

THE JEWISH OBSERVER

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ברכת חג כשר ושמח

CRISES: OF CAUSES
AND CURES



A TALE OF
TWO "CHINUCHS"



AN APPRECIATION
OF REB DOVID
KRONGLAS zt"l



TRUTH IN PACKAGING



SECOND LOOKS



LETTERS

THE JEWISH OBSERVER

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Crises: Of Causes and Cures

Based on an address by RABBI BORUCH SOROTZKIN שליט"א,
Rosh Hayeshiva of Telshe, Wickliffe, Ohio, at the recent
National Convention of Agudath Israel of America.

In Search of Justice

AT THE OUTSET OF HIS PROPHECIES of consolation, Yeshayahu says: "Why do you speak, Yaakov, and declare, Yisroel: 'My way is hidden from the L-rd, my cause has passed from the cognizance of my G-d?'" (Yeshayahu 40,07)

There are times when both the simple Jew — Yaakov — and he of more elevated station — Yisroel — feel as though their lot were hidden from G-d, so intense is the darkness, so hidden is His mercy. . . . There are times when it would seem that the world is being called to account for its actions; yet there is no justice in the relations between *Klal Yisroel* and the nations of the world. *Klal Yisroel* has a formidable case against the world for collaboration with — or at least indifference toward — Hitler's destruction of six million Jews. And now, thirty years later, these same nations are displaying no more concern for the threat hovering over "the people of G-d who dwell in Zion."

We have never been inspired by hopes of *chessed le'umim* — kindness from nations; but a modicum of justice, or at least an intolerance toward knavery and murder, was expected from the civilized world, especially in the United Nations. But, sadly, *b'makom hamishpat shom horesha* — precisely in the place of justice was wickedness found: Could there be greater wickedness than inviting the murderers of innocents into the United Nations to discuss the future of *Eretz Yisroel* — as if honorable agreements were possible with beasts of prey?

Never before has the entire world been so united against *Klal Yisroel* — particularly against the Jews of *Eretz Yisroel*!

Because of "This" and "This"

HOW DOES JEWRY REACT to mounting threat of impending crises?

A most successful approach is outlined in *Megillas Esther*. When Esther inquired of Mordechai why he had donned sackcloth, she said:

"*Mah zeh v'al mah zeh?* — Why this and...this?" The Midrash explains her choice of words: Never before had Jewry faced so severe a crisis. Before undertaking to

save *Klal Yisroel*, Esther had to determine the spiritual malaise that was so in need of correction, so she asked Mordechai to pinpoint the fatal weakness. Could the Jews have rejected their belief in "Zeh Kaili. . . This is my G-d and I shall praise Him"?—or might they have weakened in their resolve to live by the revealed Law "*Mizeh umizeh haim kesuvim* — [the Tablets that were inscribed] on this side as well as on the other"?

Mordechai replied through his page, "And he told him all '*asher karahu* — that befell him.'" Again the Midrash explains the choice of words: We are victims of a descendant of the original practitioner of "*Karahu* encountering Him". . . . Immediately after the Exodus, Amaleik had attacked the Jews, *asher karcha* - encountering you — on the way from Egypt, in a place significantly called *Refidim*. Just as that original attack was only successful to the degree that the Jews' defense was down — '*rifu yedeihem* — they weakened in Torah study,' so, too, did the Jews of the time of Mordechai and Esther become vulnerable to attack for a lack of diligence in Torah study. Mordechai answered Esther's query and a plan for defense could be determined.

We, too, must reflect on the causes of our current distress, which are also unprecedented in Jewish history. Sadly enough, we can explain them with both of Esther's suspicions: a lack of belief in G-d and a weakened conviction in the divine source of Torah. This situation is especially apparent in Israel, where the educational system provides hundred of thousands of Jewish children with no knowledge of Torah, no *emunah* (belief in G-d). The sorry state of Shabbos, the stubbornness of the government in the Who-Is-A-Jew controversy, and the forced autopsy issue also testify to the lack of faith in those who govern the State.

A generation of youth educated without belief in G-d or in "*Torah min Hashomayim*" cannot answer the accusation of "*Listim attem* - You are thieves" for they do not believe in Rabbi Yitzchok's reply, quoted in the first Rashi in Torah, that G-d created the heavens and the earth, and He can award them to whomever He wishes. Thus they stammer, "Maybe the Arabs are correct — that we stole *Eretz Yisroel* from them."

It is also no cause for wonder that the number of irreligious *Yordim* (those who have left Israel) has

skyrocketed, because without belief in Torah, they are not equipped to sense the holiness of the Land, and in face of economic, political, and military insecurity, there is nothing left to bind them to *Eretz Yisroel*.

Hands Weakened in Torah

MORDECHAI'S REPLY, TOO, is unfortunately as valid today as it was in his day. There are some officials in government circles who would weaken Torah study by violating the Holy of Holies of *Klal Yisroel* — the Yeshivos — through drafting yeshiva students. This decree has been thwarted for now, but the threat still hangs in the air.

The military situation and the need for manpower have both become graver since the Yom Kippur War, but those who would draft yeshiva students fail to understand that this would worsen the situation. The *Gemora* asks, "Why were Avrohom's descendants enslaved in Egypt for 210 years? Because Avrohom put *talmidei chachomim* into service when he went to war" (*Nedarim* 32a).

Indeed, the Torah study of yeshiva students is the best guarantee of the security of *Eretz Yisroel*. The *Gemora* (Baba Basra 7b) says, "Torah scholars do not need watching, as it is written, *I am a wall and my breasts are like fortresses. I am a wall — this is Torah; and my breasts are like fortresses* — these are the *talmidei chachomim*." There can be no more secure protection against our enemies than Torah scholars and their study.

Are "We" Blameless?

...AND MORDECHAI'S REPLY — the weakening of Torah — is still valid today.

It is not enough to complain about those who do not believe in the power of Torah and *mitzvos*, and whose goal is "Let the House of Israel be just like all the nations." The Yom Kippur War effected little change in their outlook. They still rely on "The might and power of my hand," as was blatantly confirmed by Moshe Dayan in public statements. If we more religious Jews think we are more capable of the desired response, then we must take a larger share of the responsibility for corrective action.

In the account of the Dinah-Shechem affair, the Torah (*Bereishis* 34,7) says, "*And the sons of Yaakov returned from the field, and when they heard, they became upset, and they became very angry.*" My father, Rav Zalman Sorotzkin, the Lutzker Rav, explained the incident in his commentary on Torah, *Oznayim L'Torah*:

When a person encounters misfortune and recognizes that he is to blame, he becomes upset. But when someone else is responsible, he is angry at the other party. When Yaakov's sons had heard what had happened to Dinah, initially they were upset, blaming themselves for not having adequately watch-

ed over their sister. Only later, when they could blame Shechem for the tragedy, did they become angry.

Instead of being angry at "them," perhaps we should be upset with ourselves: Are we not responsible for the sad state of religious affairs in *Eretz Yisroel*?

* Tens of thousands of Jews are arriving from the Soviet Union and are being lost to Torah Yiddishkeit; only small numbers are being saved, through the devoted work of Agudath Israel's special committee for Russian Jewry. If all of us were participating in this rescue mission, as we should be, we would be saving many thousands more.

* The Chinuch Atzmai school system is not expanding as it might simply because we are apathetic and do not help as we should. In the meantime, hardly one out of ten children in Israel attends a Torah school. . . .

* There are those who have been awakened by the events of our lives, and we are not making enough of an attempt to bring them closer to Torah.

We simply have not pitched in with our resources of time, money, and effort. We have not joined Agudath Israel's efforts to pierce the world's darkness with the light of Torah.

Doing Battle With a Decree

BEFORE HIS ENCOUNTER with Eisav, Yaakov prepared himself for prayer, gifts, and war. Rashi in *Vayera* states that Avrohom had prepared himself similarly when he attempted to persuade G-d to spare Sodom from destruction....Is it possible that one prepare himself for war with the Almighty?

The Ponevezher Rosh Yeshiva, Rabbi Eliezer Menachem Shach שליט"א explained this difficult Rashi at a meeting of Bnei Torah during the Yom Kippur War:

When we find ourselves in a time of crisis, we must react as our Avos Hakedoshim did in theirs. Avrohom, who was the founding pillar of chessed, regarded G-d's edict of destruction against Sodom as his own crisis, and he prepared himself for conciliation, prayer, and battle:

Before a man is sentenced to death by a court, a trial ensues, in which a prosecutor and a defender conduct a verbal battle. The same is true in the Heavenly Court. When G-d considered the destruction of Sodom, the Heavenly Court was bombarded with prosecutors demanding the ultimate punishment. Avrohom did battle with them, pointing to the merit of Sodom, asking that the city be spared. He went further and asked G-d to consider his own acts of faith and chessed in Sodom's merit. Similarly, Rabbi Shach said, in our current crisis, we must increase our zechuyos through more Torah study, prayer, and mitzva observance, so that we, too, may

refute the prosecution's accusations against Klal Yisroel and its demands for its destruction, by tipping the scales of justice with our zechuyos.

"Gifts" means giving additional support to all Torah institutions and to Agudath Israel, helping its holy work both here and in *Eretz Yisroel*. The implications of "prayer" may be obvious, but our thoughts and feelings must be in line with our understanding. "Doing battle" means increasing the *zechuyos* of *Klal Yisroel* in the Heavenly Court by strengthening ourselves in Torah

study and *mitzva* observance.

Then we can be confident that the defense will triumph over the prosecution, and we will witness, with G-d's help, the fulfillment of Yeshayahu's next words: "And you, Yisroel my servant, Yaakov whom I chose, the descendants of Avrohom. . . do not fear, for I am with you. . . All your enemies will be as naught, and you will rejoice in G-d. . ." (*Yeshayahu* 41,8). We will see, with G-d's help, the defeat of all our enemies, and we will recognize with clarity our salvation as coming from Him. □

The Miracle and After

Who can appreciate G-d's intervention into the events of man as much as the Jews?

Those who plot against them. For they, more than their intended victims, the Jews, know in full detail that only an act of G-d thwarted their nefarious scheme.

In fact, this is how the Dubiner Maggid, Rabbi Yaakov Krausz, explains the paradoxical passage in Hallel, which we sing throughout the Pesach: "All the nations praise the L-rd. . . because His loving-kindness was mighty over us. G-d's truth endures forever. . ."—The *nations* sing for *our* victories? Yes. For while we Jews are blissfully ignorant of our enemies' schemes to annihilate us, the nations who plot know only too well. Thus, we can not sing of the victories of which we are unaware. Only the nations can sing His praise.

An interesting example of this is Joseph Stalin's well known Doctor's Plot against the Jews, which has gained publicity lately through Solzhenytsin's *Gulag Archipeligo*. The details of this incident were recorded in *Star In Eclipse*, by Joseph Schectman, as reported by the Russians themselves.

"Our fears were made worse by per-

sistent rumors of a scheme by Stalin for the mass deportation of Jews, as an unreliable element, to remote areas in Eastern Siberia or to Birobijan. We had every reason for not taking such rumors lightly.

"And then came the miracle — at least we considered it as such. Stalin submitted his deportation scheme to the meeting of the Politburo on February 28, 1953. According to inside reports, it met with unexpectedly firm resistance from Marshall Voroshilov, Kaganovich, Mikoyan and Molotov. They argued that such a drastic measure was pregnant with grave consequences both within the country and abroad. Voroshilov indignantly took his party card out of his pocket and threw it on the table, saying that he would not remain a member of the party if this barbaric and nonsensical scheme was carried out. Accustomed to submissiveness, Stalin was so outraged by this opposition that his face became suffused with blood and he fell to the floor behind his desk. He recovered from the stroke but died five days later, on March 5, just one day before the date scheduled for the doctor's trial."

From: *Star In Eclipse*, Joseph B. Schectman (told to Schectman by a group of Jewish informants), Thomas Yosoleff Publications, 1961, N.Y.

A Tale of Two "Chinuchs"

An American mother comes home after raising her children Bnei Brak-style, and reports on her impressions of the contrasts.

WHEN OUR FIVE-YEAR old recently returned from *shul* on his first *Shabbos* in the U.S.A., he was very upset. "Emah," he complained, "I don't like it here. All the way to *shul* and back there were CARS going on *Shabbos*! I kept on shouting 'Shabbos!' and they wouldn't stop — are there so many sick people here in America? [In religious sections in Israel only emergency vehicles such as ambulances and doctors' cars travel on *Shabbos*.] And in *shul* all the people, even the *Abba* men, were talking during davening! When I said 'ssh' they smiled, but kept on talking!" Then he unhappily concluded, "Let's go back to *Eretz Yisroel* — it's more *kadosh* there. . . ."

This seemingly childish remark is full of strong inferences about a particular kind of *chinuch* (which my child had received in Israel) and a broader, more liberal type, which I personally associate with the modern *yeshiva* day school. Some of the advantages are uniquely inherent to the Israeli way of life, while others result from the high level of religious observance that are as much a part of pockets of intensive Jewish life in America as they are of the Bnei Brak and Matersdorf (Jerusalem) that I know. Some can be copied or adapted. Others, just admired.

