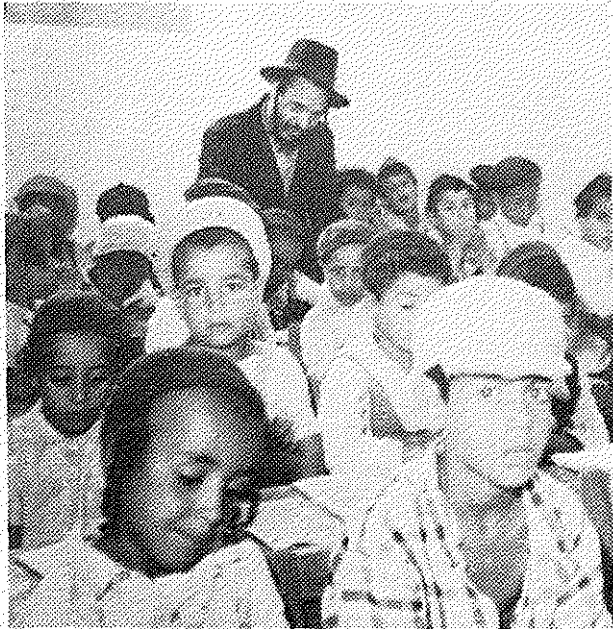


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THE JEWISH OBSERVER



Integration In Israel

**ENTERING OUR
SECOND YEAR**

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**A REPLY
TO COMMENTARY**

•

**A NEW
DIMENSION**

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THE TEST

THE JEWISH OBSERVER

THE JEWISH OBSERVER

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the cover

Sephardi and Ashkenazi youngsters side-by-side in a classroom in one of the vast chain of Chinuch Atzmai schools in Israel. Here *mizug* (integration) is a reality of everyday life. (See INTEGRATION IN ISRAEL on page 5.)

Entering Our Second Year

A subjective evaluation and a progress report

THIS ISSUE, VOLUME 2, NUMBER 1, marks our entry into the second year of publication of THE JEWISH OBSERVER. Naturally, we can not ourselves objectively evaluate our efforts in our first year; for this we look to our readers. Nevertheless, those of us who produce THE OBSERVER feel the need for a bit of self-analysis as well as a progress report to our readers.

A publication has a body and a "soul." Its physical aspects are most evident to the reader and its physical needs more pressing to its publishers. Yet it is the soul that gives meaning to the body and ultimately, the beauty of the soul—or the lack of it—reveals itself in the body.

Let us begin then, with the "soul" of THE OBSERVER. We came into being to meet a pressing need: to articulate the voice of an Orthodoxy silent for too many years. In the course of these years, a distorted image of Orthodox Judaism grew and a Jewish Establishment arose composed of an alignment of non-Orthodox secularist groupings, which by its essence is hostile to Torah Judaism. Jewish communal structures, nationally and locally, became the stronghold of this hostility and the network of public relations facilities, newspapers and magazines, generally every area of communication, echoed and reflected the anti-Orthodox bias.

Torah renaissance

In reacting to the weakened positions of Orthodoxy, our leaders, with the wisdom and experience of the Jewish past, set themselves to the sacred task of building institutions and centers of Torah, generating a renaissance of Torah, that only one blessed with a perfect faith could have dreamed to be possible. Yet, while this new strength—and dignity—of Orthodoxy has had widespread results, manifest in American metropolitan areas and small communities alike, we now find ourselves without the media of mass communication which are vital to furthering the Torah renaissance. The "Anglo-Jewish press," particularly in areas removed from large cities, is the only source of Jewish news. It provides little for the Orthodox reader while it reinforces the indifference and hostility to Torah Judaism of the non-Orthodox reader.

The establishment of a secular state in the Holy Land has created new problems for Torah Jewry. As Orthodoxy grows and asserts itself more strongly in Israel, the opposition to Torah by the secularists stif-

fens. By their control of the press, radio and the flow of news out of the country, American Jewry is given at best a one-sided picture of the *kulturkampf* raging in Israel. In most cases the positions and demands of Orthodoxy are distorted.

As a result of this news management, the average American Jew is not equipped to react intelligently to the fast-moving developments in Israel which will shape the future of the Holy Land and the future of our entire people. In the absence of objective reporting of Orthodoxy, the releases and canned "news" distributed in profusion by the Establishment monopolize the molding of Jewish public opinion.

Our purpose

THE JEWISH OBSERVER came into being to correct, in some measure, this horrible imbalance; to offer to the Orthodox Jew a clear picture of the reality of Jewish life today; and for the non-committed Jew to articulate anew and in the American idiom, the eternal values of Torah which have been perverted by those who would perform the impossible task of bringing Judaism "into step with the times."

It is our purpose to expose those who speak in the name of the Jewish people, who have themselves rejected all that is sacred to us. In the process of setting aside the binding authority of the Torah, they have shaken the foundations of their own Jewishness, a tragic fact some serious thinkers among the secularists are slowly coming to recognize. As a writer has observed: "You may free a tiger of his *bars*, but do not attempt to free him of his *stripes*, for he will cease to be a tiger." The Jewish champions of "freedom" have in their zealousness freed themselves of the shackles of Torah, but in throwing off their *stripes* they have freed themselves of their Jewishness.

It has been said by our friends and charged by our critics that we have overemphasized the "differences" among Jews; that we have been too polemical, too carping, too negative. We have tried, we will try harder in the future, to balance our negativeness with Jewish warmth and with accentuation of the many positive aspects in Jewish life today. Yet, to the charges of our critics and friends, we plead guilty . . . with an explanation.

For too long the Jewish Establishment has spoken for "the total Jewish community." "Jewish positions" on major issues confronting the people of America have been based on a most rigorous study of the latest

advances in the social sciences, with little concern for the light that Torah sheds on every area of human life.

WITH THIS BACKGROUND OF DISTORTION, IT BECAME the lot of THE JEWISH OBSERVER, as it is the duty of all thinking Jews, to shout NO! . . . when all around us are shouting YES!; to shout YES!—in the name of Torah—when others are saying NO.

The emperor has no clothes

It is not pleasant to be negative; one tires of proclaiming: *The emperor has no clothes!* Maintaining an offensive against own's fellow Jews in a world where external hostility to the Jew is still rampant, is a trying, and sometimes dangerous experience. Let us examine this dilemma without passion . . . but there's the rub . . . who can stand by calmly while the eternal truths of our Heritage are twisted and contorted out of shape, and the empty, shapeless hull is presented to our brothers as "Judaism"? No Jew whose soul was present when the Torah was revealed on Har Sinai, dare shrug his shoulders and say, "I don't want to get involved."

No appeals for *Ahavas Yisroel*, no re-writings of Jewish history, no attacks against Orthodox separatists can conceal the fact that it was the revisers and reformers of Judaism who cut themselves off from the continuity of Jewish peoplehood, thereby creating the painful rift which they now so sadly bemoan.

