and downs on the rough voyage through the troubled seas of the Golus. And let us put our faith in Him who has so miraculously allowed us to survive throughout the centuries of turbulence and turmoil. He will continue to hold His compassionate hand over us and guide our ship to the ultimate shores of our historic destination.

SOON and speedily in our days . . . □



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The Jewish Observer / March, 1974

# A CRY FOR HELP

Rosh Chodesh Adar, 5734  
 February, 1974

Greetings and Blessings from Jerusalem!

In this confused period when all of Jewry has its attention riveted on our Land whose citizens are struggling for their existence against implacable enemies, we assume that our friends are interested to know what is going on in the Chinuch Atzmai Network, and how it is managing during this period of emergency in which normal life has been disrupted.

Our schools are continuing to fulfill their sacred task despite all the problems that the war has brought in its wake. Moreover, the war situation obligates us to add more sacred studies to our programme in order to increase the z'chuss of our people in accord with the statement of Chazal that "When Yaakov's voice is heard in the synagogue and in the schools of learning, the hands of Esau are powerless."

That is why we called off the Sukos vacation and continued our learning programme, in most schools, during the days between Yom Kippur and Sukos; and even during Chol Ha'Moed, within the limitations imposed by the sanctity of the Holiday. Most of the classes were in limudei kodesh—the dinim of Yom-tov plus Torah perspective on current events.

We are making and have made every effort to secure teachers to replace those who are serving in the army. Nearly one-half of our teachers were drafted. After the cease-fire and the partial reduction of reserve troops, a third of our teachers are still under arms.

To our great sorrow we have also suffered great losses. Some of our teachers were killed, and a number were wounded. The war situation has also obliged us to purchase civil defense equipment for the schools in accord with the government instructions, and also to construct shelters in schools that do not yet have them.

We have issued special instructions to principals and teachers outlining study programmes for the present emergency. Emphasis here is on tilla and tshuva. The teachers were also asked to maintain contact with families whose breadwinners were drafted in order to aid them as much as possible.

**ALL THESE EMERGENCY PREPARATIONS HAVE TAXED US WITH AN ADDITIONAL FINANCIAL BURDEN, COMPOUNDED BY THE CURRENT INFLATIONARY TREND.**

The additional expenses are primarily for:

- Supplementary teachers' salaries
- Evening yeshivos in many schools
- Transporting pupils from areas that have no Chinuch Atzmai schools to areas that have one.
- Training talmidei chachomin as teachers.
- Clubs for afternoons and Shabbosim.
- Maintaining and expanding our kindergarten work.
- Special preparation programme for new immigrant children especially those from Georgia and the USSR, who lack all fundamental Jewish knowledge.

In bringing all this to your attention, we permit ourselves to note that as a result of the stepped-up fundraising campaign—here and abroad—for military purposes, our income has noticeably decreased. Because a large number of breadwinners are in the army, their families cannot pay for their usual tuition fees. All this adds up to tremendous fiscal problems. It is hopefully unnecessary to prod our friends to increase their efforts on our behalf and to get our friends to increase their contributions in view of Chinuch Atzmai's role in determining the spiritual shape of the growing generation.

The Torah-giants of the Land, who know the situation at first-hand and view the future of all yeshivos as dependent on Chinuch Atzmai, have issued a concerned call for increased effort in supporting Chinuch Atzmai in these difficult days, requesting that emergency funds be raised for this cause.

We are confident that you will do all you can to aid and to get others to aid in this emergency.

We pray and hope that G-d will mend the breaches of Jewry's walls and that in the merit of Torah-study of children in whose z'chuss the world exists—"G-d will grant His people strength and G-d will bless His People with peace."

With Torah Blessings,  
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## Literary Wines, Old and New *a review article*

When those of us who have labored in the field of Torah journalism get together to talk shop, we almost invariably get around to talking about the absence of well-written expositions of Orthodox Jewish thinking and ideology. We bemoan the mediocrity of what passes for writing in Orthodox life today, and we wonder why—in a time when we have become so much more militant and outspoken in defense of and in demand of our rights—we have so sadly lagged behind in this area of creativity. What greater paradox, and what greater sorrow: we, the People of the Book, and the guardians of authentic Judaism have become dumb: unable to defend our loyalty to the Divine Word intelligibly, in the vernacular of our society.

RABBI JACOBS, former editor of THE JEWISH OBSERVER, serves as a member of the magazine's editorial board.