The luxury of a youngster not having to witness *chilul Shabbos* traffic is surely one of those wonderful pluses of living in a self-contained religious community, such as Bnei Brak (on a large scale) or New Square, in Rockland County, New York (on a more modest scale). Another *chinuch* advantage an Israeli child gains is the necessity to make do with relatively few possessions, taking good care of those he does have. In most American communities, there is little the average parents can do to create these features for their children. (This relative austerity is present in the classroom, too, and can be an initial disappointment to the American

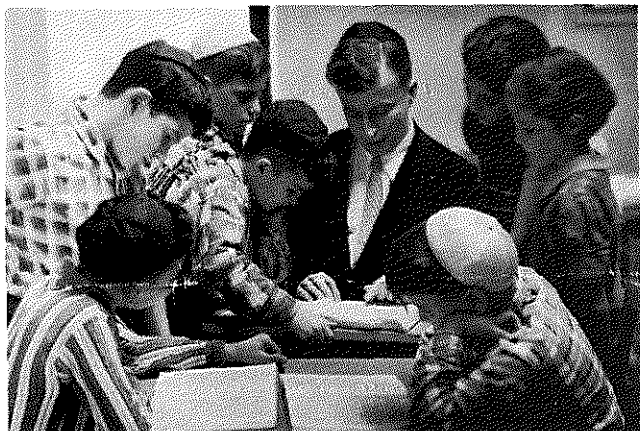
oleh to Israel. Israeli schools are generally less formally run, less organized, and substantially less equipped with play equipment and the wealth of attractive textbooks and teaching aids common in America. Few schools offer corrective speech or the services of a psychologist. But in the long run, the measure of a successful *chinuch* is the product, and whether because of the educational system or because of the total environment that surrounds him, the *talmid* of the typical Israeli *cheder* owes no apologies to his American counterpart.)

A Plea for Intolerance

MY SON'S NEXT COMPLAINTS, then, will be considered in greater detail: "I kept on shouting 'Shabbos!' . . . I said 'ssh' to them. . . ." The typical Bnei Brak child is not content to observe *mitzvos* himself; it also hurts him when others fail to do so. Perhaps one might argue that his outrage in the case of vehicles on *Shabbos*, for example, is simply a matter of not being accustomed to seeing it. I feel that it is more akin to the analogy of the loyal subject to the king who not only follows every royal command with utmost scrupulousness, but becomes upset and reprimands his fellow subject who disregards a command. He loves the king too intensely to see his wishes dishonored.

From his earliest years, the American child is imbued with the golden concept of "tolerance." Primarily, this denotes getting along with others despite differences. Like all good *midos*, however, it can become a dangerous trap if not correctly applied. As a feature of tolerance, for example, the average American Orthodox child is taught to be polite and friendly with the little Jewish boy next door even if he does not wear a *yar-mulka*. When the two become older, the observant one, in keeping with his parents' careful teaching of "tolerance," would never think of offending his neighbor as he sets out for a bicycle ride on *Shabbos*. Preach "tolerant" behavior enough to youngsters throughout their formative years, and what will it certainly produce? *Chazal* teach that our external behavior affects our innermost attitudes — not only in the

MRS. GRAMA, a native of Scranton, Pa., attended an American Day School, is a graduate of a Beth Jacob teachers' seminary, and taught several years in a New York *yeshiva*. She currently lives in Bnei Brak, where her husband is a fellow in the Kollel Chazon Ish.



children's outward behavior are they tolerant, but even their hearts become "tolerant," and totally unaffected by another Jew's disobeying Hashem's commandments.

A child brought up in a sheltered society is also instilled with a kind of tolerance: tolerance of another youngster's errors, lack of knowledge, dress, slowness in schoolwork, and the like; but tolerance of another boy's going bare-headed? Tolerance to *chillul Shabbos*? Never! I witnessed the following not-unusual scenes in Israel:

Two young Orthodox boys were playing with toy trucks in their front yard. A third little boy, obviously irreligious, passed by and, intrigued by the colorful playthings, entered the yard and joined in. The two friends accepted the stranger into their game and said nothing at first. After several minutes, however, one of them politely but firmly stated to the one without a kipa, "You can play with our trucks, but we can't have a boy without a kipa in our yard — wait, I'll bring you one from my house and then you can stay. . . ."

It was Shabbos afternoon and the streets were full of people strolling. A young man on a motorcycle was about to enter a side street when a lad of twelve or thirteen stopped him and quietly tried to persuade him not to continue riding on Shabbos. Unfortunately, the rider couldn't be convinced, so the frum one, still speaking softly but with amazing firmness, got into a discussion, insisting that he at least not disgrace the Shabbos in front of all the people present. Only after some time did the mechalel Shabbos realize that he had no choice but to listen to the youth, and meekly backed out of the street.

It is important to realize that both of these cases involve children typical of their society; on the other hand, only a very unusual American child (or adult) would have the nerve to be so "intolerant" as to act as these youngsters did, so beautifully proving their loyalty to Hashem.

But the Hostility. . . .!

BUT WHAT ABOUT all the violent incidents between the religious and the irreligious one hears about in Israel, and the hostility between the two? Isn't that clearly counter to the Torah's teachings of loving a fellow Jew? Doesn't this attitude instill negative ideas into the youth's *chinuch*?

Whenever possible, the Orthodox community does attempt to explain its views to non-religious groups, in the hope that this position will be accepted. Obviously, a Torah Jew would prefer to be friendly with an irreligious person and try to bring him closer to Torah, rather than antagonize him. But all too often it does not work that way in Israel, where most people who are irreligious are familiar with religious life; they selected their life-style deliberately, rather than out of simple ignorance, as is usually the case in the *Gola*. Imagine what would happen, then, if Israel's Orthodox groups would abandon militancy for "politeness" and diplomacy, as Americans do! As an example of what they could expect: Several years ago, after an election, the local government of a mostly Orthodox city shifted somewhat to the left. Word had it that the new mayor and his cabinet wanted to deliberately "modernize" the city by opening up a movie theater. The Orthodox community immediately let it be known that under no circumstances would it tolerate an entertainment center so contrary to what it felt to be *halachically* correct; and that if verbal wishes were ignored, it would revert to physical means.

In other words, in a tightly run, homogeneously religious society, children are clearly taught by word — or more often, by example — that one must object when faced with Torah desecration — if not outwardly, then at least inwardly. Most American children never are made aware of this concept at all.

This idea is undoubtedly one of the reasons why the level of Torah observance can be so much more consistent and sophisticated in some communities than in others. It is a sort of self-reinforcing cycle: from heightened sensitivity to the disloyalty of others one also becomes more sensitive to his own level of *mitzva* perfor-

THE CHOFETZ CHAIM: "Why offer Jewish children anything secular? The Torah is so full of magnificent material. . . . Any educator who resorts to other sources, displays his own lack of Torah knowledge."

mance; this, in turn, makes him more sensitive to breaches in Torah by others, *ad infinitum*.

The Situation in Shul

NOW FOR MY SON'S other comments: "In *shul* all the people were talking during *davening*. . ." much to his surprise and horror. Children everywhere, I am sure, are taught that it is forbidden to talk about daily, secular topics in *shul*. Yet, shamefully, it seems to be the rare *shul* in America where adults do not talk during *davening*. In Israel, almost without exception, there is no such thing as conversation during the services — by children as well as by adults. (The only exception is on festivals and *Yomim Noraim* when women attend services and bring their youngsters with them.) If a child is too young to be able to stay quietly by his parent's side for most of the *davening*, he simply does not attend *shul*.

Recently, in *shul* in America, my husband and I demanded similar behavior from our children and did not permit them to join the other children in an adjacent "playroom" during *davening*. We were criticized by a respected *mechanech*: "You can't expect young children to remain quiet in *shul* and follow the *davening*. Now let them play — when they become old enough they'll be ready for more. . . ." The approach behind this advice may well be the root to the entire decorum problem: children who are allowed to play in *shul* grow up to be the adults who can't refrain from conversing in *shul*.

A Little Excellence Never Hurt

THIS LITTLE INCIDENT also demonstrates that in communities where standards of *mitzva*-performance are more exacting than those commonly followed these standards can be incorporated into the *chinuch* of children at a very young age, without disastrous repercussions. Contrary to psychologically-based assumptions, little children brought up under Bnei Brak type standards generally do not become rebellious towards religious life in their later years as a result of these high standards, nor do they enjoy their carefree childhood years any less. Quite to the contrary, their childhoods are just as happy, and as adults, they reap the great benefits (both in this world and the next) of being truly careful Jews. Is there a more precious gift with which a parent can endow his child?

Striving for completely correct performance of *mitzvos*, by both adults and (as much as possible) by children, can be applied to countless aspects of daily life — not just to proper conduct during prayer. Only in permissive societies does one encounter Orthodox teenage

girls whose manner of dress definitely does not comply with even basic minimum requirements of modesty, as established by *halacha*. Parents and teachers perhaps casually give mention to the rules of *tzni'us* in dress. By contrast, a Bnei Brak Bais Yaakov girl can unhesitatingly list the requirements with clarity and precision, and her clothes certainly comply. She would not think of stepping out of her house with these standards compromised in any way. Even if she would, her parents and school most likely would feel too strongly about the matter not to carefully reprimand the girl and insist upon her correcting the situation. It is not that the average American teenager is more rebellious or less modest; it is simply that the poor girls have been led incorrectly to believe that *tzni'us* is a matter of feeling, without any precise requirements.

The Spirit of Jewish Living

WHILE ONE COULD not find a leading *posaik* (authority in *halacha*) or Rosh Yeshiva who would state that it is *halachically* permissible to have and use a television set; nonetheless, the great majority of observant Jews in America do possess TV sets. Curiously, some conscientious families who own sets realize that it is "not so correct" and limit themselves in some way: TV watching is permissible for the parents, but not for the children (whose *chinuch* they fear for); or anybody may watch TV as long as they do some kind of work and do not sit idle "wasting time"; or in more disciplined homes, watching is limited to news and documentary programs. The average Orthodox Israeli visiting America would certainly be shocked at this inconsistency. In Israel, the religious leaders have made it clear, out loud, and the public knows just what is permissible and what is not; and the Orthodox people guide themselves accordingly. How, the visitor would wonder, can a person lead his life so imprecisely? — In religious life, something is either permissible or forbidden, and is not left to the individual to decide for himself!

Also amazing would be top-quality kindergartens and nurseries in Orthodox schools where children learn such meaningless verses as "The Farmer in the Dell" and "Humpty Dumpty." *Chazal* suggest that before a baby can even talk, parents should repeat to him, again and again, "*Torah tziva lanu Moshe*" so that these be his first words, or at least very familiar dear ones to him.

The story has often been told of the father who asked Rabbi Yisroel Salanter, "When should I begin to train my child?" When the *Rav* learned that the baby was two years old, he replied, "You are two years too late." . . .

Torah *chinuch* starts at the very beginning of life. The more intensive yeshivos succeed in creating an environment as free from secularism, as full of Torah songs, rhymes, pictures, and stories as possible. They reflect a concern expressed by the Chofetz Chaim:

A group of "modern" educators were preparing stories not based on the Torah, for children's use. He challenged them: "Why offer Jewish children anything secular? The Torah — with its stories, commentaries, and Midrashim — is brimming with magnificent, entertaining educational material for all ages, from the very youngest to the oldest. If educators resort to other sources, it displays their own lack of Torah knowledge!"

"Little things" do count. A great *rav* once wrote: "There is no such thing as spiritual stagnation — one either rises or falls." Meaningless verses of non-Torah content do detract from a child's *chinuch*, if only because they add nothing.

The Unfair Advantages

IT MIGHT SEEM UNFAIR to make comparisons between *chinuch* in the Holy Land and anywhere else on the globe, especially America. What can compete with *Eretz Yisroel* in terms of the tangibles and the fragrances of *kedusha*? In addition, America is still part of the New

World, and vibrant Orthodoxy is a relative newcomer to its shores; large scale major yeshivos, and the vast network of Torah Umesorah day schools are only a generation old.

Yet, these are not really valid excuses for anything second best in *chinuch*. Jewish history sparkles with communities in the *Gola* — Babylon, Spain, Germany, Poland, Russia — that represented peaks of achievement in Torah life and study. America as a place lacks no qualifications. As for the need to soften our educational demands for our children — lest we alienate them with too demanding a program — that may have made sense in earlier times, but in a good many communities in America, the pioneering days are over. Second (and third) generations of yeshiva students should be entitled to excellence, without allowances for deficiencies. Whatever can be achieved in *chinuch* through home and school in more intensive communities, such as I had encountered in Bnei Brak, can with effort and ingenuity be achieved in the broader American scene.

A FRIEND recently asked me, "How can you still want to go back to live in Israel — isn't it too dangerous?" I thought of my children's *chinuch* a moment, and the reply came naturally, "It all depends upon what you consider dangerous. . . ." □

100,000 RUSSIAN JEWS HAVE COME TO ISRAEL . . .

...what are WE doing for them?

The Russian Jewish immigrants to Israel desperately need help to save them from losing their Yiddishkeit in a secular dominated society.

As a matter of conscience we dare not permit the Russian Jews to suffer the same spiritual fate as the Sephardic Jews of earlier aliyos, where tens of thousands were lost from Yiddishkeit because so few cared.

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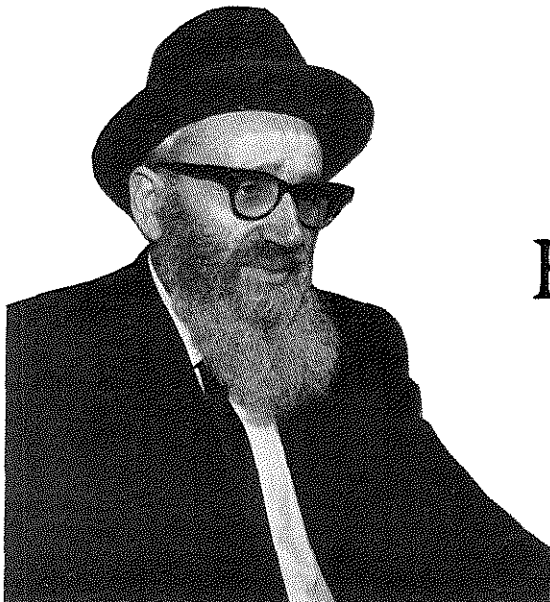
How did the yeshiva tradition of Torah-study survive the journey from Europe — where it had reached such a glorious peak, to America — where so much was against it?