There have been differences of opinion within Judaism in the past, at times resulting in sharp conflict, within the confines of allegiance and commitment to the axiom of *Torah Min Hashomayim*, the unswerving belief in the Divine origin of the Torah. Out of these differences, *L'shaim Shomayim*, Judaism came out strengthened and refreshed, as in the case of *Chassidus* which today manifests its influence on even the most incorrigible *Misnaged*.

There were also, tragically, those who rejected Torah as a whole or chose to cut it off from the life-giving *Torah Sheb'al Peh* (the Oral Law) and who for a time made the pretense of being a legitimate expression of Judaism. But, as the human organism rejects alien bodies and ejects them lest they destroy it, so too did the body of Israel cast out these alien ideologies which jeopardized its life.

Two-party system?

In our day, such groups have temporarily entrenched themselves in the structure of Jewish life, bringing havoc and confusion to our people. Some within Orthodoxy have sought to make peace with the distorters, suggesting a Jewish counterpart of the "two-party system," and application of *Ahavas Yisroel*, but

time and harsh experience have confirmed the sober judgement of those who insisted from the beginning that a greater measure of *Ahavas Yisroel* dictates that we separate ourselves from those who would separate Israel from its Torah and its G-d.

It is the purpose of THE JEWISH OBSERVER to utilize the power of the printed word and the highest standards of journalism (*this is a goal not a claim*) to project classical Judaism on the American Jewish scene and to insure—not a Judaism that will "survive"—but a Torah that will *live*.

NOW, A LOOK AT THE BODY OF THE OBSERVER. The body of any publication is its financial structure; the means whereby it maintains its soul, or in the idiom, the means of keeping body and soul together. A critic of the American press (*George Marion, STOP THE PRESS!* New York/1953) has noted that while the Constitution provides for a free press, it does not provide the huge sums of money necessary for exercising this freedom. He has estimated that it would cost \$25,000,000 (in 1953—dollars) to get out the first issue of a newspaper to compare with *The New York Times*. However modest the goals of a new publication (our's are considerably more modest) the costs of entering the publishing field are considerable, particularly in the face of the large sums of money available to the Jewish Establishment.

Of necessity, THE JEWISH OBSERVER has had to be subsidized to enable it to come into being, but the funds available are extremely limited. To achieve its purposes and to survive the crucial early years of publication, it must merit and receive the support of every Jew committed to truth and integrity in Jewish life. Ultimately THE OBSERVER must achieve financial independence as a result of a growing number of subscribers and an increasing volume of advertising. (It should be noted that while we must disclaim responsibility for the Kashrus of products advertised in our columns, like any other responsible publication and by the nature of our objectives, we must be most selective in determining what products or services are offered to our readers.)

Progress toward our objectives

At the completion of our first year of publication we can report that we have made progress in moving toward our objectives. Our subscription list is growing daily and judging from the letters from our readers they are pleased with what we are doing. Letters from critics indicate that we are being taken seriously; an important factor in a field where the "morgue" contains more than old newspaper clippings.

A growing number of advertisers are coming to appreciate the valuable assistance that we can offer them

by exposing their commercial announcements to our many readers who have proven to be quite responsive to those who advertise in THE OBSERVER. They have also found that our selective policy has added to the prestige of their product.

As we enter our second year we turn to our readers for support in the following ways:

- Let us hear from you. Your reactions to our publication are vital to our work. We welcome your critical letters as well as words of praise.
- Renew your subscription now, so that we may continue to be able to send you THE JEWISH OBSERVER.

Enter subscriptions for your relatives and friends and if you know someone who has not seen THE OBSERVER, send us the person's name and address and we will mail a sample copy.

• If you are in business, take advantage of bringing your product or service to the attention of our responsive readership, by advertising with us.

We hope that we have merited your support in our first year and we pray that we will grow in the years to come and contribute in some measure to the glory of G-d and His Torah.

Y. J.

INTEGRATION IN ISRAEL

Sephardim and Ashkenazim — A neglected call for unity

Nathan Bulman

IN THE CURRENT VOCABULARY OF JEWISH DISCOURSE "unity" is surely among the most popular of words. There is likewise hardly a term in our lexicon which is as "mean" as "disunity." Classic Jewish doctrine is instantly invoked in favor of the former and in castigation of the latter. When our non-Orthodox brethren wish to exorcise Orthodoxy, they bedeck themselves in the feathers of glorious "unity" and hurl at us—as their most potent weapon—the charge that we favor disunity.

It must be admitted that when the surrounding atmosphere is as conformist as ours is, and in a society whose academic orientation and scale of values is largely secularistic—with religious pluralism as a minor partner — a more powerful propagandistic weapon against Orthodoxy could hardly be found. There is by now an almost stylized version of the indictment, which goes roughly as follows:

The indictment

"We (the non-Orthodox) stand for democracy. We believe in 'live and let live.' In fact we even respect you for your piety—that is, those of you who aren't hypocrites. But we just can't stand it when you get too pushy and quarrelsome.

"As a matter of fact we're even prepared to fight for your right to be religious, witness the American Jewish Congress efforts in behalf of Sabbath observers in New York State. And in the smaller communities, where you just can't get a nice place where kashrus is observed, for a B'nai B'rith-Hadassah-UJA-Bond

Drive affair, we always provide fruit plates for the few who are Orthodox. And didn't Ben-Gurion himself say once to an Orthodox critic: 'Let the Orthodox bring an Orthodox majority to the Land and I'll wear a shtreimel myself.' To us, Jewish unity is the most important thing. That's why we accepted rabbinic control over marriage and divorce in the State of Israel. But do you appreciate our sacrifice? When an issue like the B'nai Israel affair comes up; or Conservative gittin; or Reform wedding ceremonies; or the marriage of a Kohen to a divorcee; or the status of children born to non-Jewish mothers who are married to Jewish fathers, you Orthodox get to be too stubborn for words. Don't you realize that you've got to give a little?

"As Levi Eshkol recently informed the Chief Rabbinate: 'It was always the glory of the rabbis that in every age they adapted the halachah to the circumstances of their times.' But somehow the contemporary Rabbinate just isn't creative in doing the same for our age. After all this is 1964, not the Middle Ages! If the rabbis will stubbornly continue not to realize that they must make the halachah serve the needs of Jewish unity today, we'll just be forced to make some radical changes.