It has clearly not always been so: did not Maimonides address the Jews of his time in masterful Arabic! Is it something about the English language that is less receptive to clear enunciation of Torah *hashkofoh*? The achievement in this area by our British Orthodox brothers prove the contrary.

And why—we wonder—when we do manage to produce something of a higher calibre, do we cloak it in a shabby outer garment, so much so that it becomes possible to measure the "Orthodoxy" of a printed work by its degree of shabiness. The People of the Book have forgotten how to write books, and we who were among the first great users and beneficiaries of the advent of printing, have forgotten how to produce a book that really looks like a book.

But—a glimmer of light has appeared on the horizon.

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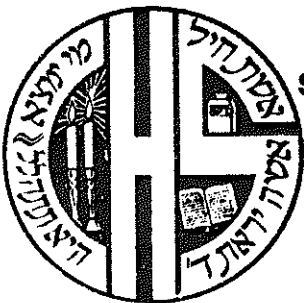
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The author of a contemporary work on *Mussar* anticipated in his preface a question his reader might ask. With the wealth of classic literature in the field of *Mussar*, what need is there for my work, which is surely not of the same dimensions? Man, he answered, cannot always drink wine, he must more often drink water. "My book," he wrote "is the 'water' in relation to the classical 'wine.' "

An enterprising publisher of Judaica has gone back into the past and has discovered some 'wine'—classic works written in good English style, and —while they are reprints of early editions—they are beautifully printed and bound. They look like books and they read like books, and their publisher, Hermon Press has made a major contribution to Jewish letters in our time.

The list of Hermon titles may not appeal to every reader's taste, but there are enough to fill a significant gap in the field of Orthodox Jewish apologetics. Most noticeable in that category —and most exciting — is *The Conciliator*, an English translation of a work written in Spanish by the famed scholar and communal leader R'Menasseh ben Israel in the seventeenth century. The purpose of the book—written in the vernacular to make it accessible to Spanish Jewry and translated into English for British Jewry —is spelled out, in the grand style, on the title page: "*The Conciliator* of R. Menasseh

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FAITH STRENGTHENED (Hizzuk Emunah), by Isaac Troki. Translated by Moses Macatta. (First published: London, 1850 - Hermon Press Reprint: New York, 1970, 308 pages, \$9.75)

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ben Israel; a Reconciliation of the Apparent Contradictions in Holy Scripture, to which are added Explanatory Notes, and Biographical Notices of the Quoted Authorities." A little heady? —a little archaic for the enlightened 1970's —sure: heady and archaic like an old wine —but equally delicious. The author's style is intriguing: as the title suggests, he juxtaposes two or more passages from *Chumash* or *T'nach* which appear to be contradictory, and then proceeds to reconcile them. His answers are sprinkled with such sources as *Rambam*, *Abarbanel*, *Ralbag*, *Radak*, *Saadiah Gaon*—most of which are not available to the English reader. The English is flawless, though the reader may sometimes have to scurry for a dictionary for the meaning of words which are no longer common in modern English. The range of the subjects covered in reconciling conflicting passages makes the work a treasure of Torah *hashkofah*, and a valuable tool for the educator, or the reader who is seeking authentic Jewish teachings in the English language. The original publisher managed to skillfully

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introduce into the text key words and phrases in their Hebrew original, all of which are explained in the text itself without the need for referring to foot-notes. The translator has provided brief biographical sketches for the scores of authorities quoted. To top it all off, the reproduction of the original is perfect; the paper and the binding are the finest; and the book is a delight to hold in one's hands, and it is a delight to read. Having so often found it necessary to be severely critical of newly-published works of Judaica, it is a special joy to be able to so heartily recommend this classic work, which belongs in every library of Judaica and which can be a source of strength to those whose work and inclination places them in a defensive posture in regard to Orthodox practice and belief.

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THE CONCILIATOR, by Rabbi Manasseh Ben Israel. Translated by E.H. Lindo. (First Published: London, 1842 — Hermon Press Reprint: New York, 1973. 684 pages, \$14.95.)