The key factor was the *cheresh ve-hamasger* — the scribes and the teachers, who were storehouses of knowledge and served as models of ideals beyond the reach of words. They provided the object for " *והיו עיניך ראות את מורך* Your eyes shall see your master." Other areas of

knowledge may be taught through the written word or other, more sophisticated means. Torah is only transmitted when one sees his teacher — and more, "*morecha*" means "your guide."

Thus, with the advent of the Holocaust, a handful of "scribes and teachers" was spared by the *hashgacha* (Providence) to effect the revival of Torah on American shores. Just before World War II, several *Gedolei Torah* managed to escape Europe and come directly to America.

Gershon Weiss



A European Mashgiach in an American Yeshiva

An appreciation of *Horav Hagaon Reb Dovid Kronglas זצ"ל* — two years after his passing.

The American Challenge

A MASHGIACH STRIVES with the Rosh Hayeshiva to guide his students toward becoming the *adam hasholeim*, the complete man: immersed in Torah study, in pursuit of perfection in character, enhancing his faith and love of G-d. This was an ambitious goal even in Europe, but at least it was in the realm of the possible. After all, the students had come from towns where these goals were understood and admired. . . . In his hometown of Kobrin, Reb Dovid would recall, there were always 60 to 80 people at study in the *Beis Hamidrash* — around the clock. Some worked during the day and learned from early evening until midnight. Others retired early and came to the *Beis Hamidrash* in the middle of the

night or in the early morning hours. . . and so a day would pass. When someone left the comforts of home in a town such as this to join a yeshiva, he was surely searching for *gadlus* — greatness in Torah. Ulterior motives? — perhaps for fame or reward — to be a *talmid chacham*, revered by all, — to obtain a position of dignity. . . . A Mashgiach's task, then, was to influence his charges to elevate their goals, and to attempt to purify their motives as much as possible, to raise the human to the divine.

On these shores, by contrast, yeshiva students came from towns where the dominant attitude was often in opposition to Torah, indifferent and even hostile to the very concept of *kedusha*. Individual students were weak in scholarship, totally lacking in thirst for growth in learning and greatness of spirit. The Mashgiach's task was thus difficult and complex. Students had to be

RABBI WEISS, a *musmach* of *Yeshiva Ner Israel of Baltimore*, is *Menahel of the Mesivta of Staten Island*.

Others, including the entire Yeshiva of Mir, found shelter in Shanghai, China, during the war. These two groups provided American yeshivos with a major source of teachers, lecturers, and deans — Roshei Yeshiva, Maggidei Sheur, and Mashgiachim.

The role of the Rosh Yeshiva in America is almost identical to his role as teacher of Torah in Europe. By contrast, the task of the Mashgiach as spiritual mentor has changed. As a prime ex-

ample of the Mashgiach in American yeshivos, I would cite Reb Dovid Kronglas ל"צ, Menahel Ruchni of Yeshiva Ner Israel in Baltimore, who was among the Mirrer contingent in Shanghai. He is gone from our midst now for over two years, but his presence is still felt.

Editorial Note: This manuscript was submitted with every reference to Rabbi Dovid Kronglas ל"צ expressed in the respectful terms of "Moreinu VeRabbeinu" as befits a disciple writing of his rebbe. In preparation for publication, this was substituted with the more common "Reb Dovid," as he was affectionately known.

transformed into *talmidim*. Concepts had to be introduced along with the goals. And more: even after becoming converted into a yeshiva *bachur*, the student then had to become equipped to withstand the unusual pressures of American society — the hedonism, materialism, and the surge toward permissiveness, all so prevalent here. They needed the wherewithal to face these challenges in post-yeshiva life — whether as rabbi, *mechanech* (educator), or responsible layman. A formidable undertaking — but as Reb Dovid was wont to say: "For what other reason did Hashem save us from the Holocaust?"

The Mashgiach Plus

IN EUROPE, THE MASHGIACH was primarily identified with spiritual guidance: saying *shmuessen* (lectures in ethics), setting the tone in the yeshiva, and counseling individuals. Reb Dovid felt that in America, where an interest was yet to be cultivated in Torah and *yiras shomayim* (fear of G-d), this approach would be ineffective. The *bachur* would have to become close to his rebbi and have confidence in him in all areas of Torah before responding to him by changing his attitude towards his life-purpose. Reb Dovid therefore undertook the additional burden of teaching the highest daily *Gemora* class.

This dual burden kept him in the yeshiva from 7:30 in the morning until six in the evening, in addition to devoting later hours to counselling students and to intensive preparation for his daily class. This had tremendous impact on his students, who were smitten by his infectuous love for Torah study; in addition, he established himself as an authority in those areas we learned to value most: breadth of knowledge and depth of understanding in the Talmud. His every lecture created thirst for the next one, to know the Torah that *he* knew, to know it thoroughly, as *he* did.

Reb Dovid did not have to lecture us on "*ki heim chayeinu* — for they (the precepts) are our life"; we saw it in his actions. . . in the light that shone in his eyes — eyes that betrayed very few hours of sleep. . . in his stubborn devotion to his rigorous schedule, never failing to

say his *sheur*. In fact, with the exception of unusual illness, or a most important religious event, he never missed his class — not on his wedding day, not on his daughter's wedding day, nor on the day of his son's *bris* — not even during the final pain-ridden days of his life.

During those last weeks, his family urged him to relax his regimen, to skip a sheur, to which he replied, "One does not get sick from saying sheur."

A Rosh Yeshiva who had shared an apartment with him in Shanghai remarked that he only remembered him engrossed in his study, even under the most trying circumstances....He wondered when he ever slept.

During the darkest days of the war, depressing news often shook the Beis Hamidrash, dampening the atmosphere. Reb Dovid confessed that he found it difficult to concentrate on his studies during this period, and he would lock himself up in a shul, studying Zera'im with a friend, undistracted....The fruits of those arduous days are in his greatly admired sefer "Divrei Dovid."

The Mussar Shmues

THE CLASSIC MUSSAR SHMUES is usually a lecture aimed at influencing the listener to self-improvement — hardly a theme to set people running for a front seat. Yet, Reb Dovid's weekly *shmues*, after *Shalosh Seudos*, would trigger a rush for a "good seat" — for many reasons. First, he formulated a *shmues* as he did any Torah lecture: drawing on *Shas* and *Poskim* (Talmud, Commentaries, and the Codes) to clarify an ethical topic; in the final analysis, aren't issues of ethics and morality also determined by *halacha*?

In addition, Reb Dovid incorporated basics of *emunah* into his lectures, to prepare his *talmidim* for the difficult challenges of America's open society, for he was keenly aware of the American *bachur's* shortcomings and how to meet them. This was done with subtlety, not raising questions in *emunah*. He would rather present the elements of our belief — often not making us aware of the treasures we were receiving. . . . Later, many com-

mented that the *shmuessen* equipped them to cope with difficult situations and challenges to *emunah* long after their yeshiva years. For that matter, his *shmuessen* had tremendous impact at the time we heard them, many of us experiencing great upheavals in our world-view then and there. Many a youngster who came to the yeshiva determined to become a professional in later life dropped these ambitions to concentrate instead on attaining *shleimus* (perfection) in *avodas Hashem* (service to G-d), and eventually devoted his adult life to dissemination of Torah.

The Approach: Beyond Intellect

THE OVERWHELMING EFFECTIVENESS of the *shmuessen* could not have resulted simply from the Mashgiach's intellectual approach. Indeed, his words not only resounded in our ears and our minds, but struck chords in our hearts as well, in keeping with the *ma'amar Chazal*: "Words that emanate from the heart enter the heart." So, too, did his random statements, his words of advice, and his manner reinforce the themes of his *mussar* talks.

A young couple, married a number of years without children, were told by their doctor that it would be impossible for them to have children as long as they honored taharas hamishpacha (laws of family purity). They consulted Reb Dovid, who spent several hours, stressing that everything is in the hands of G-d. . . the doctor's findings are not binding on Him. He succeeded in transmitting his firm belief directly to them, and they left his office with joyful confidence that their fate was in the hands of One they could trust. . . . Within that year they were blessed with a baby girl.

Words were of scant importance in preparing us for the judgment of *Yomim Noraim* in comparison to witnessing his awareness, his trembling during those days.

In the beginning of Elul, one could sense the approach of the days of judgment from his bearing, embodying Reb Yisroel Salanter's paradox: The loftier one's level of life, the more impelled he feels to prepare himself for Judgment; the more mundane one's life, the less impelled he feels to prepare. One would expect the opposite to be the case.

His appreciation of Yom Kippur for the closeness to Hashem it offers was so profound that he once remarked that were it not a day of judgment, one would dance a rikud of joy. . . His joyful gratitude for the Yom Kippur "forgiveness of our sins" did find full expression during Succos. He would sit in his Succah radiating joy, even (uncharacteristically) tasting every dish brought before him, because doing so was part of the mitzva.

His Life Assignment

REB DOVID used to cite the phrase: "He scrutinizes every man's deeds and his assignment"; that each person's actions are judged not on an objective scale, but in relation

to his assignment in life. He thus ignored his own achievements and scholarship, only examining whether he was fulfilling his own life assignment. And he viewed his position with the yeshiva as not just a job, but as his life-assignment.

He once confided: People dream of what they would do with a sudden acquisition of a great sum of money — how they would spend it, how it would change their lives. "As for me," he said, "it would not change a thing; but I would return every cent I received from the yeshiva over the years as my salary."

In fact, he viewed every aspect of life as part of his life-assignment. This was evident in his ability to shift mood and manner.

Especially sparing of words in Elul, and surely during Yomim Noraim, he surprised a group of students who returned from a pioneering mission in an out-of-town community just prior to Yom Kippur. Reb Dovid carried on a warm, animated conversation, inquiring into details of their venture. . . . After all, they were involved in Harbotzas Torah (dissemination of Torah) and needed every encouragement.

He could sense the tension of a *talmid* approaching him for a discussion. To disarm him, he would inject a humorous quip, putting the boy at ease. . . . When chastising a student, he would be extremely cautious not to alienate him in any way.

A bachur was once sporting a sweater too flashy for his particular station in the yeshiva. Reb Dovid felt it improper. Rather than risk offending him, he complimented him on the beautiful colors of his attire. The message was received without ill-feeling.

*Once when he was rebuking a student, one could sense a strength in his outburst. In the middle of the tongue-lashing, a *talmid* who had just become engaged entered the room. Reb Dovid's countenance changed completely as he broke into a smile, wishing the chasan well, and he held a pleasant exchange with him. He then returned to the first student with the same fire as before. . . . totally in control of both situations and of himself.*

Hakoras hatov, acknowledgement of acts of kindness from others, was a frequent theme in his *shmuessen* — but more, was an ever-present aspect of his life.

*When a *talmid* drove him home, he would repeatedly refer to this act of kindness. . . . The "dairy cook" commented after his passing that she prepared a bowl of bland cereal for him every day, because of his diet; he never failed to send a different expression of appreciation every time.*

*A *talmid* who drove him from home to the yeshiva every morning recalled that whenever there was a heavy snowfall, Reb Dovid would leave his house earlier to meet the car on the main road to spare the driver the difficulty of driving through unplowed snow.*

On one occasion he asked the driver to wait a moment; he had forgotten something and had to rush back home: When he had left and wished all the members of his family "a good day," one of his daughters was not present. He owed her good wishes as well.

A Double Set of Books

HE WOULD OFTEN quote Reb Yisroel Salanter's directive that a person must have two methods of bookkeeping: extremely tight-fisted with himself in self-indulgences, yet highly ambitious and demanding on the spiritual level; for others, he should be overindulgent to a fault, showering them with recognition and material needs. Reb Dovid personified this in his lofty personal existence, contrasted with his down-to-earth practical concern for others, involving himself in every detail of their life. This concern was most evident when he counseled older students in courtship and marriage.

Lunch hour was not his own. He only had a coffee at mid-day, devoting his time to sessions with select groups of *bachurim*, sometimes discussing problems with individuals, other times enhancing their knowledge with lessons in extra-curricular *seforim* (*Sifrei Maharal, Nefesh Hachaim, Derech Hashem*). While he took pains to display little of his personal attainments, during these sessions he would inadvertently reveal his vast knowledge of Kabbalah and other specialized areas.

He once offered the following advice for achieving humility: *Imagine yourself with your friends before the Heavenly Tribunal. Can we be sure that, after taking everything into account, G-d will consider us greater than our friends? Give the matter some thought, and we could at least be in doubt in regard to anyone we knew. A little more thought, and we would realize that, indeed, everyone exceeds us in merit one way or another. . . .* Advice such as this may sound excessively ambitious; but hearing Reb Dovid express it, realizing that it was his credo in life, did have overwhelming impact.