"Why don't you learn from the American experience? There most of the prominent Orthodox Rabbis, just refuse to be intimidated by those fanatics in Brooklyn, and those eleven ultra-Orthodox Roshai Yeshivah, and they do their best to maintain harmonious relations—for the good of Jewish unity—with their non-Orthodox colleagues. The Orthodox have their representatives on the Federations, and the Jewish Community Coun-

cils and they even get allocations for many of the yeshivahs—which makes it unnecessary for all the meshulachim to solicit the merchants on Main Street . . . and if it weren't for the fact that the big givers are mostly non-Orthodox, they would even get bigger allocations. After all it isn't our fault if you have so many schools and seminaries. Why don't you consolidate them into one big one, just like the Reform and the Conservatives, both of whom have one central seminary for the United States and Canada? Why, in many of the smaller communities, the Orthodox are glad to have the Jewish community centers sponsor community-wide Talmud Torahs, and youth programs, to take care of their children's needs as well. And in the youth programs, Kashrus and Shabbos are observed—whenever possible—and as much as possible. The youngsters are even encouraged to include religious activities in their programs, and they attend all the Synagogues and Temples in rotation. But the most important thing, is that in most American communities the Orthodox have learned the art of living at peace with us. . . . Now why can't you people in Israel learn from us in this matter?"

NO, THE ABOVE IS NOT A CARICATURE. THAT is what they say and, a sizeable number of Orthodox Jews—in addition to themselves—find the argument compelling. Try to explain that that kind of unity is literally devouring us—that it is a one-way bridge whose net effect is to entrench the present *status-quo* and to confirm the assimilatory course of the real power centers in American Jewish institutionalism. You will either get a blank stare in response, or some angry retort like: "You people are just heresy hunters."

Try to explain that those who preach the "unity sermon" most passionately, use it only when it serves their own interests; that the Conservative movement tacitly supported the center movement only for so long as the latter served to undo the earlier centrality of the Orthodox Synagogue—but that now, as the center movement poses more and more of a threat to Conservatism, the latter is engaged in a bitter nationwide struggle with the center movement—and never mind all that Jewish unity business . . .; that the *democratic* Anti-Defamation League, and the *aristocratic* American Jewish Committee just say "fie on you" to the MacIver report and the Council of Jewish Welfare Funds when the latter two threatened their *absolute autonomy*—and indirectly next year's allocation; that when the *aristocratic* American Jewish Committee feels moved to do so, its emissaries will go off to the Vatican on their own and never mind Jewish unity.

If the going gets too rough and too many of those *non-aristocratic* Jewish organizations start protesting, a member of the AJC staff can always come up with a cute phrase in *Commentary* about the "outbreak of Jewish self-respect this summer" on the part of those

who criticized the AJC's Vatican policy, followed by a "no-holds-barred" diatribe against "our fundamentalists," the Agudists who adamantly insist on "going it alone" on their fanatic separatist course. It will of course occur to very few to wonder—after all, those benighted Agudists *believe* in their cause. However misguided those poor souls are, *nebach*, they are driven by conscience in their separatism. What is the excuse of the liberal-aristocrats of the American Jewish Committee for *their* separatism? Is material wealth a better reason than fundamentalism?

All your efforts will be to little avail. You'll get the same blank stare or angry retort: "Don't be a fanatic."

Abyss of estrangement

Once in a while however, the enduring grounds of Jewish unity are dramatically bared by a source from which one would least expect it. The distinguished Yiddish writer, Ephraim Auerbach (who is himself a deeply committed Labor-Zionist), recently visited the State of Israel. He recorded some of his impressions in a series of articles in *The Day-Morning Journal* which appeared on August 24th and 27th of this year. The first of the articles dealt with the terrifying abyss of estrangement and even violent hatred which separates the Ashkenazim and the Sephardim in the State of Israel. The second contrasts Auerbach's amazement and even joy on seeing at first hand the harmonious welding of the two communities in the religious camp. Together both articles comprise an extraordinary statement of the fundamental grounds of Jewish unity. The implications of what Mr. Auerbach saw (we have long known it, but stated by us it would have been "suspect") deserves to be pondered earnestly.

A READING OF A BOOK ON THE *Maabarot* BY A YOUNG Iraqi author (Shimon Balos) filled Auerbach with dismay. The author doesn't spare his own. It describes their drunkards, the power mad, the degenerates. But when he depicts the Ashkenazi Jewish Agency officials in the *Maabarot*, he ascribes to them a murderous brutality which is beyond belief. The terms *Vos-Vos* and *Yiddish* which are used by many of the Oriental Jews as general designations for the Ashkenazim, become the very symbols of all that is evil.

"A meeting is called to select a committee. The people gather in the Bais Hamedrash. But the Yiddish of the Agency call police and obviously, the police are also Yiddish. They beat the assembled murderously and arrest some. There the arrested are also beaten, till they come out covered with wounds. The Medina, over which the Yiddish rule, literally torture the Oriental Jews. The latter aren't given any work. In

the winter rains and cold, they live in wooden barracks and suffer terribly.

"The Iraqis in the Maabara constantly talk about the good times they enjoyed in Iraq, till the Ashkenazim came and misled them with promises, with the vision of the Messiah — says one of the book's characters: 'Let them all (the Ashkenazim) drop d. . . . The electric light they light up for themselves — and we stumble in the dark.' Another of the chevrah says, 'it's all because of the Yiddish. The whole state is for them. Even their hens live better than we do.' Still another says: 'I'll poison them all.'"

Now even if the above is exaggerated, Auerbach reasons, the book obviously does contain a core of essential truth. The Histadruth publishing house *Am Oved* would not have published the work, if it were nothing more than slander and libel. He is therefore dismayed beyond words over the sorry prospects—in the light of the present situation—for the ultimate integration of the two communities. Auerbach asks one of the old residents: "How long does he foresee, will it take before the pains of *mizug* (integration) will be alleviated?" "A generation, possibly two generations." Auerbach reacts despondently: ". . . they don't see that this tragic internal struggle for a generation or two, is capable of undermining a society's foundations."

Separate, but not equal

The separate restaurants frequented by both communities are literally ghettos in which each group gathers to the exclusion of the other. In the smaller communities, Auerbach also saw a wall between the two camps. The heavy manual labor was largely done by "Eastern" Jews. Even in the schools—where there is certainly no discrimination—there is still very little integration. The Oriental Jews live in the poorer neighborhoods . . . and the children are likely to attend neighborhood schools. Future prospects for harmonious integration of the two communities, are fraught with towering difficulties.

In the religious camp however, Mr. Auerbach saw an entirely different story. A *landsman* invited him to attend the latter's synagogue on a *Shabbos* to witness a triple *siyum*; a *siyum Mishnayos*, a *siyum* of *Maseches Shevuos*, and one celebrating the conclusion of a study of the Prophet *Yeshayahu*. Auerbach's *landsman* gave the *hadran* (farewell *Shiur*). The second *siyum* was presided over by the teacher of the several tens of Jews who had together studied *Maseches Shevuos*—a young Yemenite *rav*.