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The recent resurgence of Christian missionary efforts directed toward young Jews in particular (which has had minor success, but one *neshomo* is too much for us to lose) has forced many committed Jews to arm themselves against anti-Jewish polemic. Here again,

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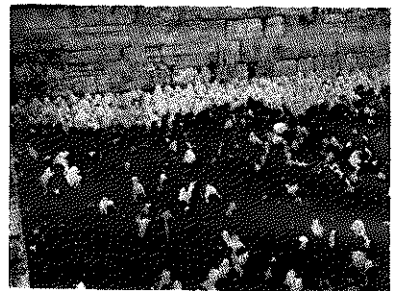
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Hermon Press has made available a master resource: an English translation of the classic work *Hizzuk Emunah*, a systematic and scholarly refutation of Christian doctrine as it impinges upon traditional Jewish belief. Since its publication in the sixteenth century, *Faith Strengthened*, as the translator has rendered the title, has been a handbook and guide for Jewish response to distortion of passages from *Chumash* and *T'nach* to give credence to New Testament doctrine. Now, not many of us will want to delve deeply into Christian theology—nor should we expend the necessary time and intellectual energy that could be put to better use. But for those who must deal with this kind of confrontation, *Faith Strengthened* shows the way in a scholarly and traditional manner. Again: the language is beautiful; the reproduction, paper and binding are superior, making *Faith Strengthened* a valuable and attractive volume.

A word about price: the Hermon reprints are expensive. But when one considers the constantly rising prices in the general book field, and the necessarily small printing run for books of this type, the prices are quite fair. And if you think about the cost of an original copy of one of these volumes—if they are available at all—charged by rare-book dealers, these reprints are a bargain. (We will discuss some more Hermon reprints in a future issue.) □

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"*Yisgadal veyiskadosh . . .* — glorified and sanctified be His name."

Since the Jews have been re-discovered by modern literature and the lively arts, the Aramaic phrases and mournful melody of the "Kaddish" have become familiar to both Jewish and non-Jewish ears as the Prayer for the Dead. And it is often employed as such in punctuating the resolution of dramatic confrontations.

Anybody present at the *Siyum Mishnayos* sponsored by Pirchei Agudath Israel on the Saturday night of March 16, who witnessed one thousand youngsters jump to their feet in response to "Kaddish" intoned at the completion of the last *Mishnah* of the Oral Law, would know otherwise. "Kaddish" is always an affirmation of life, and never was it more apparent.

The crowd was electric with vibrancy, and the atmosphere was one of a victory rally — they had plotted, they had set out, and they had conquered. So they feasted and sang with gusto.

Children, ranging in age from eight through fourteen, each undertook to memorize at least one chapter of *Mishnah*, so channeling their efforts that all 4,125 *Mishnayos* of the Oral Law were mastered; — so pooling their resources, that a total of 50,000 *Mishnayos* were committed to memory; — so devoting their talents that four boys were tested successfully on 1,000 *Mishnayos* each — one on 1,892, and one on 2,264

The Grand Winner was honored to be *mesayem* (the "completer"): reciting the closing words of "*Uktzin*" (the last tractate of the 62 volumes of *Mishnah*), followed by

the traditional "*Hadron aloch — We will return to you, Six Orders of Mishnah . . . our thoughts are to you . . . we will not forsake you, not in this world and not in the world-to-come.*"

Then the prayer that always follows completion of a tractate: "*May it be Your will . . . that Torah shall be our trade . . .*

*"We are thankful to You, O G-d . . . for putting our portion among those who dwell in Houses of Study and not . . . on the corners."*

One thousand onlookers listened, and nodded in confirmation — some unmistakably Chassidic; others sporting the all-American costume of longish hair, knitted suits, brightly-colored shirts; others simply "yeshivish."

The *mesayem* continued: "*We arise and they arise: We arise to study Torah, and they arise for empty pursuits.*"



Part of the 1,000 *Mishnah* — memorizers: "*Yehei shmei rabbah mevorach . . .*"



Kew Garden Hills, N.Y.: 1,892  
Mishnayos



Scranton, Pa: 2,264 Mishnayos



Los Angeles, Calif.: Greetings  
from the West

The Jewish Observer / March, 1974

One thousand onlookers — awed and perhaps more than a little envious of the achievement of the *mesayem* who mastered thousands of *Mishnayos*; each plotting his own schedule of "three-a-day plus five on *Shabbos* . . ."

"We labor and they labor . . . We race and they race . . ."

And race they did, for buses from Scranton, Wilkes-Barre and Kingston; from Bridgeport, Hartford, and Boston; from towns all over New Jersey; from Metropolitan New York and out-lying areas; from Montreal, Outremont, and Chomedey; even from Los Angeles.

But none this year from Chicago, Cleveland, Cincinnati, Detroit, Columbus, Toronto. Pirchei Agudath Israel sponsored a separate *Siyum* for Mid-Westerners in Cleveland the previous month.

"We race to share in the world-to-come."

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mortal man — endowing the ephemeral with the eternal.