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No Easy Assessment

THE FAR-REACHING EFFECT of Reb Dovid Kronglas's personality and teachings can not easily be assessed. Thousands who were under his influence and tutelage at Ner Israel went on to become conscientious laymen, rabbis, teachers, *mechanchim* — some fulfilling positions of Rosh Yeshiva and *Mashgiach Ruchni* in America and Israel. . . . Some of his influence will never be uncovered. It can only be guessed at. For instance, the ambulance driver who took him to the hospital on the last day of his life did not sound the siren in deference of his sensibilities — so as not to frighten people on the yeshiva campus. . . . Or the doctors and nurses who knew him for but a few hours, yet cried when he passed away, apologizing that, although doctors usually do not cry when a patient dies, but "This was a man!" These impressions were implanted wide and far, and are still being felt.

Those of us who were so deeply moved and molded by his *shmuessen* find the published ספרים, his own transcriptions of his lectures, vivid reminders of the scope of his thought and his personality, keeping our Rebbe very much "before our eyes."

There was a time when Torah was transmitted from the senior generation, by way of the collective heart of the entire community, to their children. Today, especially on these shores, communities are too impoverished. The burden of this transmission falls upon the yeshiva, with special stress on its heart. When the yeshiva is graced with the presence of a Mashgiach with the calibre of Reb Dovid זצ"ל, then the task focuses on him, as he transmits to the bachur: halacha, perfection in character, yiras shomayim, emunah, not as independent achievements, but as integral parts of the adam hasholeim — the complete man.



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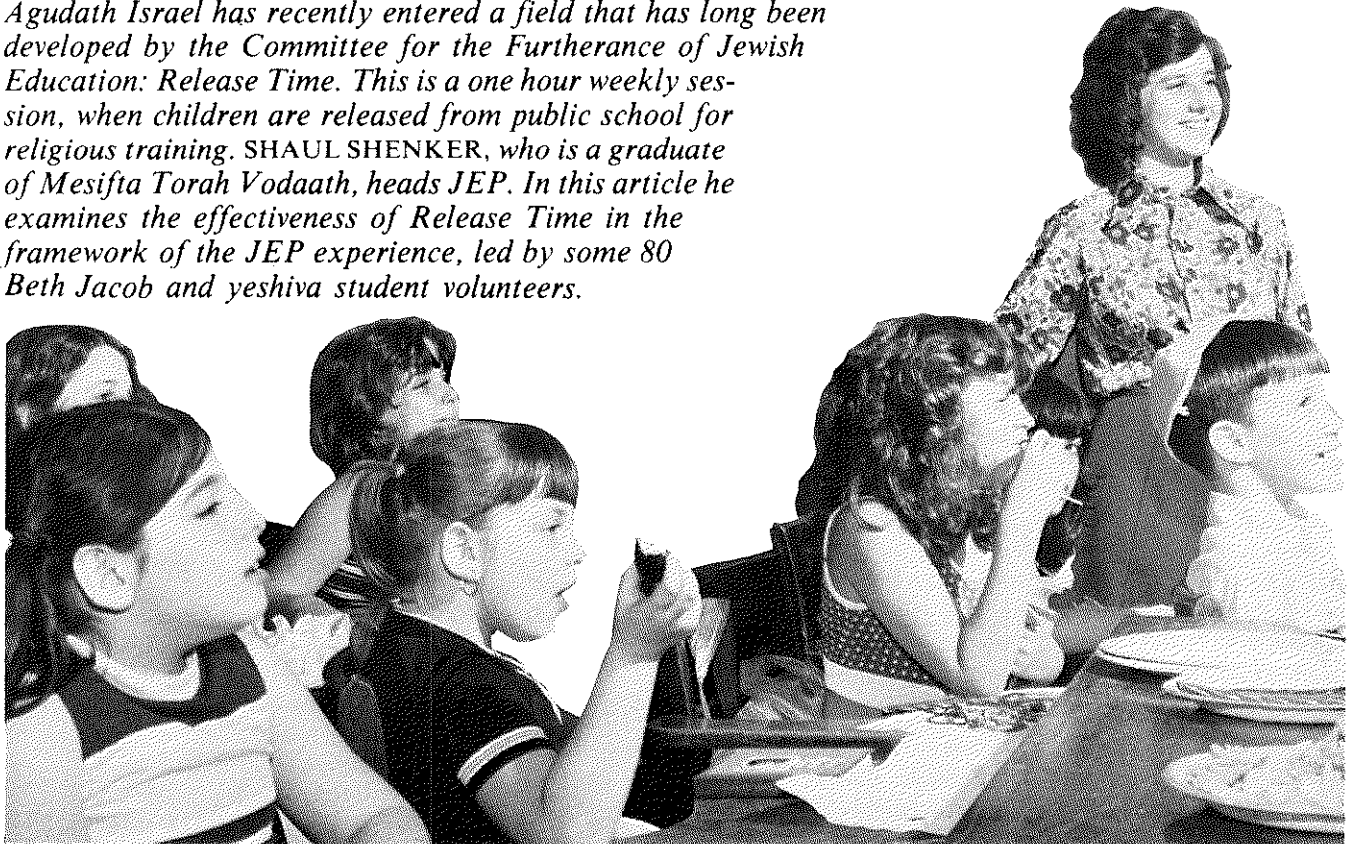
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RELEASED TIME: Only One Hour A Week . . . What's It Worth?

As part of its Jewish Education Program (JEP), aimed at reaching out to children estranged from Judaism, Zeirei Agudath Israel has recently entered a field that has long been developed by the Committee for the Furtherance of Jewish Education: Release Time. This is a one hour weekly session, when children are released from public school for religious training. SHAUL SHENKER, who is a graduate of Mesifita Torah Vodaath, heads JEP. In this article he examines the effectiveness of Release Time in the framework of the JEP experience, led by some 80 Beth Jacob and yeshiva student volunteers.



POSTULATE #1: *A single hour a week of Jewish education is meaningless in terms of lasting impact.*

POSTULATE #2: *If a major part of that hour is spent on "fun and games" it is rendered even more useless.*

POSTULATE #3: *A cadre of amateurs teaching children about Judaism for one hour a week will have amateurish results.*

POSTULATE #4: *Public school children are eyebrow deep in American secular culture. It is folly to anticipate changing their ingrained attitudes.*

CONCLUSION: *Any program which attempts to use yeshiva and Beth Jacob volunteers to teach public school children for one hour a week in an informal atmosphere is doomed to failure. Thus the Released Time sessions, operated by JEP volunteers meeting with some four hundred children released from public school for merely one hour a week may be a lovely distraction, but can be of little real value.*

WRONG! *Experience has proven time and again that radical changes are effected upon the children attending such classes. The premise is incorrect and so is the conclusion.*

What Are We After?

FIRST, IT WOULD BE IN PLACE to delineate the goals of a release hour to enable us to evaluate those postulates. The ultimate goal of any *Kiruv Rechokim* program must be to eventually influence the subject to become a *yorei shomayim* and an observant Jew. This goal, naturally, cannot be reached in a short time, since it entails a radical change in a person's attitudes. However, the initial contact should foster a warm and positive attitude toward Yiddishkeit. Furthermore, it should attempt to change a person's situation, removing him (or her) from the detrimental environment which has so far held sway over his opinions.

Translated into the release hour situation, our goals must be: (a) to impart to the child a warm feeling when he thinks of Yiddishkeit, (b) to remove him from the public school (i.e. negative environment), and (c) place him in a yeshiva.

With these goals in mind, a carefully planned curriculum has been devised by the JEP release hour program, emphasizing the more "pleasant" aspects of Yiddishkeit, putting into motion forces of subtle persuasion. When the child experiences the joy of being a Jew, when the child is able to feel a sense of involvement in *mitzvos*, when the child learns the glory of his heritage — then the child is ready to make a commitment to change his environment *so as to become a better Jew*.

The Day Is Short

BECAUSE THE IMMEDIATE goals of our program are not intellectual, but tend toward the emotional, and because our purpose is not to educate the child, but rather to whet his appetite so that he should want further education, the limited length of the Release Time sessions may really be an asset. If much more time were involved, the child would probably become bored with the games he plays. He would lose interest in the stories, and become turned off to the entire project. Emotional appeal must either escalate or wither away.

However, since time is limited, every minute can be used for exciting games or stories: the child is constantly learning new and interesting ideas, and he is excited and relates positively to this new material. Thus our first postulate is given a serious blow. The lack of sufficient time might not be a hindrance to the contrary, it might even be an asset. (In fairness, it should be noted that Release Time kids occasionally get together for other activities, such as Yom Tov parties, supplementary Sunday school sessions for special groups, and a system-wide luncheon at the end of the semester.)

As regards our second postulate: The informality of the classes greatly enhances opportunities for success. The child reports to the release hour after a long tedious day of sitting in a classroom. He welcomes the opportunity to sing songs, play games, and hear fascinating stories. It is a refreshing break from the routine. It helps inculcate him with a positive attitude toward Yid-

dishkeit, which is our goal. The second premise, too, has little validity.

Trained Amateurs at Work

DURING THE COURSE OF THE YEAR one problem gnaws away at us incessantly: Wouldn't the program be far superior if the teachers were paid? However small the remuneration, wouldn't it give the administration far more latitude in enforcing strict standards regulating the teachers' activity with far greater control? And in the long run, wouldn't the children be the chief beneficiaries?

Upon reflection, however, it would appear that the Release Time program is far more effective as presently conducted; true, there are occasional lapses by volunteers because they have no financial reward and therefore feel a lesser obligation. But, who can compare the tedious approach of a paid worker who has lost his interest in his job, but hangs on for the pocket money he receives, to the vigorous enthusiasm of a zealous volunteer, who is on the job only because he wants to be there? The life and vigor imparted by our volunteers is unparalleled and irreplaceable, and our program would be totally ineffective without it.

This judgment is not my own. The common thread running through all the comments I have heard from parents and professional teachers is their amazement at the dedication of our volunteers to their ideal. Moreover, a crew of class supervisors visits three Released Time classes every week, checking on progress, assessing the atmosphere and rapport, bringing back information regarding incipient problems and especially promising children. They invariably bring back glowing reports. Despite occasional lapses in regularity of covering groups, our leaders bring a youthful enthusiasm to their work, which they transmit to their charges. The children can't help but be affected by it... We may then strike off our third postulate: Trained amateurs are indeed superior.

Change a Child's Mind?

AS FOR THE PLAUSIBILITY of changing the attitudes of our public school children, I can only reply with a few illustrations.

* Peter B's father is of rather coarse background. Peter's conduct seems to reflect many of his father's traits and he was known to be quite rowdy in public school. His parents separated and he remained with his mother who was interested in giving him a Jewish education. After meeting with other children in Released Time classes, he became fascinated with his Jewish identity. When his mother entered the hospital for surgery, he insisted upon studying with a religious friend. Peter is now studying in yeshiva and has tutoring three times a week. He has had his hair cut short, he wears *tzitzis* and he behaves reasonably well.

This is a stark illustration of the change in a child's attitude toward Yiddishkeit. We might speculate about

the underlying reasons for the change, but, in the final analysis, it eventually took place because Peter felt a measure of warmth whenever he encountered a religious Jew.

A large percentage of the Jewish children in public school are the products of broken homes and mixed marriages. A little warmth is often all that is required.

* Mellisa S. comes from an economically deprived home. Her parents can't even afford a telephone. Mellisa has a very sweet disposition, but she does not even possess enough change to buy a little "nash" when her friends go to the candy store. She seemed to enjoy release hour, but was ashamed to even reply when her leader inquired if she wished to attend summer camp; she knew that her family could not afford camp fees.

With the help of a scholarship, Mellisa attended a sleep-away camp last summer. Very little prodding was needed to influence her. She is like a vast number of other children who attend public school only because they think they cannot afford yeshivos. All that is required to win the sentiments of such children is the financial assistance to attend the yeshiva.

* Michael H. has middle-class, well-educated parents. When I mentioned the prospect of sending Michael to a Talmud Torah, Mrs. H. looked at me quite quizzically. She didn't know what I was referring to.

The H's are completely ignorant of their Jewish heritage. But they are deeply interested in expanding the scope of Michael's Jewish knowledge. They are constantly asking for additional time for religious instruction.

What causes people of this background to be so enthusiastic about their religion? Why have they suddenly shown this interest after so many years of estrangement? Generally speaking, they have not had embittering experiences with Judaism. They harbor no hatred toward Yiddishkeit, only ignorance. The simple fact that someone telephoned them regarding their child, that someone cared enough to show an interest in them, can be a prime factor in their positive response. When a volunteer offers to teach their children, they are eager to cooperate.