" — The mode of studying *Gemorah* is the same one to the Yemenite Jew as to the East European Jew. The *rav* erected 'mountains and valleys' (the reference is to the dialectic of the traditional *Gemorah Shiur*). The students, who

sat with him at the table refuted him several times and he responded with the 'enthusiasm of learning.' An expert swimmer in the sea of the Talmud was he, exactly as if he were sitting in a little *Bais Medrash* in Poland or Lithuania fifty years ago.

"Among the students there were a number of Oriental Jews. There was no dividing wall between them and 'our' Jews. Probably the two groups have customs which do differentiate them in some minor way. But the climate of tradition, faith and Torah is *one* for the religious *shetel* Jews and for the Jews from the Arab countries."

No secular mitzvohs

As for secular culture, literature, a shared secularist viewpoint, or national patriotism, Mr. Auerbach reluctantly admits that these have not proven capable of serving as unifying forces between the two camps in the non-religious segments of Israeli society. Culture and literature?

"These have no rooted tradition as yet among us. And further, is it possible to have a faith commitment to the secularist way? There is no *mitzvah* to study Bialik or Agnon. But to study Torah is a great *mitzvah*. . . . As for faith . . . who is to say that a secularist Jew must have faith in the same idea in which another Jew places his faith? *To the contrary*, the essence of secularism is free thought. . . . And as for national patriotism . . . again the same thing. Love of country, and loyalty to the state are very relative. Obviously when the country is in danger all are kindled with the fiery desire to defend the country, and even to sacrifice life itself in behalf of the state. But generally, in comparatively quiet times, the measure of national love and loyalty becomes a result of individual attitudes, and often those measures differ from each other as greatly as East is far from West."

To be sure Mr. Auerbach is of the opinion that secularist culture and literature are not necessarily divisive, that in the long run they can serve a unifying function. He points to their role in the history of the new *Yishuv*. But for the present time he sees them as incapable of serving such a function. For our time is "*a time in which secularist Judaism has in large measure gone bankrupt, and has perhaps entirely disintegrated.*"

Sharp contrast

By contrast again, Auerbach writes glowingly of the Torah community of B'nai B'rak. There he saw adult Oriental Jews and their children "who were completely

integrated with the Polish-Chassidic Jews of the community. The Oriental Jews constantly fear that they are considered inferior—and they are not entirely wrong. But in the Schul, at the *davenen*, or in the yeshiva, there is no such thing. One *Ribbono-Shel-Olam*, one Torah, the same *mitzvohs*."

TWO SCENES:

"Friday night in Tel Aviv at the seashore. Two cafes arrogantly throw their fullness of illumination on the pious Shabbos sea. One story above, music plays. There is dancing there. Below, Oriental youth sits, drinks intoxicating liquors. Boys and girls . . . vulgar immodesty . . . drunkards stumble past, G-d! when did we Jews have such ugly drunkards. One stands and throws up. Another . . . But let me rather spare myself and the reader. It seemed to me that the deep-blue sky above the sea was ashamed to look at the vulgarity of those cafes.

"What relation, I asked myself, have I with these Jews? Am I to walk with them towards our people's redemption? What sort of a folk-redemption can come from them? And some, when they saw us, even sang out: 'Here are the Vos-Voses. . . .'

"A thousand times L'havdil, another scene: a yeshiva in Tel Aviv. I hear ringing little voices. . . . The voices, the melody, the enthusiasm of learning—they all melt together. Through the windows I see children from here and there. They are all dressed Jewishly, wear little payos, even their eyes sing one song with their pious glow.

"Have I any relation to them? Yes, a very close one. But what is most important, the children among themselves are one harmonious song without the slightest separation between them.

"No, for *mizug galuyot* within traditional Jewry, generations are not necessary. For *mizug* in the secularist sector—who knows how long and how painful the process will be."

A FEW QUESTIONS: How many Jews, Orthodox or non-Orthodox, know what happened and is happening before our eyes to the great Sephardi immigration into Israel since the State was established? How many know the history of the *yaldei Teheran*? The *payos*-cutting? The *shlichim* in the embarkation centers? The destructive role of Youth Aliyah? "The eighty percent-twenty percent" distribution key for Jewish children? The *Maabarot*? The threats of economic reprisal against Sephardi immigrant parents who insisted—and insist—on registering their children in the religious schools? How many Jews know that in comparison to the *organized* weaning away of countless thousands of Oriental Jews from the life of Torah to

the secularist life, the "inconveniences" which the non-Orthodox experienced over issues such as the "B'nai Israel," Conservative *gittin*, "who-is-a-Jew?" are child's play?

Separation and unity

Who destroys Jewish unity more—those who destroy the millennial loyalty to Torah of our Sephardi brethren, who strive to erect a wall of separation between the children of the Sephardi community and their Father in Heaven, which not only de-Judaize them but also, alas, de-humanize them, while leaving them deeply hostile to their Ashkenazi brethren—or those who strive desperately to keep alive the great eternally unifying force of Torah tradition, even if they must thereby risk the scorn of artificially incited "B'nai Israel," a *Kohen* who wishes to marry a divorcee, or Conservative or Reform "rabbis" in desperate search of a little Israeli recognition?

What of our responsibility?

And one final question addressed to ourselves, Jews who are loyal to Torah. Since we don't expect Ben-Gurion or Levi Eshkol, Mapai or Mapam to hand us a Torah-society on a platter; and since we don't really expect the non-Orthodox establishment to face with equanimity the prospect that a religious Sephardi immigration is likely to turn Orthodox Jewry into the majority segment of Israeli society, the only complaints which we can intelligently address to our non-Orthodox adversaries are that "they don't fight fair"; that they use means which are unethical by their standards as well, in the struggle for the soul of Sephardi Jewry. But of ourselves we must ask, in deepest honesty, can we say: "our hands have not spilled this blood"? Have we done what we could have done—are we doing what we can do—to provide the necessary religious absorption centers to save the Torah soul of those hundreds of thousands of our Sephardi brethren—who gave us the *Rif* and the *Rambam*; the author of the *Shulchan Oruch* and the *Ari*; who lived and died through so many centuries of bitter exile in deathless loyalty of Torah; who so long were the pride and the glory of the people of Israel; who today can decisively incline the balance of struggle for the Torah soul of the entire Israeli Jewish community, and ultimately all of world Jewry?

We, who are loyal to Torah, need to know that in the categories of Divine Judgement, we will be judged more stringently in this matter, than our non-Orthodox brethren. To our sorrow they don't understand. But we do understand, and more is therefore demanded of us. May our children one day be able to say that we passed the test of Providence.

A NEW DIMENSION

Torah-hospitality as a supplement to home and school

"I always respected our principal . . .", began an eleven year old sixth grade girl at the closing assembly of the academic year in a Southern Hebrew day school. She had been chosen as student council representative to bid farewell for the summer to the faculty on behalf of the student body. ". . . but I never really appreciated what Rabbi — means to us until one time when he invited me and some of the other girls in my class to spend Shabbos in his home. It was the most wonderful Shabbos of my life—". She broke off, too choked up to continue, and took her seat with strained sedateness.