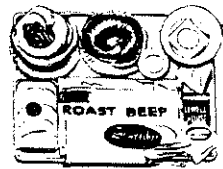
Then the "Kaddish" was recited — a special one for the occasion of a *Siyum* — the same one, incidentally, that is intoned at a burial — with phrases referring not to death, but to future life. The literal reference was eschatological, speaking of *Moshiach's* time, the rebuilding of Jerusalem, and the arising of the dead; the immediate application, to young lives with a course to follow, a curriculum to pursue, and periodic exultations in celebration of milestones. Milestones in personal growth. And milestones in the reassurance that "this Law will not stray from your mouth, nor from the mouths of your children and your children's children."

The "Kaddish" continued with the request "on behalf of Israel, the rabbinical scholars, their disciples, and disciples' disciples . . ."

Then: "*Oseh Shalom bimromav . . . — He who makes peace . . . shall make peace for us and all of Israel . . . ve'imru Omein.*"

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## Letters to the Editor



### From the Obvious to the Hidden

To the Editor:

In "What is Demanded From Us?" (J.O. Nov. '73), based on an address by Rabbi Yaakov Weinberg, reference is made to a quotation from the Ramban: "The Ramban (Nachmanides) writes in his commentary on *Parshas Bo* that whoever attributes events of historical impact to coincidence has no part in our Torah." While Rabbi Weinberg's audience heard an application of the Ramban to his topic, *The Jewish Observer* reader might be left with the impression that matters of less-than-historical significance are not being discussed by the Ramban. Nothing could be further from the truth.

Let the Ramban's words speak for themselves. "From the wondrous, obvious *nissim* Man acknowledges the hidden *nissim*, which are the foundation of the whole Torah. For Man has no part in the Torah of *Moshe Rabbeinu* until he believes that all our matters and events, affecting either the public or the individual, are *nissim*, neither natural nor normal."

That Divine Providence decrees and controls every facet of our lives is the basis of our *Emunah*. When presenting such fundamentals in print, caution should be exercised to prevent any misconceptions regarding "the foundation of the whole Torah."

BORUCH B. TWERSKY  
Lakewood, N.J.

### "Modern" vs. Traditional We Need Both

To the Editor:

I read with interest Miss Ross' criticism of Rabbi N. Wolpin's article, and his reply. It seems to me, that the history of the revival of Orthodox Jewish life in Miss Ross' hometown of Cleveland will shed some light on the problem discussed.

Up to the beginning of World War II, Cleveland had been a stronghold of Reform. Orthodoxy was disappearing and seemed doomed to ruin. Several attempts to establish a Jewish Day School failed.

Then the European holocaust brought to these shores, amongst others, two great Torah personalities, Rabbis Eliyahu Meir Bloch, and Chaim Mordechai Katz. Upon the efforts of the Spero family, they came to Cleveland with a handful of students to re-establish the Telzer Yeshiva in that city. The first interest of these heartbroken *Gedolim* turned toward the small children to assure the Torah education of the youth. As the few interested *ba'alei batim* were unable to raise the first necessary funds, the refugee Rabbis supplied the larger part of the money and continued to help financing the school (the Hebrew Academy of Cleveland).

The idealism and selfless efforts of the Yiddish-speaking leaders kindled the interest and enthusiasm of English-speaking men, like Irving Stone. He never fully understood their "*mame lashon*," but he felt the

warmth that streamed from their *neshamah*-fire.

However, without the action and idealism of the English-speaking educators and teachers of the Hebrew Academy, this tremendous job of educating thousands of Jewish children could never have been achieved in these thirty years.

The arrival of Orthodox Jewish life in Cleveland is a living and shining example that the old Yiddish-speaking and the young English-speaking generation are both needed to rebuild our destroyed sanctuaries, in harmony and cooperation.

The pioneering and daring spirit of both departments in the framework of Torah education in the '40s has brought life, awareness and responsibility to an awakening Jewish community in Cleveland on all levels and all fronts.

Let us therefore not argue who is important. Let us remember the

words of Rabbi Abahu in Sota 40a: "What is the difference? Through him and myself the One above (G-d) is sanctified."