These three (authentic) case histories illustrate three general classifications of public school children who can be easily introduced to Torah Judaism. The JEP experience with Released Time would indicate that they are typical of more than 50 percent of the Jewish school population. It is our duty and our challenge to bring as many of those children back to the fold as possible. □

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The UOJCA Rejoins the Synagogue Council of America

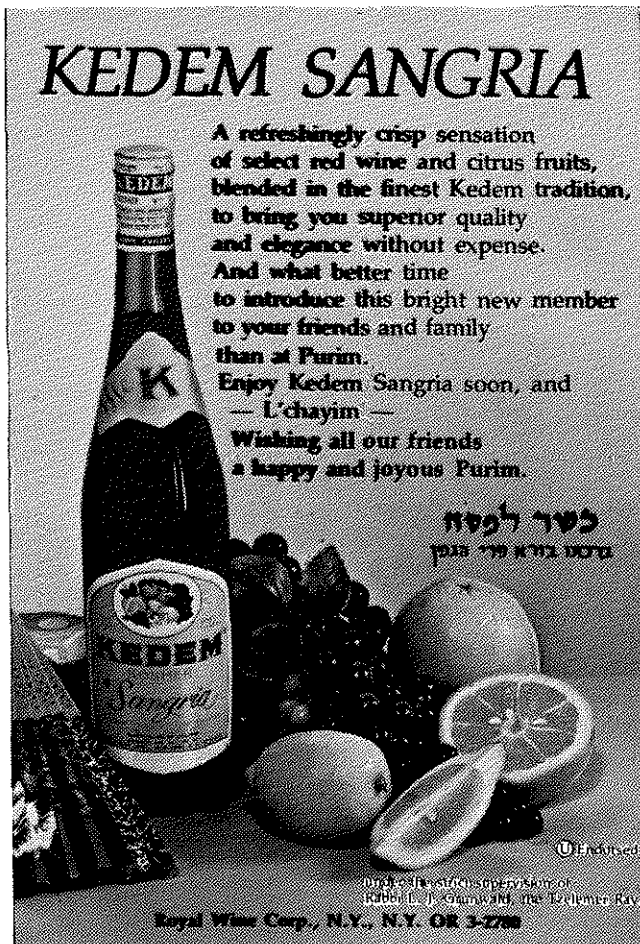
We view with dismay the recent vote (68-56) by the Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations of America to end its one year suspension from membership in the Synagogue Council of America. By including representation from Orthodox, Conservative, and Reform congregations, the S.C.A. gives equal credence to all these as alternate "branches" of Judaism. Any such reference to anti-Torah groups is a travesty.

In a *psak din* twenty years ago, the Torah leadership in America and abroad condemned participation in the Synagogue Council as an implied recognition of deviant groups which unjustly feign to represent Judaism. It is our hope that all members of the Union who voted to resume participation in the S.C.A. will give deepest thought to reconsideration of this move in defiance against the counsel of Gedolei Yisroel, especially after they take into account the historic implications of their move. It is also our hope that the 56 who so positively reaffirmed their commitment to the word of our Torah leadership not lose heart, and will succeed in convincing

the 68 to join them in this reaffirmation.

Further clarification and comment will be forthcoming.

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Truth in Packaging

In this age of consumerism, the purchasing public insists on being told what it is buying. It will not tolerate fraudulent labeling. And it rejects the prospect of purchasing a large package only to find it filled with a lot of air, and just a little of the product indicated.

In Jewish community life, descriptive labeling has always tended toward the flamboyant and the overstatement. The common case in point has been the American Jewish Congress, which — working backwards — is surely no "congress"; is "Jewish" in membership, but not in its anti-Torah stance; meets in "America," but is very un-American in its narrow, anti-pluralistic view that there is no room on the broad American canvas for advocacy of

particular ethnic [read: Jewish] interests. Such hyperbole is not new, and not worthy of much comment.

But mis-labeling is something else, and here the implications can sometimes be far more damaging than in overstatement. Of course, some mis-labeling is simply outlandish: A Glatt Kosher Nite-Club. (Never mind the menu — can any nightclub be kosher?) Or a Gay Synagogue. (How can a group, whose basis of identity is violation of natural and religious laws, band together for the purpose of worshiping the G-d whose laws they defy?)

Here we will deal with some cases of mis-labeling sampled from the wide spectrum of Jewry — some intriguing, others downright hazardous in their implications.

I. What Is a Reform Jew?

REFORM JUDAISM is not what it used to be — at least according to appearances. Some think it has strayed from its "historic roots," and wears the wrong identifying label. Others defend its fidelity to its name. We think Reform Judaism is Reform Judaism, but Reform Jews — that might be something else.

At summer camp: 600 young people immersed in Jewish studies at [Reform] camp Kutz at Warwick, N. Y., taking such subjects as rabbinic literature. . . Chassidism, biblical commentary and exegesis, the chanting of Torah portions, the Jewish community, Yiddish literature and, of course, Hebrew on various levels.

These kids, many in yarmulkas, some with tsitsis hanging out, were Reform kids, members of the National Federation of Temple Youth, who were giving up part of their summer holidays to attend a national academy [to study]! . . .

Another thing stood out: Most wanted badly to learn Hebrew fluently — not to be used in speech, but as the tool to delve into the authentic Jewish sources in their original language.

AMERICAN EXAMINER-JEWISH WEEK,
July 27, 1974

AT HEBREW UNION COLLEGE: *Skullcaps are commonplace around Hebrew Union College - Jewish Institute of Religion campus this year. . . .*

Observant students are a growing minority here and while their level of observance and the reasons behind it vary greatly, their influence is being felt. Special meals are prepared for six of the 44 resident students who keep kosher. Two men will not eat in the dining hall at all. . . .

One student offered: "Under the circumstances it is no more offensive to have people come to services with a tallit or tefillin than to have people slouch into services in their bluejeans. Personally, I prefer tallit and tefillin."

"Reform Jews put mezzuzot on their doors," he explains. "It's the same thing, a concrete symbol of a command. The sensation of being tied is a recognition of one's relationship to G-d."

NATIONAL JEWISH POST AND OPINION,
Jan. 17, 1975

This could be mistaken for a return to Torah Judaism. In fact, the American Council for Judaism publicly decried this type of revisionism in tones reminiscent of some classical Marxist's condemna-

tion of religious practices, quoting a declaration "Concerning Reform Judaism," issued by six Reform rabbis, signed by 33 others:

The Reform Movement is ceasing to be Reform. It is abandoning its historic roots. The Reform Movement was born out of a confident affirmation of the power of man to shape his destiny. It announced the right of man to freedom and personal autonomy. It found the most exciting moments of human history in the future and not in the past. It took the risk of universalism and openness.

Above all, the Reform Movement offered Jews an opportunity to maintain their integrity by allowing their ideology to match their behavior.

Today, the ideology of the Reform Movement is scarcely distinguishable from that of the Conservative Movement. It has turned full-circle and is now marching backwards.

We reject this new Traditionalism. We believe that a liberal Judaism should affirm the positive value of Jewish identity while maintaining the freedom of the individual to determine his own religious practices.

We believe that a liberal Judaism should encourage ceremonial creativity and should avoid an unimaginative attempt to revive the ritual patterns of the past.

While there was little the campus people at UAHC could say to neutralize the objections of the Council for Judaism, they were quick to dissociate the tallit-kashrut rush from a return to Orthodoxy, and the most ritual gravitating students were also eager to back the qualifications.

Second-year student Sam Rothberg's reaction: "When I go the services and I'm not leading the prayer, I enjoy going to an Orthodox place. *It's a totally free experience. You can do what you want. You can pray or just sit there and meditate. There's no one telling the congregation to 'please rise and turn to page so and so.'*"

"Ritual is essentially an irrational emotional component of religion,"

Lee Lifschiz, a fourth-year student, believes. "Reform previously has focused almost entirely on the rational, but man has emotional needs which Reform Judaism should also serve."

For Lifschiz the question of what to observe is "purely a personal thing of what turns you on — *what makes you feel good. Life cycle rituals fulfill psychological needs.*"

For Rabbi Kenneth Erlich, assistant dean of the college ordained last spring, "*ritual is poetry.*"

Senior Bruce Adams says he likes ritual: "*It's fun, but I don't feel commanded to do it. We keep kosher at home purely for identity reasons — as a statement that we're Jews. For most it's a fad, like Jewish Hare Krishna.*"

quoted from JEWISH POST & OPINION Jan. 24

What all of this amounts to, it would seem, is a breaking down of the rigidity of classical Reform to a drift between ritual-centered Conservatism and folk-way Reconstructionism — nothing to get excited about, Council condemnation notwithstanding. But something in our heart tells us otherwise. When a student says, "I finally own a four-cornered garment — a pancho," adding that he intends to put *tsittit* on the corners: "Why not? It'd be nice. You're commanded in the Shema to put fringes on all your garments." — We think something more might be happening; an awakening from within that may be starting many individuals on their full journey back home to Torah, after all. □

II. "Kashruth" —According to Conservatives

THERE CAN BE no objection to urging Conservative Jews to keep kosher. More than almost any other area of Jewish practise, dietary laws promote a constant awareness of Jewish identity within the individual. Moreover, the Talmud teaches that the food one consumes (in terms of *kashrus*) has far-reaching effects on one's personality and sensitivity. If, for whatever reason, Jews are adhering to *kashrus*, the results can only be salutary. The Conservative rabbinate has issued *Guidelines on Kashruth*, however, and it is cause for concern.

The introductory material may seem to put emphasis on the right points: "sanctity" . . . "consistency in home and when eating out" . . . "Jewish particularism." But there are some general principles as well as some specifics that are extremely unsettling.

A keynote to *kashrus* is the Torah's deliberately vague directive regarding ritual slaughter: "And you shall slaughter as I commanded

you. . ." with no further written explanation in the Pentateuch. This is a direct reference to the Oral Law given to Moshe at Sinai, which, indeed, does detail *shechita* procedures and requirements.

Similarly, the thrice stated command, "You shall not cook a kid in its mother's milk," is also explained in the Oral Law as the basis for detailed aspects of milk-meat restrictions. It is extremely difficult to understand how this can be authoritatively accepted by Conservative Judaism, which rejects whatever aspect of Mosaic Law it sees fit: It permits Torah-dictated Sabbath restrictions — automobile travel to the synagogue for the sake of increased attendance, for example. It defies explicit Torah prohibitions against marriage between a *kohain* and divorcee — because it finds them no longer "relevant" in a non-Temple dominated society. . . . Placing Conservative conviction very much is in the status described by the Rambam: the servant who accepts

all of his master's commands, except one. . . totally negating the servant-master relationship. In other words, the partial believer who is perforce a non-believer. What kind of "kashruth" can Conservative Judaism promote and guarantee?

The question rhetorically suspended could well provide its own answer. But the pages of the *Kashruth Guide* do a more detailed job. The layman who has made a life-time practise of living Jewishly would be astounded by the *hetairim* (permissible status) granted such long-time forbidden foods as sword-fish, sturgeon, all wines (even of non-Jewish production), gelatin (even if made from non-cleaned animal bones), vegetable shortening (without certification), all cheeses, fish foods (prepared in a restaurant, cooked in non-kosher utensils). . . .

The sophisticated rabbinical observer can easily spot each of these "permitted" foods as grabbed opportunities for shoddy scholarship and a studied selection of long-rejected minority opinions

— amounting either to shallow hucksterism, or deliberate misrepresentations. . . . The very name vegetable shortening sounds safe, but it invariably *does* contain non-kosher ingredients as a matter of course. . . . Swordfish and sturgeon do have scales of sorts, but they were demonstrated to be non-kosher in a scholarly monograph by Rabbi Moses Tendler of Yeshiva University (*JO* - April '68). . . . Wines may be processed by machines, but still require supervision. . . . Cheeses

produced by non-Jews are forbidden as "g'vinas akum," and are often produced through use of non-kosher ingredients. . . . Non-kosher utensils in a restaurant can be "nosain ta'am lifgam" (contributing a foul taste and can thus be discounted) — as the *Guide* points out with scholarly flourish, but *not* necessarily; nor has the restriction against general use of non-kosher utensils ever been dropped. . . . *Bishul akum* (restrictions against foods cooked by non-Jews) is summarily wiped off the books as a "decree too taxing for the congregation to sustain."

have their understanding (albeit limited) of the various *kashrus* symbols and the reliability of their sponsoring organizations. Government agencies charged with regulating honesty in marketing, which have already outlawed use of the description "Kosher-style" in cuisine (kosher is a matter of essence, not style), and have successfully prosecuted breaches of *kashrus* in food industry, will now be faced with a new grey area. If the Conservative rabbinic certifies a restaurant or product as "kosher" — even though it serves swordfish steaks, French wines, Danish cheeses, (need we go on?) without adhering to established standards — who can fault the law enforcement agencies for not prosecuting, refusing to enter an area beset with "denominational dispute"? How can the unwary consumer be alerted that "kosher" might only mean "Conservative Kosher," and as a result be *traife*?

But enough. The *Kashruth Guide* is obviously part of the old Conservative ploy of measuring how far the uninformed seem willing to follow, and then leading them thus far — and daring to venture no further. Rather than "Kashruth," which has always been synonymous with unrelenting discipline, the booklet preaches indulgence and compromise; and rather than a "Guide," it is a reaction.

In a manner perhaps more striking than ever before, the Conservatives are demonstrating how they are pulling away Jews from Torah observance under the shield of Kosher-labeled activity. □

Another serious complication from this source for *kashrus* guidance is the confusion that can result on the marketplace. People

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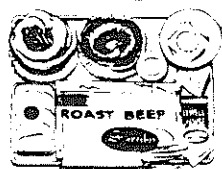
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III. Chassidus in Song — Not for the Record

Chassidus has long been associated with musical expression of religious fervor, joy, and yearning. MORDECHAI SCHILLER, a correspondent from Israel, comments on the degeneration of the value of a Chassidic label on records and public performers. He does not challenge the more obvious mis-application of the Chassidic tag to performances in night clubs and annual festivals, featuring popular entertainers and women singers. (See "Chassidism on the Modern Scene" in last month's JEWISH OBSERVER.) He zeroes in much closer to home. He writes:

Chasidic music entered a new era in 1959. With the release of Shlomo Carlebach's first record, "Haneshama Loch," *nigunim* became part of the world of media. And, as much as any other cultural phenomenon adopted by the media, it was to change and be changed.

The immediate, positive result was the well deserved proliferation of the music of Modzitz and Chabad. It was not long, however, before the success of "chassidische" records, together with the American pop-folk revival of the early sixties, gave birth to the plastic *nigun*. Peter, Paul, and Mary went to the *mikva* and came out rabbi's sons. As the culture progressed, it went from PP&M to Simon and Garfunkel arrangements. (For some reason, always a mystery to me, Simon and Garfunkel were always more acceptable in the yeshiva world than the Beatles or Bob Dylan. Perhaps it's because their name sounds more Garment District than Greenwich Village.)