The tribute, more eloquent in what it left unsaid, is one deserved by teachers, principals, rabbis, *klei-kodesh*, and enlightened laymen everywhere who have learned to enjoy their homes as more than merely places to live and rear their families. Such *b'nai Torah* have learned to fulfill through their homes some of the desperate spiritual needs of our times, and thereby are experiencing themselves—as well as affording others—some of the most richly rewarding of human interpersonal relationships.

A step downward

Some of these *b'nai Torah* may originally have been inspired to do so by the enlightening and uplifting *shiur* in *Hilchos Chinuch* presented several years ago by the *Rosh Yeshiva* of the Mesivto Rabbi Chaim Berlin, *Horav* Yitzchok Hutner. (The *Shiur* has since been published in Yiddish and Hebrew by Torah Umesorah, as well as in English translation in *The Jewish Parent*.) The *Rosh Yeshiva* made the point that compulsory universal schooling amongst Jews, which preceded by many centuries parallel innovations in educational thought amongst non-Jews, was in actual fact a step downward in the development of Jewish education. For the institution of *bais-rabban* (schools) amongst Jews was a substitute for the once effective institution of the Jewish home (*bais-abban*) as a transmitter of Torah. This substitution of school for home serves much as the incubator does, to make up for the constitutional weakness of some mothers as life-givers and life-sustainers.

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In this vein, then, the relationship of the *rav* (teacher) to his pupil is properly *bimkom av* (*in loco parentis*, substitute father) with all the meaningfulness that this relationship implies, rather than merely that of professional to client. Briefly, then, the *Rosh Yeshiva* made clear that the Jewish home at that time had lost some of its effectiveness as a transmitter of Torah, and the loss was replenished in some measure through the institution by the Sages of Torah schools for the young as supplements or complements to the child-rearing efforts of their parents.

Now, this was true even in times when Jewish homes and Jewish parents were steeped in Torah traditions, beliefs and practices, and when Jewish schools were dedicated exclusively to Jewish learning "all of the daylight hours and part of the night" (*Rambam, Hilchos Talmud Torah*). How much the more are the problems of Torah-transmittal intensified and aggravated in times such as ours when Jewish homes are relatively devoid of Jewish observance and belief and when even the most intensive of Jewish day school programs can devote no more than three to four hours daily to Jewish learning? The homes have become infinitely weaker Torah-transmitters than even before, and the schools—even the best of them—proportionately follow suit.

Supplement to home and school

In order to replenish these seemingly irreparable losses in home and school, an institution must be found which will, in some measure at least, convey some of the values of Torah-learning and Torah-living which Jewish homes and schools today often fail to communicate.

That institution it is plain to see, is the home of the rabbi, principal, teacher, klei-kodesh, and enlightened layman. The portals of this home must be flung open wide to pupils, congregants, laymen, and fellow klei-kodesh as the emergency generators of Torah-transmittal powers necessitated by a breakdown of the main source of power.

Indeed, to an ever-greater degree this Torah-hospitality is being afforded by sensitive Jewish families throughout the country, but not yet to the fullest potential demanded by the current crisis in culture-com-

munication. Perhaps a discussion of some reasons why this practice is not more widespread will ultimately lead to its more widespread adoption.

Many of us neglect to invite congregants and pupils to our homes for *Shabbos*, *Yom-Tov*, *Melaveh-Malka*, Purim, Chanukah, and *Chol HaMoed* festive meals, simply because we don't think of it. And even when the idea does occur to us, those of us who are in religious work frequently put off the thought because:

- **WE'RE BUSY.** As community figures our lives are so harried by day and beleaguered by night that we seek a haven in the privacy and relaxation of *Shabbos* and *Yom-Tov*, as the only time that many of us have to devote to our own spiritual growth and that of our families.

- **IT IS EXPENSIVE.** Having guests is costly and energy-consuming, especially for the *balebosteh*, who is probably already overworked with the responsibilities of several small children and possibly even a part-time teaching job of her own.

- **OUR SELF-IMAGE** is that of "guest," and, as such, psychologically inhibits our acting as "hosts." Many of us tend to think of ourselves as transients in the communities we serve because of the residential mobility which prevails in the rabbinate and teaching fields today, and, we unconsciously tell ourselves, transients do not generally play host to permanent residents.

- **WE THINK** our fellow *klei-kodesh* don't need the *chizuk* (spiritual reinforcement) of our company. We tend to think that other rabbis or educators can get along very well on their own without the benefits of shared *sedarim*, *mishmarim*, *va'adim* or less formal learning sessions.

Upon closer reflective examination, however, we find that none of these reasons holds any validity. It must be granted that each man and each family must have time for inwardly-directed privacy for purposes of spiritual self-replenishment and growth. A "transmitter" which does not continue to generate its own power will soon have nothing left to transmit. But *occasionally*, several times a year at least, *Shabbos* and *Yom-Tov* should be shared with others who would not normally enjoy these Jewish home experiences.

Similarly, the matter of cost and bother need not be an inhibiting factor if the invitations are extended infrequently enough to make of them meaningful occasions and yet often enough to sustain their effectiveness. Not *all* of the rabbi's congregants nor *all* of a principal's or teacher's pupils must be invited at each occasion, or even during the course of one single year for that matter. Furthermore, modest hospitality genuinely and graciously extended will be more greatly

appreciated than needless lavishness in "entertainment."

As to our self-image as transients and guests in the communities we serve, Rabbi Meir Belsky (Memphis) and Rabbi Emanuel Feldman (Atlanta) have as rightfully as they have eloquently made a telling point. They have written in *THE JEWISH OBSERVER* (Sept./Nov., '63) on "the case for out-of-town" declaring that it is time that *bnai Torah* unpack their bags and sink roots deeply into the communities in which they settle. This is certainly true. And it is further true that even if a rabbi's or teacher's stay in a given city is avowedly short-termed, and as such his status in terms of residence is transient, nonetheless his status in terms of the Torah which he bears is permanent and abiding. *In terms of his heritage, his congregants and his students are transient "guests" while he is the permanent resident, their "host."*

Lastly, it should by now have become a banality that we all learn from one another by associating with one another. From the greatest to the least of us we all need the encouragement, the challenge and the stimulation of one another's company to keep our level of aspiration in Torah-living and Torah-learning high. *Shiurim* which rotate on a regular basis from home to home are particularly effective for this purpose.

In conclusion we return to our opening story in which the point is implicitly made that learning often takes place at the most unexpected times in wholly uncontrived circumstances. The impact which a visit to the Jewish community leader's home may have upon its visitor whether young or old is often immeasurable in its proportions and scope. Realizing this, our potentially greatest and most lasting contribution to the communities we serve may be "brought home" to our people by bringing the people home to us.