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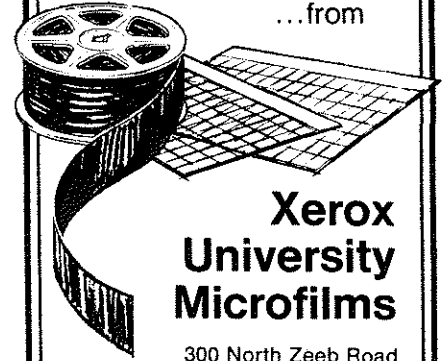
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## LETTERS CONTINUED

### Why Quote Secularist on the Chofetz Chaim?

To the Editor:

I truly enjoyed the Shevat edition. The article about the Chofetz Chaim was very interesting, yet I was greatly disturbed. Under the picture of the sainted man was a quotation from an *apikores* who even brought others to sin — as Rabbi Scherman stated, this man was partly responsible for the “Yom Kippur Balls.” The caption said that Hillel the Elder must have looked like the Chofetz Chaim. One can easily be misled to thinking that this is the observation of a great and righteous man. I think it inappropriate that this quotation be placed under the picture.

Secondly, how could such a person have had insight into such a pious and holy man like the Chofetz Chaim?

M. S. L.  
Philadelphia, Pa.

### Rabbi Scherman Replies:

Before coming to the substance of the writer's criticism, it is important to correct an error: My article did not say that H. Mauskopf, the correspondent who compared the Chofetz Chaim to Hillel, was an *apikores*, or that he had any responsibility for the infamous Yom Kippur Balls. He was a writer for the *Forward*, the anti-religious Yiddish daily that sponsored the balls; but it is unfair to assume that he shared the beliefs of his employers.

It would certainly be wrong to rely upon, or even cite, Mr. Mauskopf's opinion on questions of Torah belief or policy. It is quite another matter to say that even someone far from Torah could appreciate the greatness of a *godol hador*. The Torah says, “And all people of the earth shall see that you are called by the name of the Lord; and they shall be afraid of you” (*Devarim 28:10*). The Torah makes it very clear that a Jew who lives as Hashem wants him to is quite recognizable. Indeed, the fact that even secular-minded people were awed by the Chofetz Chaim is a most eloquent testimony to his

greatness; it is hardly surprising that such as the Gerer Rebbe, Reb Chaim Brisker, and Reb Chaim Ozer revered him.

The Talmud draws on the assessments of Alexander the Great and Antoninus Caesar to testify to the holiness of Shimon HaTzaddik and Rabbienu HaKadosh.... The Chasam Sofer related how attacking bears fled when they saw the face of his rebbe, Reb Nosson Adler. And the Chasam Sofer went on to explain that Reb Nosson still possessed the *tzellem Elokim*, the image of G-d with which man was originally created.... Those who knew the Chofetz Chaim felt that he had it, too. And the reverence that he inspired in simple people, from

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## Agudath Israel's

### Commission on Senior Citizens Maps Plans

A BROAD RANGE of projects to help senior citizens are on the drawing board of the Commission on Senior Citizens of Agudath Israel of America, it was announced by Rabbi Menachem Shayovich, chairman of the Commission. These projects for the elderly are in addition to the Senior Citizens Centers which Agudath Israel has contracted with the City of New York to operate, of which the Boro Park facility is already in full swing.

The Commission on Senior Citizens, for which Rabbi Joel Schnur has been engaged as the director, is opening new vistas of opportunities to help the aged, and is marshalling Orthodox Jewish youth and adults to fulfill their responsibility to give meaning to the life of the aged.

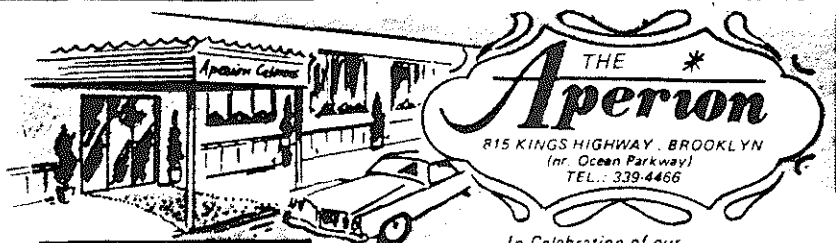
## Agudath Israel Hails "New Climate" For Non-Public School Children in New York City

"A NEW CLIMATE of better understanding by the public school sector for the needs of the non-public school pupils on the premises of non-public schools.

The Agudah, through its Commission on Legislation and Civic Action, has been the major advocate in the Jewish community for more than a decade of providing non public school children with government services and funds to which they are constitutionally entitled. When the Board of Education on January 25th initially decided to provide speech therapy to non-public school children in New York City now exists, thanks to Dr. Seymour Lachman, president of New York's Board of Education." This strong commendation by Agudath Israel of America, was triggered by the news that the Board of Education will in the near future provide speech therapy and speech correction services to non-public school children only on public school premises. Agudath Israel raised strong objections on the grounds that it was an "unsound policy to remove children from their educational milieu."