As record sales soared, the center of neo-*nigunim* became the concert hall, rather than the *tish* or *farbreng*. And the new *rebbelech*, rather than wearing *bord un payos*, began sporting tailored hairstyles. It was also at this point that many began to drop even any pretensions to "Jewish style" music, and turned to overt rock tunes for their "*nigunim*." Typical justifications for this were:

"What's Jewish music anyway? Just a bunch of old Russian folksongs and Polish marches." Stories of the Kaliver Rebbe buying back from a shepherd a song which had been lost since the destruction of the Beis Hamikdash; talk of a rebbe being *mekadesh* a tune by using it as a theme in a *nigun* structured to lift the *neshama* through numerous levels; all this is looked upon as so much hocus-pocus or sentimentality.

Now, I am no stranger to, or enemy of secular music. What I object to is the coopting of secular music that is, itself, of dubious quality; and, often slapdashedly, turning it into a *nigun* through grafting a *posuk* onto it. I also write songs, but I don't try to force music on an unwilling *posuk*; I write verses to it.

It might reasonably be argued that none of this is "vile" enough to elicit such a reaction. Perhaps, but it provides the historical backdrop for something which is. There is a new tradition in Jerusalem: an annual "Evening of Chassidic Song." It has featured prominent *menagnim* as "stars," men who, perhaps, are still

more familiar with the *tish* than the stage. Also featured are more modern performers with varying youthful proteges, choir groups, and others. The concert is a big event for Jerusalemites as, with its separately seated audience, it is the only "kosher" entertainment available.

I was in no way prepared for what happened at the most recent such type of concert. I arrived late, and when I came in, I thought I had walked into the wrong hall. On stage was a whole boys' choir, most with little "payalach," each wearing the same costume: faded blue bell-bottoms, and bright yellow body-shirts with red stars. Their leader swished across the stage, leading his young lads with exaggerated, effeminate gestures. The scene could easily have been mistaken for a benefit concern for Gay-Lib.

The next attraction was a new-generation star. . . . If I like Tom Jones, I would choose to listen to the original, not a pale, pseudo-Jewish imitation.

And so, for the most part, the evening went. Throughout, the overriding feeling for me was. . . if that's Chassidus, maybe the Vilna Gaon was right, after all. □

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IV "Hasidism" — A Postscript

In his book-review article "Chassidism on the Modern Scene" (JO, Jan '75) Rabbi Joseph Elias commented: *There is a danger in this warm embrace of [Chassidism]; for in the very act of exploring — and exploiting — the movement, there emerges the tendency to change and adapt it to the patterns of thought and life of the observer. . . . Far from opening better avenues to understanding, [it] raises roadblocks . . .*

A recent editorial in the Boston Jewish Advocate, entitled "Ehrlichman's 'Hasidism,'" cast a bit more light on the ridiculous proportions this can reach. We quote:

We reach the reductio ad absurdum in the plea for newly-acquired client John Ehrlichman by Ira Lowe,

described by The New York Times as "a local lawyer known for his interest in radical causes." Perhaps the Times should have written of Mr. Lowe's knowledge of things Judaic, also. In describing his client's post-verdict soul-searching, during which he allegedly formed a desire to aid some New Mexico Indians on land tenure problems (his pre-White House specialty as a private attorney), Mr. Lowe said Ehrlichman sought to determine "what he could do to comport with the old Hasidic command of a good deed for a bad."

While we find Ira Lowe's Hasidus bizarrely out of place, given that while Ehrlichman is of Jewish descent, he is a practicing Christian Scientist, we also hear a hollow, expedient ring in the hitherto flinty Ehrlichman's contrition.

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— *from the Vatican*

WE JEWS DO NOT seem to have many friends as of late. In anxiety to recapture that old pre-Yom Kippur War popularity, some of us are turning to unusual quarters. Some have even forgotten the lessons of the hot-and-cold, now-I-love-thee-now-I-do-not-know-thee relationship with the Catholic Church, and are expecting balm from the Vatican. Some, but not many.

The Vatican is doing its part to encourage the enthusiasm. Last December the Vatican dusted off *Nostra Aetate*, its ten-year old declaration on Jews and Judaism, it set up an official Commission on Relations with Judaism, and issued an internal Guideline, directing the Church members on how to view Judaism and how to interact with Jews.

Part of the Guideline was a renouncing of anti-Semitism, which is always encouraging—especially when it emanates from the single most responsible source of anti-Semitism over the millennia. Yet most Jewish groups did not break forth with accolades for this positive statement. First, they remember the deafening silence from the Vatican that accompanies every outbreak of hostilities against Israel, as well as its recent rise to the defense of Archbishop Capucci, convicted smuggler of arms for the PLO.

In addition, as some pointed out,

“there is lacking in the Vatican document a clear admission of guilt. One cannot just draw a line and condemn anti-Semitism for the future without paying attention to Christian persecution of Judaism and Jews throughout many centuries, which eventually led to the Holocaust.

“Furthermore, outspoken guidance should have been given regarding the interpretation of the New Testament, so as to neutralize the anti-Semitic statements made in it and to counteract the idea that the Church has inherited G-d's promises to Israel. It is this idea — that the Church is the People of G-d — that prevents a real dialogue between Jews and Christians.”

(Professor Ze'ev Falk, Hebrew University, quoted in JERUSALEM POST, Feb. 6)

Another objection: no mention was made of the special relationship between Israel-the-People and Israel-the-Land. The Vatican explained the omission as an attempt to stay clear of political questions. Of course, the relationship between People and Land may have political ramifications, but to Jews, this relationship is a primary aspect of the Jewish essence. Although the Vatican's Guideline *did* purport to explain Judaism as Jews understood it, rather than from the outside, perhaps it was too much to expect



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(excerpts):

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the Church to recognize this Land-
People kinship. It simply cannot
accept any kind of Jewish national
existence, especially in a homeland
of its own: according to Christian
doctrine, the People that rejected
"the savior" is condemned to eternal
exile until it repents. A State of
Israel is only a mirage in the
Catholic view of things.

Perhaps one should still find a
modicum of encouragement from
the smallest step toward tolerance of
Jews by the Catholic Church — except
for one overriding consideration: the
Church is an evangelist institution.
Its mission to save the "unenlightened"
is an integral part of its theology.
And its view of Jewry as G-d's
"disenfranchised" children makes
conversion of Jewry to Christianity a
doctrinal imperative. Thus the gradual
shift from barbarism to civilized
brotherhood — from pogrom and
auto-da-fe to polite dialogue — is not
necessarily a signal of a shift in the
Church's goals regarding Jewry. It
only signifies a shift in its tactics.

Pope Paul's expressed hope, then,
that "a true dialogue may be established
between Judaism and Christianity" cannot
be taken as a new goal in Catholic-Jewish
relations, only as a new approach to
old goals.

Dialogue — What Does It Mean?

AS FOR JEWISH GAINS from talking
things over, one must question the
entire concept of dialogue. The Random
House Dictionary defines dialogue as
"an exchange of ideas with a view to
reaching an amicable agreement." We
already agree from the outset that
Catholicism may be acceptable to non-
Jews, but it is meaningless to a Jew.
Judaism, in turn, only has purpose to
those born within the Jewish fold, or
to those who enter Jewry voluntarily.
We do not proselytize, and we accept
the non-Jews' potential for fulfillment
as he is, providing he keeps the seven
Noahide commandments. What gain can
be achieved through dialoguing? We do
not seek new common ground. And, in
the context of a battle of wits, we seek
neither victory nor defeat: We are not
interested in winning converts to
Judaism through successful dialogue,
and certainly not in losing face by
being overcome by a successful
antagonist.

If Catholics are interested in
learning more about Judaism as "the
source of Christianity," there are any
number of resources to consult —
many within the Vatican — without
engaging in dialogues. Yet, those who
are habitually (and

professionally) involved in discussion,
disputations, and dialogues are back
at it again:

* The Vatican has declared 1975 to
be a Holy Year, somehow using *Yovail*,
the Biblical Jubilee Year, as its precedent.
Going all out in its avowed course of
"drawing from Judaic roots," the New
York Diocese, as well as other Church-
related groups, are circulating a
pamphlet "Jubilee," an exposition on
the Jewish Jubilee Year, prepared for
the occasion by Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum
of the American Jewish Committee. In
addition, the American Jewish Committee
is sponsoring an Israel-Rome Study
Tour for Jews and Christians to witness
first-hand "the roots and the flowering."

The Vatican may declare that it is
only seeking understanding, and Rabbi
Tanenbaum may protest that he is only
out to foster brotherhood, not
proselytization of Jews. But a church
with a mission in its charter cannot
help but missionize, and a Rabbi with
a dialogue as the first and last clause
in his contract cannot help but cooperate
with those who view Judaism as a stage
whose passage is long overdue.

* The Vatican claims that it only
seeks to understand how "the Jews

St. Patrick's and Emanu-El Plan Dialogue



Msgr. James F. Rigney, rector of St. Patrick's Cathedral, speaking from the pulpit at Temple Emanu-El yesterday.

By ELEANOR BLAU

St. Patrick's Cathedral and Temple Emanu-El, two of the leading houses of worship in the country, have decided to spend a year discussing the problems that have strained relations between members of their faiths.

In a convocation attended by more than 1,200 Roman Catholics and Jews, at the cathedral and, later, at the Reform temple, spokesmen announced guidelines for their planned dialogue and appealed to "all synagogues



Rabbi Ronald B. Sobel, the spiritual leader of Temple Emanu-El, as he spoke from the high pulpit at St. Patrick's Cathedral.

Continued on Page 74, Column 5

define themselves in the light of their own religious experience" — should direct the Catholics to a library stocked with basic Jewish texts, not to common prayer. Yet, the front page of the *New York Times* on February 13 featured twin pictures of the "St. Patrick's Emanu-el Dialogue Plan" in action, of Rabbi Sobel speaking from the pulpit on the Cathedral, and Msgr. Rigney, rector of St. Patrick's, speaking from the Temple pulpit. (This was hailed as a major breakthrough, for while priests have spoken at Emanu-el before, this was the first time that a rabbi has graced the altar at St. Patrick's.)

Rabbi Sobel intoned: "We have begun to learn. . . that theological differences and divergent views of history's meaning need not be impediments to understanding or barriers to love." (*New York Times*)

Not content with its own program of blurring the lines between religious groups, "the New York Federation of Reform Synagogues said it would urge the 105 Reform synagogues in the New York area to engage in similar programs with local Catholic Churches."

Perhaps the Catholics have a genuine need to define their own ex-

perience on the broader canvas of Judaic belief. So be it. But by what strength of inferiority feelings must the Bnai Brith's Anti-Defamation League and the Temple Emanu-el, sponsors of this unique convocation (as it is described in the press), seek Jewish identity in the field of Christian experience — or find comfort in Christian acceptance? Will the Bnai Brith never be comfortable in a

pluralistic society until Jew and Christian are indistinguishable? Will Reform Judaism never consider itself "arrived" until it is one with Christianity?

While the Catholic Church may need dialogue with Jews for any number of reasons, there is neither need nor justification for Jewish participation in such.

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Babies, Birds, and Compassion in the Law

*"He who shows mercy to the cruel
will eventually be cruel to the
merciful."*

This rabbinic adage represents more than poetic justice with a twist of irony. It points to an inevitable aspect of nature: Without some superior source of guidelines for his actions, a person will rely on his own judgment, and this is as subject to winds of change as is a weather-vane in a tornado. The same subjectivity that, under the banner of some humanistic doctrine, can summon up compassion for those guilty of crimes can also dictate calloused, cruel acts — as an impulsive aberration, or as a matter of a "we-know-what's-really-best-for-you" policy.

A striking example of how a non-Torah based humanism can be responsible for showering mercy on the cruel, and cruelty on the merciful, appeared on prestigious editorial pages of the *New York Times* (Feb. 19). Two editorials, one following the other, pleaded for a combination of common sense and compassion. The first, "Abortion Error," decried the conviction of Dr. Kenneth C. Edelin (Boston) for manslaughter, for having aborted a fetus during the sixth month of pregnancy. The baby was alive at birth, but the doctor made no effort to preserve its life, and the jury found Dr. Edelin guilty.

In the *halachic* view, abortion is akin to murder, and cannot be permitted unless full-term pregnancy constitutes a threat to the mother's life. The situation of a socially deprived, economically underprivileged, or single mother constitutes a social or economic problem and must be solved through social or economic

measures — not by snuffing out the fetus's life. The big push for right to abortion by Women's Liberationists is only part of their campaign to end the double-standard—to be equal to men in self-indulgence-without-responsibility.

But the *New York Times* only sees the tragedy of "the complex and sensitive issue of legal abortion in this country made more agonizing than ever by the almost unbelievable decision of the Boston jury in the Edelin case."

First, "the conviction of Dr. Kenneth C. Edelin for manslaughter is a blow not only to physicians who perform legal abortions but also to the women who need these operations or may need them in the future."

Moreover, the legal status of abortion, which had long been in the category of the taking of life in criminal law, has now been recast in a new mold. The *Times* says, "The case was an attempt to use a criminal jury to set social policy," as if the conviction were an innovation.

True, the Edelin conviction may be reversed, the *Times* says, "but the damage done to the cause of rational abortion may be much harder to undo than the conviction itself."