□

SIFREI TORAH

are urgently needed for
new Yishuvim in Eretz Yisroel

Requests keep pouring in from Eretz Yisroel, some telling of settlements using a *Chumash* for *Krias Hatorah*, due to the lack of a *Sefer Torah*.

If you know of any *Sefer Torah* available for such a holy purpose, please write or phone:

AGUDATH ISRAEL OF AMERICA
5 Beekman Street New York City
WO 4-1620

A REPLY TO COMMENTARY

*"I believe more in the tradition of our fathers,
I do not wish to listen to this sermon."*

Commentary is a magazine published by the American Jewish Committee "to meet the need for a journal of significant thought and opinion on Jewish affairs and contemporary issues." (From A Statement of Aims.) It has had remarkable success and has won the acclaim of influential readers in literary and government circles.

Milton Himmelfarb, a contributing editor of *Commentary* writes periodically a feature called *In the Community* in which he reacts to events in American Jewish life. While not a partisan of Orthodoxy, he occasionally has a warm word to say about day schools and other manifestations of Orthodoxy.

In the September issue of this year, Himmelfarb examines Orthodox stubbornness, or more politely intransigence, as exemplified historically by the *Chasam Sofer* in his opposition to the enlighteners. In examining THE JEWISH OBSERVER's first year of publication (he calls us *an outward and visible sign of the new Orthodox aggressiveness in the United States*) he sees THE OBSERVER as the modern-day proponent of the *Chasam Sofer's* approach. Taking to task Agudath Israel and THE OBSERVER, Himmelfarb declares that had he lived in the times of the original clash, he would have been one of the enlighteners. "Yet," he goes on, and here the *Yiddishe neshomah* covered over with a crust of sophistication and liberalism comes through, *I feel a certain reserve in my opposition to the Agudah and what it stands for. There may be others like me.*

Himmelfarb's case for his "reserve" is extremely fascinating, and he and those who "may be like me" would do well to ponder the implication of his own words:

Recently I heard a distinguished Israeli man of letters praise the Jewish and humane worth of modern Hebrew literature. He remembers young men and women in the Russian Revolution who killed in the cellars of Cheka, so devoted were they to the revolutionary ideal; yet though Hebrew was beginning to be regarded as counter-revolutionary, in secret they still read the poems of

Bialik and Chernikovsky. For him that proved the attraction and power of Hebrew literature. For me . . . it proved the weakness of mere literature, or mere culture. That some of the Nazis who kept the crematoria burning were moved to tears by Beethoven does not prove that music is evil, but neither, certainly, does it prove that music has great power for good. The idealistic Cheka killers who loved Hebrew poetry were not pious Jews. Piety would have kept them from such idealism; culture—whether the Hebrew poetry of Bialik or the Russian of Pushkin—did not keep them from it. They helped to establish the reign of pitilessness. They also helped to suppress Jewish culture, and to oppress Jews.

Throughout our history it has been the stubbornly pious who have resisted the persuasions of self-interest and idealistic universalism, and their resistance has kept them and their descendants from becoming idealistic killers. The moral account of those who yielded to self-interest or what seemed to be idealistic universalism—the two temptations often appear to be one—is not so clean. Spanish apostates from Judaism wanted the Inquisition, to prove their good faith. . . . The intransigent Jews have no guilt for that tragedy, either for themselves or their descendants. They chose to be victims of oppression, not oppressors.

In another place and in another time, Heine paid the price of baptism for a ticket of admission to Western culture. If he had had descendants, even by the Nuremberg standard they would have been *echt Aryan*, and some therefore, would have been Nazis. That can not be said of the followers of S. R. Hirsch. So that, whether we look to Spain or Germany or Russia, and whether from the point of view of Jewish or of universal humane values, we are in no position to laud ourselves above the intransigents.

Mr. Himmelfarb is suggesting, and we agree, that there is a correlation between the degree of a Jew's intransigence and his authenticity as a Jew. As the Jew, even slowly compromises his resistance to external forces which seek to wean him from his Jewishness and his G-d, he slides closer on the slippery path to

apostasy (read: *Shmad*). Having reached the point of *Shmad*, he has not yet traveled all the way in his degeneracy as a Jew and as a human being. As he plunges toward the bottom he may become a missionary to his former brethren and ultimately their furrderer.

Would it carry Himmelfarb's formula too far to suggest that it would also apply to contemporary enemies of Jewish (Orthodox) intransigence, or would it simply be updating his thesis? May we ask—on the basis of his thesis—the latter-day enlighteners: *Would you have your grandchild be an intransigent Orthodox Jew or a vicious anti-Semite?*

In a very perceptive analysis, Himmelfarb applies his thesis to explaining "a change in historical outlook." He writes:

It is my impression that while the 19th-century medieval Jewish historians were essentially pro-Sephardi, the 20th-century ones are pro-Ashkenazi. In the 19th century the Sephardim of the Middle Ages were an attractive model for Jews who wanted to be modern. They showed that Jews could remain Jews and still be at home in the general culture, or even do remarkable things in philosophy, literature and science. That was necessary for reassuring the modernizing Jews, half-suspicious of their own motives, and was thought useful for persuading the Gentile authorities to take the last step toward full emancipation.

In the 20th century we are no longer so impressed with Jewish achievements in general culture. The edge is off our hunger and we worry now about the cost of the achievements. German Jews from Heine and Moses Hess to Kafka (culturally German) and Franz Rosenzweig respected the backward East European Jews for their Jewish and human authenticity more than they did German Jewry, with all its modernity. In the same way our historians today, looking back to the Middle Ages, have noted virtues in medieval Ashkenazi Jewry and vices in medieval Sephardi Jewry that their predecessors were not prepared to see. . . . During the Crusades the Jews of the Rhineland went to the stake rather than to the baptismal font.

Illustrating the pseudo-sophistication of Spanish philosophers, Himmelfarb quotes from a 15th-century text, *Magen Varomah* to illustrate his point:

. . . I once heard a preacher expounding G-d's unity in the analytical manner of the philosophers. He would say repeatedly: "If he is not one, then such and such must follow." Finally a certain householder rose, of them that tremble at the word of the Lord . . . and said: "In the massacre of Seville (in 1391) they robbed me and wounded me and left me for dead. All this I bore for my faith in Hear O Israel, the Lord our

G-d, the Lord is One. Now you attack the traditions of our fathers by way of philosophical analysis, saying, 'If he is not one, such and such will be the case.'" And the householder said: "I believe more in the tradition of our fathers, I do not wish to listen to this sermon."

NOW LET US GO BACK TO HIMMELFARB'S QUARRELS with Agudath Israel and The JEWISH OBSERVER.