With the new decision just taken by the Board of Education enabling the children of Yeshivos to obtain speech correction services from the government within the Yeshivos themselves, "the Board has rectified a discrimination from which non-public school children in New York City suffered for many years," according to an Agudah spokesman.

Gratification was also expressed for the decision of the Board of Education to extend for at least an additional year the bus transportation services for non-public school children from Queens who study in Nassau County, as well as for Chancellor Ander's new policy to consult with non-public school officials in mapping the school calendar for the year in order to avoid areas of possible conflict.



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## Aid to Russian Olim

### 1. Pesach Needs

COMMUNITY SEDORIM for Russian immigrants have been arranged in fifteen communities throughout Israel by the Russian Immigrant Rescue Fund. Operating through its committee in Israel headed by Mr. Meier David Lewenstein, this major Orthodox agency for the religious absorption of Russian "olim" has made it possible for these immigrants to observe traditional Pesach Sedorim in communities ranging from Arad in the south to Carmiel in the north.

"Operation Pesach" of the Russian Immigrant Rescue Fund included the distribution of Passover needs and clothing to hundreds of Russian immigrant families located in twelve immigrant centers throughout the Holy Land. The beneficiaries are Carpathian Russians, Georgians and Bucharrians.

In addition, special Yom Tov assemblies have been arranged in Russian immigrant communities with the participation of the Russian religious leaders, as part of this overall plan to keep the new immigrants from Soviet Russia rooted to Jewish traditions and religious observance. Of special interest was the Passover Haggadah in Russian translation which the Russian Immigrant Rescue Fund published and distributed this last week amongst the Russian "olim."

### 2. Four Hundred Russian Immigrants Circumcised

FOUR HUNDRED RUSSIAN IMMIGRANTS were circumcised in Israel during the past year through the efforts of the Russian Immigrant Rescue Fund. These "olim," who ranged from children through adults, came primarily from cities where they could not perform this mitzvah, such as Moscow, Kiev, Riga, Leningrad, Kishinev, Odessa, and Lwow. The Israel director of the special Milah department at the Russian Immigrant Rescue Fund, Rabbi Aaron Chazan, estimated that there still remains several thousand Russian "olim" who arrived uncircumcised. Amongst the most recent immigrants from the behind the Iron Curtain for whom the Russian Immigrant Rescue Fund arranged circumcision was a high-ranking scientist and his four sons.

### 3. Shabbos Anthology

THE ISRAELI COMMITTEE of the Russian Immigrant Rescue Fund also reported a broad demand for the Shabbos Anthology which it published in the Georgian language for the new immigrants, which is an invaluable handbook about the laws and meaning of Shabbos. The first edition of thousands of copies of this Shabbos Anthology has already been exhausted and a new supply is now being prepared.

The Russian Immigrant Rescue Fund was

## 1,000 Attend Siyum Hamishnayos of Pirchei Agudath Israel in Brooklyn

ONE THOUSAND MEMBERS of Pirchei Agudath Israel from all parts of the Eastern Seaboard, including New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Connecticut, Massachusetts and parts of Canada, as well as three representatives from California, converged on the Boro Park section of Brooklyn to participate in the Eleventh Siyum Hamishnayos of the National Council of Pirchei Agudath Israel, on Saturday evening, March 16. Pirchei Agudath Israel is a youth division of Agudath Israel of America.

The *Romi Cohn Award*, two complete sets of Shas, were presented: to Binyomin Steinberg of the Kew Garden Hills (N.Y.) Pirchei, and the other to Shmuel Gordon of the Scranton (Pa.) Pirchei, for their knowledge of 1,892 and 2,264 *Mishnayos* by heart, respectively.

Menachem Mendel Schechet, an eight-year Pirchei member who flew in from Los Angeles, California, for the Siyum, greeted the overflow crowd in the name of all out-of-towners.

The unique entrance fee for the 1,000 boys was the knowledge of at least one *Perek Mishnayos* by heart. At the Siyum, the participants were treated to a Melave Malke - Banquet with entertainment by Chazan David Werdyger, Heshy Marx, and Shlomo Reich, accompanied by the Flatbush Bachurei orchestra led by Dov Brezak and Shimon Blumenthal.