For a mirror image of the "Abortion Error" editorial, the *Times* follows through with a condemnation of a "Bird Massacre" in Paducah, Kentucky. Millions of blackbirds have been plaguing residents of the Fort Campbell, Kentucky area with disturbances, crop damage, and diseases:

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transmit gastroenteritis — inflammation of the membrane of the stomach and intestines — which is fatal to some farm animals, especially swine.

“The birds have also have also been held responsible for carrying histoplasmosis, an infection caused by microscopic fungus spores ingested by the birds and spread to other parts of the body. More than two dozen cases were reported last year.”

(Wayne King, N. Y. Times - Feb.20)

But the N. Y. Times editorial only took note of “the poignant spectacle of millions of dead and dying birds. . . According to a UPI report, sprayed birds benumbed by the cold dropped from their roosts and skittered along the ground. Later the birds huddled together for warmth and some hours later began dying by the thousands.”

So how does the Times size up today's moral climate?

Conviction of an abortionist? — a regrettable “. . .Error”!

Wiping out an ornithological pest? — “Bird Massacre.”

Abortion Error

The complex and sensitive issue of legal abortion in this country—already the subject of bitter controversy —has been made more agonizing than ever by the almost unbelievable decision of the Boston jury in the Edelin case.

The conviction of Dr. Kenneth C. Edelin for manslaughter is a blow not only to physicians who perform legal abortions but also to the women who need these operations or may need them in the future. It will now become more difficult than ever for women to obtain abortions when they are in the second trimester after conception. Those who do not seek abortions until the third to sixth month of pregnancy

the damage done to the cause of rational abortion may be much harder to undo than the conviction itself. Worst of all, it will be the most unfortunate of women—the youngest, the most ignorant, the poorest and the most unsophisticated—who will be the chief sufferers from this jury's misguided decision—until it is reversed.

Bird Massacre

The United States Circuit Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia had upheld the legality of killing millions of starlings, grackles and redwing blackbirds that . . .

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The Education of Sephardic Jewry in France (cont.)

The January edition of the JO featured an article on *Ozar HaTorah and Sephardic Jewry*. Much discussion was devoted to the particular problems of French Jewry, which constitutes one of the world's largest concentrations of Jewry. Several readers brought our attention to other school systems, in addition to the *Ozar HaTorah*, that are struggling with the education of Sephardic children in France. ARTHUR (ASHER) GOLDBERG of Brooklyn, New York, writes as follows:

One of the largest growing schools in the country is "Merkaz

HaTorah," located in Villenoble, a suburb of Paris. Organized in 1968 by Rabbi Yaakov Toledano, with only 8 children, it has now developed into an elementary and high school with 400 boys and girls. With more classes now being built to take care of the exploding demand, Merkaz HaTorah is scheduled to have 500 students in September, 1975. Approximately 80% of the students are Sephardim and 20% are Ashkenazim, and they range in age from 6 to 18. It is the largest yeshiva of its type in France: with 50% of each day, and all of Fri-

day and Sunday classes devoted to religious studies. Its high level of secular education has been recognized by the French Ministry of Education.

Plans are now being made to provide space for 700 students by 1977. With 300,000 Jews living in the Paris area, Merkaz HaTorah is carrying a major portion of the responsibility of saving half of the children of French Jewry from complete assimilation. It could grow even faster, but it is limited by a lack of funds. Unfortunately, the Sephardic immigrants that are interested in furthering Jewish education have not yet achieved the economic ability to do so, while the established, but highly assimilated, Jewish community refuses to support the religious education of Jewish children.

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* * * *

Another correspondent writes of the *Ohr Joseph Institutions* in France, established in 1948 by *Rabbi G. Libman*, a disciple of the revered *Gaon, Rabbi Abraham Jofen* זצ"ל. They consist of educational complexes with intensive stress on Torah study, providing educational and dormitory facilities, from kindergarten through post-graduate studies.

Ohr Joseph Institutions have achieved great strides in these cities:

Armentieres-en-Brie — A "Torah Village" with some 44 houses for teaching staff and Kollel members, separate elementary schools for boys and girls of Kollel families, as well as a Yeshiva Ketana and Yeshiva Gedola for 300 pupils, with dormitory.

Nanty - An elementary school for the local community and a high-school dormitory for girls.

Nice - An elementary school, a yeshiva high-school with dormitory, and a Kollel.

Marseilles - A Yeshiva high-school and Bais Medrash, with dorm, and high-school dormitory for girls.

Letters to the Editor



The Legacy of Rabbi Rice

To the Editor:

The article in your Shevat issue by Shmuel Singer entitled, "From Germany to Baltimore," was interesting but very incomplete. I therefore feel obligated to comment on a number of points the author made. The writer leaves the reader with the impression that Rabbi Rice's influence passed on when the Rabbi died. Nothing could be further from the truth. Baltimore was known for a long time as the Yerushalayim of America due to the influence of Rabbi Rice.* The religious community of Baltimore has maintained, from the time of Rabbi Rice until the present, an unbroken chain of observance and dedication to Torah. The present day Congregation Shearith Israel of Baltimore, a strict orthodox Congregation following the German Minhag, which to this day does not allow non-shomrei Shabbos Jews to be members, traces itself back to the small congregation established by Rabbi Rice. In fact there are a number of families, descendants of Rabbi Rice's students and followers, that are still members of the Congregation. So even though the larger Congregation Nidche Israel became a Reform Temple in 1871, the religious elements of the German Jewish Community perpetuated themselves up to the present. It is within the realm of probability that if not for the leadership of Rabbi Rice, Baltimore

* *Funk and Wagnal's Jewish Encyclopedia.*

like Cincinnati would have become a stronghold of the Reform heresy.

My other comments are on a more personal level. The writer stated that a short while after the death of Rabbi Rice his children became irreligious and alienated from Torah Judaism. This is not so. The first generation following Rabbi Rice was 100% Torah observant. The alienation did not begin until the second generation after the Rabbi, by some of his grandchildren. It was unfortunately accelerated by the third generation which made a complete break with Orthodoxy.

The story related at the end of the article about the young man, a descendant of Rabbi Avraham Joseph Rice, is like many stories, lacking in exactness. The adjective "totally irreligious" is totally incorrect; ignorant of true Torah Yiddishkeit, yes. This young man was brought back to true Torah

Judaism. He was befriended in his return by Reb Eliezer Zirkind and Rabbi Simon Schwab and their families. However, the credit for saving this Jewish *Neshamah* and thereby the generations to follow, goes to Grand Rabbi Amrom Taub shlita, of Kahal Arugath Habosem of Baltimore, who has been like a father to the young man. No one should know better than I.

SHRAGA BENDIT RICE
Brooklyn, New York

Give Me Your Tired, Worn Out Cliches

To the Editor:

Miss Roth's attitude towards *chessed* (*Letters*, Jan. '75) really evoked my anger — and then pity. She sounds as if she really *believes* that *chessed* is only for those whose intellects do not qualify them for greater things. Guess it was the lack of a good university that lead Avrohom Avinu *and* Sora Imeinu to indulge so much. Pity!

Avrohom Avinu — who came to recognize G-d with his own intellect . . . and when he was ill and in pain, Hashem made the sun shine with special intensity to keep travelers off the road, so that Avrohom, who was 99 years old, could recuperate from

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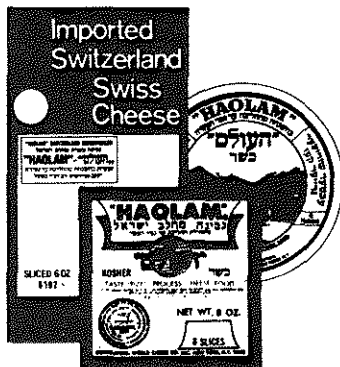
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LETTERS CONTINUED

his *bris-milah*. But Avrohom couldn't bear the spiritual pain—the vacuum created by this lack of *orchim* (guests) so G-d sent the *malachim*. Could not Avrohom an intellectual giant, have found something better to occupy himself with than being a waiter to a bunch of dirty wayfarers? Could he not have spent his time in study, or have welcomed the rare chance to meditate or reflect upon the universe and its many wonders?

And then again—

The scope of *chessed* is infinite! So much so that it is a challenge to anyone "who is active, curious, alive." It can mean a pause in one's

rush-rush pace to simply cross an old lady to the other side of the street, or it can mean listening — really listening — to another person's problems so that he knows he has someone to share them with, and then applying one's perception and sound judgment to help him solve the problem. *This is redeeming intellectual stimulation*. The possibilities are endless.

Which brings to mind a old axiom: As an *end in itself*, the person who is writing his thesis for his Ph.D. is accomplishing nothing more than someone sitting in front of his TV, watching a ballgame, with a can of beer in his hand. That is — he cannot be קונה חלקו בעולם הבא (gain his other share in the world-to-come) with his *or* her thesis, nor with his TV; he cannot — with listening to a great

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symphony, nor with Rock and Roll music. Likewise — not by reading a great novel, nor a cheap comic strip.

One may *enjoy* these various activities, his source of pleasure will vary with his intellectual capacity, and he may *develop* this capacity by doing these things — but find *fulfillment*? If he does, there is something sorely lacking in his or her *hashkafa* as a *shomer Torah umitzvos*, something very unclear in his mind about why he was put on this world in the first place.

We actually *verbalize* this every single day — a Mishnah from the Oral Torah which our sages thought wise to incorporate into our daily prayers in the hope that we would *listen* as we speak them: "These are the activities for which a person eats fruit. . . . Six out of ten are forms of *chessed*, and within each there are a million possibilities.

Cliched, tired, worn out—? Never! Guaranteed to give fulfillment? Beyond question!

MRS. S. FREEDMAN
Brooklyn, New York

The Role of Jewish Women: More Complex

To the Editor:

I would like to respond to your article "Jewish Women in Torah Society For Frustration. . . or Fullfillment?" In your preface you raised the question "To what extent is confinement of women at home and hearth a reflection of the eternal Torah attitude?"

A woman's duty is to bear and raise her children, and to imbue them with *Yiras Shamayim*. This is her basic responsibility but her duty to herself, her family, and *Klal Yisroel* does not end there. We can not be content with building our family alone, for we possess the talent to make contributions to *Klal Yisroel* as a whole. Yes, we start with our own viable home structure and from there help build a better world.

Having a part-time career or being intellectually stimulated does not necessarily mean one's responsibility as the *Aishes Chayil* will suffer. Education and career are not negative values for the *Bas Yisroel*. There are many years when the children are all in yeshivos. Should housework then be woman's all consuming activity? I would rather have my children see me working for the community, organizing a school system, helping the elderly, or bringing better nursing skills to the community. Housework is necessary to the family unit, but it is not the goal. *Homemaking*, on the other hand, means promoting the value and scope of each member of the family. Being a good homemaker then means being the best human being one can be, and using all intellectual faculties to do so.

Today's society often demands that both partners contribute to the family's income. This is paralleled in the Torah family — we women work when we are young so our husbands can learn Torah. During our child-

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LETTERS CONTINUED

raising years we work partime so our husbands can pursue a career in *Chinuch*. Mothers of older children work to send them to the best yeshivos — no matter what the transportation, dormitory and living expenses are. Other women work so that their sons and sons-in-laws are able to learn in *Kollel*. Throughout her life the *Aishes Chayil* may be called upon to supplement the family income and she should be prepared with marketable skills or a career.

In regard to the education of girls, you stated that "*Schooling educates for education.*" To want to use one's mind is a blessing, not a hardship. I have met many women well versed in Torah learning. They are to be praised for they are able to understand and appreciate the depth and beauty in Torah learning. They also have an enhanced ability to encourage their children in their Torah learning. — What better example is

there for children than see their mother going over the *Parshas HaShavua* with Commentaries or studying a *Mussar sefer*! It is not enough for the father to be a *Talmud Chochom*.

You refer to "intellectual inner vacuum" felt by the Bais Yaakov girl who raises a family. There is no reason for this. The more profound the Bas Yisroel's education during her school days, the deeper her commitment to Torah life will be. It is better to be introduced to intellectual pursuit, even if it has to be put second place during the busy mothering years, than never to have felt its satisfaction at all.

No, being a Bas Yisroel does not mean that a woman's role is narrow or confining or non-intellectual.

DEENA HOLLAND
Los Angeles, California

(Mrs. Holland's comments serve to develop one aspect of the editorial clarification and response published in the January issue. But as stated, they do not represent the full range of experience. — N.W.)

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Non-profit educational projects of Agudath Israel of America.

TORAH LEADERS AT AGUDATH ISRAEL'S 53RD DINNER

THE FOREMOST TORAH AUTHORITIES in the United States are among the 1,000 Orthodox leaders and activists who will join in the 53rd Anniversary celebration of Agudath Israel of America, Sunday evening April 27th in the Grand Ballroom of the Commodore Hotel in New York City. This large attendance of the nation's most distinguished Torah scholars who actively participate in the policy-making bodies of Agudath Israel is unique even in Jewish life, a spokesman of the organization pointed out.

Sheldon Beren, prominent Orthodox Jewish businessman of Denver, will receive the prestigious Hagaon Rav Aharon Kotler Memorial Award for "having assisted in turning Denver into a vibrant Torah community," thus serving as a stimulant to individuals in other farflung communities to make Torah flourish. Mr. Beren, a leader of Denver's Hillel Academy, helped found the Yeshivas Toras Chaim and the Beth Jacob High School for Girls, which serve senior students from the entire Far West region.