"In principle, Agudath Israel's great enemy is secularism and apostasy; in practice an Orthodoxy that is not intransigent enough for its taste. The Agudath is harsh to assimilationists, harsher to secular Zionists, still harsher to Reform and Conservatism, and harshest of all to the Orthodox who in one way or another cooperate with other Jews. . . ." Certainly, Mr. Himmelfarb is not taking up the cudgels for the secularists and those who "yielded to self-interest," who sought reassurance "half-suspicious of their own motives."

As to the OBSERVER's hostility to the Orthodox who "cooperate with other Jews," Himmelfarb has not been reading us carefully. Let us re-state our position.

What is involved is not a failure to cooperate with other Jews. Orthodoxy has been united in associating itself with all efforts to insure the physical well-being of the Jewish people. However, THE OBSERVER differs with those Orthodox groups who participate on an equal basis with non-Orthodox groups on a *religious* level.

The men who serve as Reform and Conservative "rabbis" are trained in institutions whose curriculum is far removed from classic, authentic Torah study. By virtue of their lack of scholarship, piety and—*this is crucial*—belief in the basic teachings of Torah, their so-called "ordination" is ludicrous. They are about as qualified to be rabbis as an under-graduate college student who doesn't believe in the germ theory would be qualified to practice medicine. When an Orthodox rabbinic or lay-body participates on an equal basis with such distorters of Judaism, thereby lending credence to their mythical status as "rabbi," we find it a great cause for concern and anxiety. We see this recognition as defeating the purposes of Orthodoxy and a growing number of Orthodox rabbis and laymen associated with mixed groups are coming closer to this position. (At a recent convention of the Rabbinical Council of America a majority of the membership voted to ban such fraternization, though the ban did not muster the 2/3 vote required to amend the constitution. In the Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations partisans of the position espoused by THE JEWISH OBSERVER are hopeful that it may soon be the official stand of the Union.)

Himmelfarb is scandalized by the doctrine of the *Chasam Sofer*, which he discovered in THE OBSERVER

"We would like to forget, but in a part of ourselves we remember."

Chodosh Asur min Ha-Torah; as he translates it, *what is new is forbidden by the Torah*.

Unfortunately for Mr. Himmelfarb, and for his many readers, he completely misses the meaning of this concept. Perhaps we could best illustrate the meaning of this slogan in the following manner. For many centuries prior to the invention of moveable type, Hebrew works were laboriously written by hand, thus limiting the number of copies of the great classics available to scholars. When printing became available, the Jewish people quickly saw its inestimable value and used it to great advantage. There is no evidence of any inhibition to exploiting to the fullest this "new" instrument for the dissemination and teaching of Torah. Yet, should a *Sefer Torah* have a single line, or even a single letter imprinted by type rather than written by hand, it becomes *posul*, unfit for use as a *Sefer Torah*. *Chodosh asur Min Ha-Torah*, was simply a reaffirmation of the immutability of Torah-Law, and not a refusal to accept technological advance. One could cite numerous examples of this principle of assimilating into Jewish life advances of contemporary technology, while guarding against their intrusion into areas proscribed by *Halachah*.

We have observed that some of Himmelfarb's charges against us in the first section of his essay can best be answered by reference to his own insights in the latter section. However, in some instances Mr. Himmelfarb has not provided the answers and we must provide them ourselves. (The italics are his; the roman type is ours.)

. . . the Agudists never give the title of rabbi to Rabbi Louis Jacobs of England . . . non-Agudah Orthodox rabbis are being threatened with contemptuous rejection of their qualifications, as if they were Conservative or Reform rabbis.

The charge that "non-Agudah Orthodox" rabbis are not called rabbi is simply not so. We are pleased that Himmelfarb recognizes our right to reject the credentials of "Conservative or Reform rabbis"; we feel the principle applies with equal validity to one like Louis Jacobs who reads himself out of Orthodoxy by rejecting the basic doctrine of *Torah Mi-Sinai*.

"The strikingly new element in the way Agudath Israel talks now is the sharpness about the Catholic Church . . . , JEWISH OBSERVER was pleased with

Hochhuth's Deputy, has quoted at length from The Catholic Church and Nazi Germany. . . ; the derision that greets anti-anti-Semitic statements by Pope or cardinals is a derision of the Jews who welcome such statements."

Himmelfarb's exegesis is intriguing: intrasigent Orthodoxy, he maintains, has no real quarrel with Catholic anti-Semitism; it is simply "using" the Church to whip its transigent brothers.

As to our reaction to the book, *The Catholic Church and Nazi Germany*, we must confess that *Commentary* scooped us. Himmelfarb may recall that a chapter of the book appeared in *Commentary* even before it was published by Mc-Graw-Hill; we trust he does not begrudge us our interest in the book.

"There is something else, too. The Agudah probably feels let down by the Church. As long as Catholicism represented intransigence on the great scene, the Agudah did not feel alone in representing intransigence within Jewry."

Orthodox intransigence is a function of our faith in the eternal truth of the Torah revealed to us on Sinai. We feel no more alone today than did our father *Avraham* when he stood on one side with the entire world on the other side.

Himmelfarb closes his article and clinches his case for the intransigents by quoting the observation of an Israeli historian concerning dislike of Oriental Jews by Eastern European Jews in Israel.

(They) *"tend to remind them of the social and cultural conditions prevailing only a few decades ago in their own now rejected shtetels and ghettos in Russia and Poland. It is this . . . eagerness . . . of most East European Jews in Israel to forget and disown their own past, their own selves . . . which has led . . . to their . . . rejection of the "Sephardo-Orientals" and . . . the dangerous drift away from their own true traditions and culture."*

"The Orientals," Himmelfarb concludes, *"are not alone in reminding us of what we would like to forget, and being resented for it. There are also the devout. . . We would like to forget, but in a part of ourselves we remember."*

THE JEWISH OBSERVER is dedicated to not letting us forget.

Dateline: MEMPHIS

Changing the Climate of A Southern Community

ONE OF THE MOST RESPECTED BUSINESSMEN IN THE South sat in his guest room eyeing the group of young men gathered there for a *Melava Malka*. "The *baaleibatim*," he began, "haven't arrived yet." The suggestion of a smile played about his lips. "So meanwhile, we *yeshivah-leit* are alone."

This incident, which occurred just a few weeks ago in Memphis, Tennessee, marks the coming of age of the vigorous, forceful community that is Orthodox Memphis today. And it is laden with significance for thoughtful Jews concerned about the future of Torah in this country.