The entire Shabbos was spent at the Agudath Israel Center of Boro Park, 4511-14th Avenue, where 500 children davened together, had an Oneg Shabbos on Friday night, and a Sholosh Seudos on Shabbos afternoon. During the entire weekend, they were addressed by Rabbi Joshua Silbermintz, the National Director; Rabbi Zyshe Heschel, educational consultant of Camp Agudah; Rabbi Gershon Weiss, Menahel of Mesivta of Staten Island; Rabbi Shimon Zweig, Chairman of the Advisory Committee of the National Council; and Rabbi Boruch Zaks, a Rosh Yeshiva at Mesivta Staten Island. Rabbi Yehuda Oelbaum, Menahel of Mesivta Toras Chaim of Hewlitt (L.I.), served as the master of ceremonies of the Melave Malke.

The co-chairmen of the Eleventh Siyum Hamishnayos were Shaya Yaroslavit and Gershon Nathan.

---

founded as an independent agency at the 49th National Convention of Agudath Israel of America. Its treasurers are Dr. Ernst L. Bodenheimer, Max Berg and Moses Brauns-tein.

## 1st Siyum Mishnayos Of Midwest Pirchei Agudath Israel

CHILDREN FROM CHICAGO Pittsburgh, Cincinnati, Wickliffe, Cleveland and neighboring cities and towns participated in the First Siyum Mishnayos of the Midwest Region of Pirchei Agudath Israel. The entrance fee was the knowledge of at least one *Perek Mishnayos* by heart.

The Siyum Mishnayos took place Motzoei Shabbos, Parshas Tzaveh, in the Hebrew Academy of Cleveland, with the participation of the Telsher Rosh Yeshiva, Rav Mordechai Gifter and 250 children from near and far. The Rosh Yeshiva called out enthusiastically to the children that they should become intoxicated with the study of Torah. Many out-of-towners knew hundreds of *Mishnayos*. Thus, it was a Simcha which was never seen — no one ever dreamed to see, hundreds of miles from New York.

The Telsher Rosh Yeshiva, HaRav Boruch Sorotzkin welcomed the guests from all the communities on Friday morning and set the tone for the entire weekend.

At the Shalosh Seudos, the National Director of Pirchei Agudath Israel, Rabbi Joshua Silbermintz, addressed the guests and Telsher Yeshiva Bachurim and stressed the necessity of doing more for the children away from major population centers and the importance of following in the footsteps of the Gedolei Yisroel.

At the Melave Malke, Rabbi Daniel Schur, the President of Agudath Israel of Cleveland, and Mr. Gershon Adler greeted all the guests and hosts. The children together with the Roshei Yeshiva, *Baalei Batim* and leaders, danced with great joy. They were also entertained by the choir of the local branch of Bachurei Agudath Israel and the Pirchei orchestra. Winners of the Siyum Mishnayos contest in each city were awarded prizes at the Melave Malke.

The committee for this first Siyum consisted of Rabbis Moshe Borenstein, Yaakov Reisman, Mordechai Kaplowitz, Velvel Rosen, Chaim Aaron Weinberg, Mattisyahu Roberts and Dovid Ungar.

## Agudath Israel Provides Matzoh Parcels to Russian Jews

AS A RESULT OF the annual Overseas Pesach Campaign of Agudath Israel of America, a large number of Jews in Soviet Russia will have Matzohs for Pesach. The parcels were shipped from the European offices of Agudath Israel in time to arrive for Yom Tov.

For decades the Agudath Israel movement has supplied Pesach food to needy Jewish families abroad, and in recent years the thrust of this effort has been directed to Soviet Russia.

## JEP Launches Operation Chavrusa

OPERATION CHAVRUSA: the JEP-directed one-to-one tutorial program that pairs together elementary-level yeshiva day school students with advanced yeshiva *bachurim* for regular private sessions has finally advanced from the drawing-board stage to a reality.

JEP (Jewish Education Program) is a project of Zeirei Agudath Israel, which organizes and directs the efforts of senior yeshiva students to reaching out to less-religious youngsters. Since its creation a year and a half ago, JEP has given thousands of children from homes lacking in Jewish commitment a taste of Yiddishkeit by bringing children into communities of vibrant Judaism, arranging Shabbos and Yom Tov programs for them, as well as conducting Released Time religious classes for over 400 public school children every week.

The new phase in JEP activity, Operation Chavrusa, may well be the most effective, as it is aimed at influencing the marginal day-school student to take the vital step of con-

tinuing in a yeshiva high school. This will hopefully result from the greater proficiency he will resultantly achieve in his studies, and the close relationship he will develop with an ideal role model — the senior yeshiva student.