A presentation of the Moreinu Yaakov Rosenheim Memorial Award will be made to Joseph Friedenson for "outstanding service to the cause of Agudath Israel." Mr. Friedenson is the scion of a prominent family of pre-war Agudath Israel leaders in Poland, and since his arrival in this country he has served as the editor of *Dos Yiddishe Vort*.

Max Berg, prominent Boro Park community leader will receive the Reb Elimelech Tress Memorial Award as the "Shearis Hapleitoh man of the year." Since his arrival in the U.S.A. from war-torn Europe, Mr. Berg has

AGUDIST YOUTH CONDUCTED PURIM PROJECTS

PIRCHEI AGUDATH ISRAEL presented a special Purim program in eleven hospitals, old age homes, and nursing homes throughout metropolitan New York. These lively Jewish oriented programs brought joy and happiness to the lonely and forgotten Jewish patients in these institutions.

The community service department of Zeirei Agudath Israel successfully completed its first Megillah reading project this past Purim. Fifty Zeirei members read the Megillah on the night and morning of Purim to over 500 invalids and shut-ins in New York City.

Any indigent individual who needs help, or hospitals or old age homes which seek a program of entertainment or visitation on a weekly basis, should contact the Bikur Cholim committee of Pirchei Agudath Israel through Rabbi Joshua Silbermintz at 5 Beekman Street, New York City.

The Jewish Observer / March, 1975

dedicated himself to the furtherance of Torah causes.

Governor Carey to Address Dinner

The dinner will hear an address from Governor Hugh L. Carey of New York, who will on this occasion receive from Agudath Israel the 1975 Humanitarian Award. New York's chief executive will be feted for his long record of constructive activity for helping the common man since he began his career in government over fourteen years ago. Governor Carey's interest in the gut issues affecting the Jewish people has made him a prime fighter for Jewish causes, especially in the field of Jewish education.

Agudath Israel of America is part of the world movement of Agudath Israel, which aims to establish the sovereignty of Torah in all problems facing the Jews as individuals and as a nation. The 53rd Anniversary Dinner will hear a report on how the American Agudath Israel movement is striving to achieve these aims by maintaining sixteen divisions of activity embracing every phase of Jewish life, affecting the daily lives of many thousands of Jews of all ages.

DR. BERNARD FRYSHMAN TO HEAD AGUDATH ISRAEL'S COMMISSION ON LEGISLATION

DR. BERNARD FRYSHMAN, prominent Orthodox activist, was unanimously elected chairman of the Commission on Legislation and Civic Action of Agudath Israel of America, at a meeting of the organization's executive board on February 19th. Dr. Fryshman will succeed Menachem Shayovich, who resigned the chairmanship of this important commission which he headed for seven years, upon his appointment as Special Assistant to Governor Hugh Carey for New York City and community affairs.

Dr. Fryshman is an assistant professor of physics at the New York Institute of Technology and is on the staff of Brooklyn College. He is actively associated with numerous groups, including the Association of Orthodox Jewish Scientists and the Association of Orthodox Jewish University Faculty.

The Commission on Legislation and Civic Action of Agudath Israel of America has for many years pioneered in mobilizing Orthodox Jewish support for the defense of Jewish interests in every area of legislation and governmental operation. It has gained special recognition for the Agudath Israel movement for its effective work in fighting for the rights of Yeshivos and parents of children attending Torah institutions.

AGUDATH ISRAEL'S ANNUAL MATZOH SHIPMENTS TO RUSSIA COMPLETED

BY SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT with the European offices of Agudath Israel, the annual transports sent by Agudath Israel of America to Jews in Soviet Russia were sent in time to arrive for Pesach.

These Matzoh parcel shipments for Russian Jews are funded by the Overseas Passover Campaign of Agudath Israel. Thousands of Russian Jews, who otherwise would not have been able to observe the mitzvah of Matzoh, have been provided with their basic Pesach needs during the past years through the combined efforts of the world movement of Agudath Israel.

REGISTRATION FOR CAMP AGUDAH AND CAMP BNOS UNDERWAY

REGISTRATION is in full swing for the non-profit summer educational camps sponsored by Agudath Israel of America: Camp Agudah for boys in Ferndale, New York, and Camp Bnos for girls in Liberty.

The Agudist camps have for the past three decades served thousands of youngsters from North and Latin America with a unique combination of a healthful vacation with a warm religious program keyed to engendering enthusiasm for a Torah way of life.

In view of the heavy registration during the first weeks, it is suggested that parents of children from 6-15 enroll at the city office, at 5 Beekman Street, New York City, while there are still vacancies.

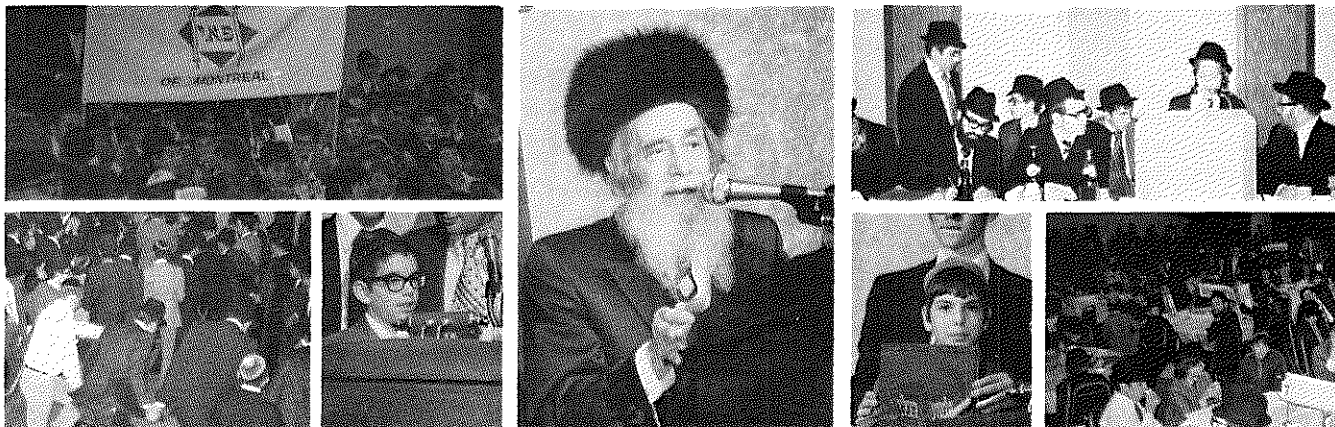
ZAI "CHESSED" ARM EXPAND SERVICES

THE SHMUEL WALD MEMORIAL FUND, the *Gemilas Chesched* arm of Zeirei Agudath Israel, has recently broadened its range of chessed Services. The *Gemilas Chesched* was originally established to serve Zeirim and young couples in need of a no-cost loan, and it recently began servicing all others, as well.

Among the various services offered by the Shmuel Wald Memorial Fund are: Interest Free Loans, Camp Scholarships, and a recently added Blood Bank. For information regarding any of these services, call (212) 964-1620 and ask for Rabbi Eissenberg.

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FOUR PIRCHEI SIYUM CELEBRATIONS ACROSS THE U.S.A.



OVER 2,000 Jewish boys between the ages of eight and fifteen, gathered in four separate celebrations, in as many locations, to mark the mastery by heart of the entire Mishna. Huge gatherings of kids is not unusual, for they can be attracted by any number of activities, ranging from pranks to sports to music to "music." The Annual Siyum Mishnayos is unusual, however, in that it brings together young boys to celebrate the voluntary commitment to memory of all 525 Chapters of Mishna through their pooled efforts. The four Siyumim are sponsored by Pirchei Agudath Israel — a network of sixty-five youth groups with a total membership of 9,700, sponsored by Agudath Israel of America.

The largest and oldest such celebration in America was held over the weekend of February 15, in the Boro Park section of Brooklyn, accommodating boys from Montreal, New England cities, Greater New York a multitude of New Jersey towns, Philadelphia and Baltimore.

Last year was the first time a second Siyum took place—in Cleveland, Ohio. This year, two additional celebrations took place—in Los Angeles and Denver, hosting boys from their respective areas. Next year, a fifth Siyum is slated to take place in Baltimore to serve boys from the Mid-Atlantic region.

The planning for this year's celebrations began in October, according to Rabbi Joshua Silbermintz, National Director of Pirchei Agudath Israel, when the 525 chapters of Mishna, encompassing a total of 4,190 separate sections, were assigned to the youngsters in each region for study and memorization.

Besides studying the assigned chapters of Mishna, many boys compete for special awards for mastering 50, 100, or more Mishnas — some young scholars mastering over 1,000 selections each. The Grand Winner in the New York based celebration

was Yaakov Yehuda Shulman of Monsey, New York, who was successfully tested on the memorization of 2,097 Mishnas. Runners up were Elchonon Baron and Moshe Schechter of Montreal and Sholom Rakowsky of Monsey, with over 1,000 Mishnayos each. In the Cleveland-based Midwest competition, the Grand prize winners were Shmuel Baron of Wickliffe and Dovid Engel of Toronto, who had learned over 1200 Mishnayos. Runner up was Tzvi Richter of Denver.

A visit to any of the activities connected with a Siyum weekend is bound to be a stimulating experience, both for the youthful vibrancy that dominates, and the participants' broad range of backgrounds: boys of obvious Chassidic affiliation, all-American mods, shy scholarly types, and regular Yeshiva kids.

Mid-West Reports

The Midwest Siyum was the highpoint of a weekend visit to Cleveland. A Shabbos of study was spent at Telshe Yeshiva's Wickliffe campus, and sightseeing excursions were made on Friday and Sunday. The Shabbos was highlighted by greetings from the Telshe Roshei Yeshiva, Rabbi Boruch Sorotzkin and Rabbi Mordechai Gifter, and featured the pairing off of each visitor with an older Telshe student who acted as guide and counselor. Over 250 boys participated in the Siyum Celebration, including 150 from Detroit, Chicago, Pittsburgh, Toronto, Cincinnati and Akron.

The Siyum was dedicated to the memory of Michael Tress, founder of Agudath Israel's youth organizations and its first administrative president. Two of his sons, Rabbi Avrohom Tress and Menachem Tress, both studying at Telshe Yeshiva, participated in the Siyum, as did a son-in-law, Rabbi Yisroel Pichey, a Telshe alumnus now teaching at the Pittsburgh Talmudical Academy.

Rabbi Joshua Silbermintz, executive director of American Pirchei Agudath Israel, spoke at the dinner, as did Rabbi Mordechai Gifter. Chairman of the Siyum was Rabbi Moshe Borenstein, assisted by Dovid Unger, Menachem Mendel Tress, and Aharon Weinberg.

The "National" Siyum

The climax of the efforts of the 1200-plus boys who participated in the New York based Siyum was the weekend in Boro Park, marked by awe-inspiring tefillos, with over 500 Pirchim and their leaders participating; lively Oneg Shabbos gatherings; and Torah addresses by Rabbi Naftali Basch, Menahel of the Mesivta Toras Emes Kamenitz and Rabbi Nisson Wolpin, editor of the *Jewish Observer*.

The Siyum Celebration was chaired by Rabbi Yehuda Oelbaum, principal of the Yeshiva Toras Chaim (Hewlett, L. I.) At this final gathering the boys were guests at a huge dinner which was attended by leaders in Jewish education and community affairs. Special greetings from the Moetzes Gedolei HaTorah were brought by Rabbi Nochum Perlow, the Noveminsker Rebbe. The hush that greeted his entrance into the banquet hall and his heartfelt words made a striking impression on all who were present. Besides awards, speeches and a barbeque chicken plate, the program also featured entertainment and music.

Co-chairmen of the New York Siyum Mishnayos were Gershon Nathan and Shaya Yaroslawitz. Menachem Proforske was chairman of the interbranch weekend.

Western Siyumim

The Western Regional Siyum, which took place in Denver on March 15, was chaired by Mr. Muschel. The Pacific Coast Siyum was held in Los Angeles on the same weekend, and was chaired by Zalman Manelo. (Details of these celebrations will be reported in a future release.)

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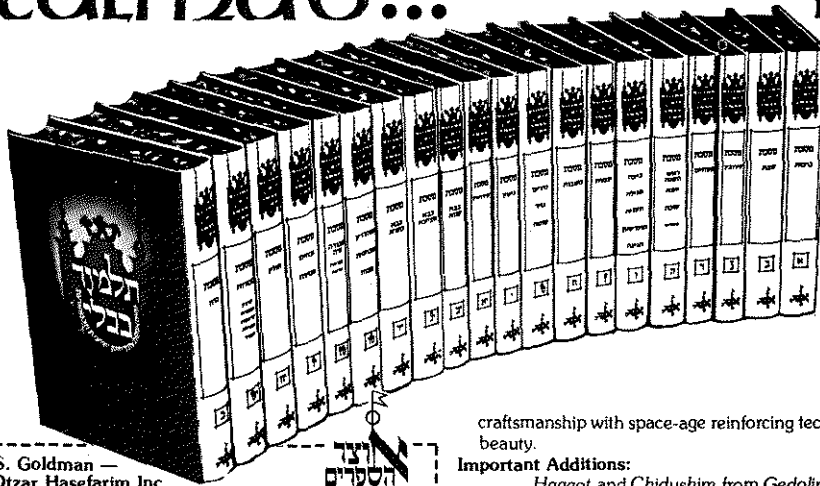
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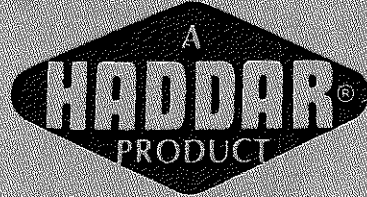
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