Roshei Yeshiva have greeted this program with great enthusiasm and utmost cooperation, for the Chavrusa set-up permits the older student to use his greatest assets — those of personal contact and Torah scholarship — for the benefit of others, without loss of time from the yeshiva's scheduled curriculum.

In its pilot project, Operation Chavrusa has paired sixty students from the Mirrer Yeshiva (of Brooklyn) with an equal number of younger students from the neighboring Achiezer Yeshiva. The boys meet during the afternoon lunchbreak at Mir. Similar programs are in the planning stages involving the Mesifta Chaim Berlin - Kollel Gur Arye, as well as other senior yeshivos in the New York area.

## Agudath Israel's 52nd Anniversary Dinner To Honor Three Notables

OVER 1,000 ORTHODOX LEADERS and activists, including the outstanding Torah authorities in this country, will join in the 52nd Anniversary Dinner of Agudath Israel of America, which will honor three eminent personalities on Sunday evening, May 5th, in the grand ballroom of the Statler Hilton Hotel in New York City.

The Horav Aharon Kotler Memorial Award for distinguished service to Torah will be presented to Moshe Zolty of Toronto as "an exemplary Orthodox Jewish layman, who with humility has served as a major force for Torah and Chesed in his community and the world over."

The Moreinu Yaakov Rosenheim Award for outstanding service to the cause of Agudath Israel will be awarded to the eminent Agudist leader, Eli Basch, who for decades has served the cause of Agudath Israel and its local branches with dedication.

Eugene Fixler, will be honored as the "Shearis Hapleita" Man of the Year, the annual Reb Elimelech Tress Memorial Award for his outstanding work for community service and Orthodox Judaism since arriving to these shores as a refugee from war-torn Europe after the holocaust. This occasion will also mark over a half century of accomplishments by the Agudath Israel movement in every area of strengthening Torah authority and perpetuating authentic Judaism in this country and abroad through a vast network of constructive projects. The deans of the major Yeshivos (rabbinical seminaries) will also participate in the occasion as an expression of faith in the Agudath Israel movement for its total commitment to the supremacy of Torah in Jewish life.

### JUDAICA

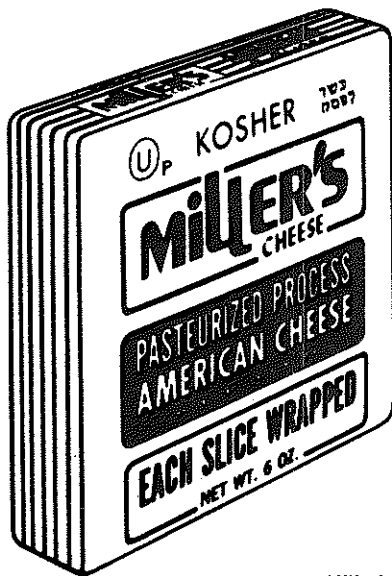
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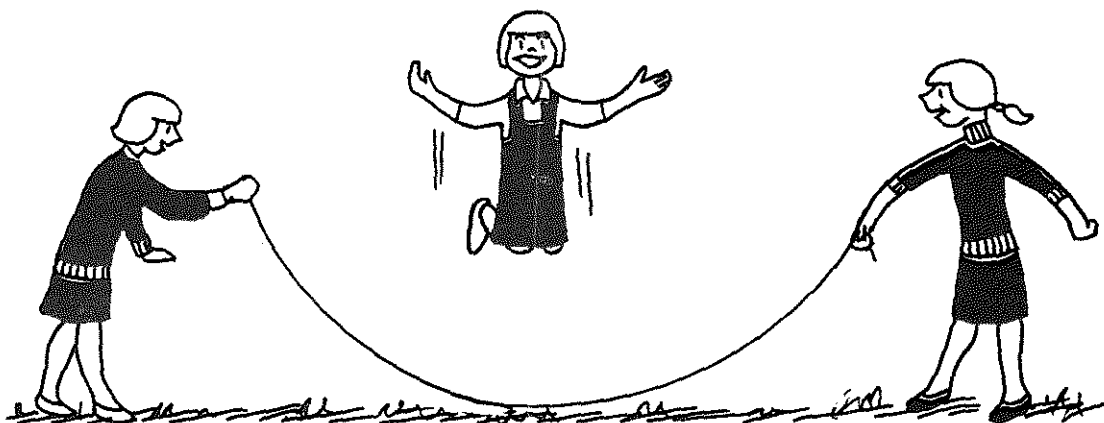
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