Memphis is neither a Williamsburgh, nor a Crown Heights, nor a Washington Heights, nor even a Baltimore or Cleveland. These centers of American Torah life are essentially transplants of a centuries-old European culture; a powerful, many-splendored force, which survived chaos and upheaval with a tenacious vivacity. But, the mass migration which pumped life into New York City can not be duplicated. European Jewry is dead, buried in six million martyrs' graves; its cultural heirs will not, in the foreseeable future, recreate the spiritual climate of our country through population shifts. If its nobility of spirit is to live—if meaningful Jewish consciousness is to become the prime mover in the life of the American Jew—then there must come to pass in a hundred cities across the face of the nation what has occurred—what is occurring—in Memphis, Tennessee.

Focal point of service

The people of Memphis have discovered a truism of Jewish history which is at once elusive to chroniclers unfamiliar with the Jewish spirit, and elementary to those close to it: that the focal point of the Jewish concept of service to the Creator is the uniquely Jewish experience known as *Talmud Torah*—the study of the Law. Moreover, this study in no way minimizes the significance of the myriad physical and emotional acts of piety which are daily required of the Jew. Indeed,

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only through the study of the Torah can the fulfillment of these acts, in the profoundest sense, be achieved. Furthermore, the spiritual fruits of Torah Study can be shared in many ways: principally through actual study; through the material support necessary for Torah study; and through intimate association with Torah scholars whose lives are devoted to intensive Torah learning.

Here we have the key to the Jewish soul-treasure . . . sanctity through the intellect. And this concept marks maturing American Orthodoxy, much as the full development of the power of the intellect marks the mature human being. Thoughtful Memphis Jews searched for the fundamental in their Judaism, and found what they were looking for. It has changed their lives.

The success of the Memphis Hebrew Academy (a day-school) has led many Jews in Memphis to feel that the next step in the development of the community would be the creation of a Mesivta High School. But, how does one prepare a community in the deep South for such a major step? Somehow the Jews of Memphis had to "taste" the atmosphere of the *Bais Medrash*, and the idea developed of bringing a group of young men to the city for a two-month period to expose the community to the refined atmosphere of the study-hall, and create the climate for a Mesivta.

The plans were made. They were carried swiftly into action by Rabbi Meir Belsky, *Menahel* of the Memphis Hebrew Academy. A *musmach* of the Mesivta Rabbi Chaim Berlin, Rabbi Belsky contacted the renowned *Rosh Yeshiva*, *Hagaon Rav Yitzchok Hutner*, שליט"א, and laid before him the community's plan. The *Rosh Yeshiva* was fired with enthusiasm. "An American community is prepared to spend large sums of money for no other purpose than to hear the sound of Torah!" he exclaimed. "Astounding! How can they be refused?" A statement he made in a reflective moment best describes the feelings of the Memphis Community. "They simply long for Torah."

The news was brought back to Memphis. A group of sixteen advanced students of Mesivta Rabbi Chaim Berlin would spend eight summer weeks of full-time study in the Hebrew Academy building.

As Mid-Tamuz approached, all was prepared. The building, housing a complete dormitory, including kitchen and sleeping quarters, was ready. The reference library needed for the *Bais Medrash* was assembled. In New York meanwhile, our group awaited the summer's work impatiently. The day came, at last, when we arrived in Memphis. We were driven to the Academy building by a group of cars awaiting us, and treated to a meal adequate for a small army—typical of the treatment we were to receive all summer. The very next morning the intensive schedule that had been agreed upon went into full swing.

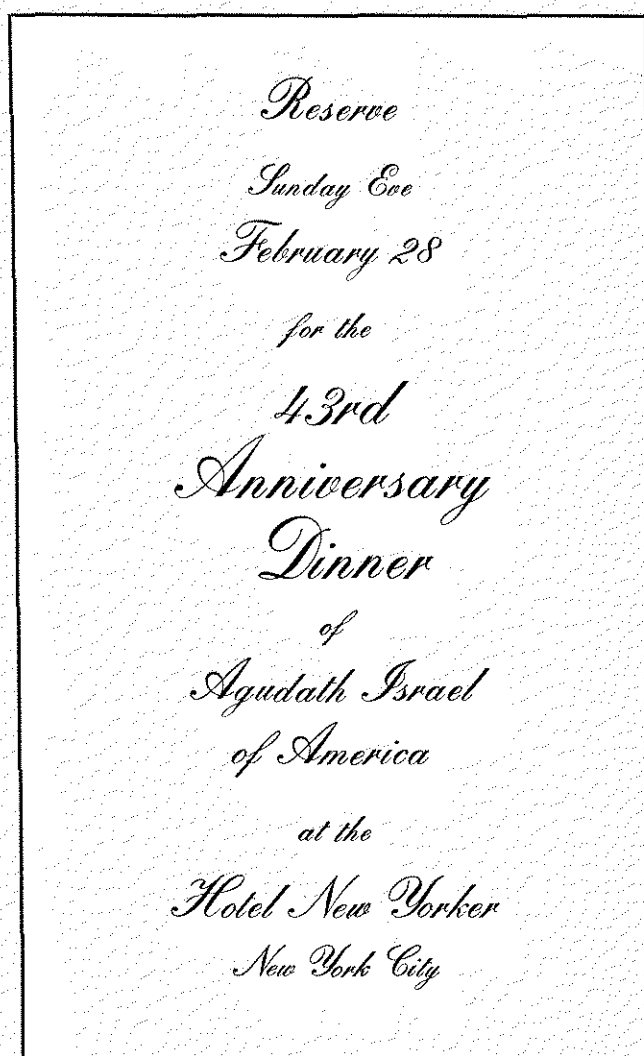
WE HAD KNOWN, OF COURSE, that this was a extraordinary community. Nevertheless, we were startled by its reaction to our presence. The finest families in town were on hand to spend *Shabbos* with us. Each week several of these families moved in with friends in the neighborhood so that they could share in our *davening*, partake of the *Shabbos* meals with us, listen to the spirited recitation of a *Dvar Torah* at every meal, participate in the singing of *Zmiros* (they could never get enough)—in short, taste with us the fullness of the *Shaboos* spirit. They invited us to their homes at every opportunity; Friday evening or *Shabbos* afternoon, a Malava Malka, a Bar-Mitzva celebration, a *bris*. And all these became vehicles for a meeting of the minds, or more accurately, of the spirit.

It is difficult to capture the mood of a community with clarity and precision. Perhaps it would be simplest to record the deeds of its members, large and small, and let the common chord they sound serve as the communal voice.

A successful young lawyer sends his sons to study with us—then appears himself, *sefer* in hand, to study in our *Bais Medrash* . . . *Cholov Yisroel* arrives for us every day from a local farm . . . we are provided with a full diet of glatt kosher meat . . . a leading Academy figure gives us the daily use of his swimming pool . . . busy matrons, with families of their own, cook suppers for us regularly, spending long hours over a hot stove in the stifling summer heat. . . . A widely known Torah scholar comes to our *Bais Medrash* periodically to study with his son—and finds himself deeply involved in discussions with our *bochrim*. . . . A young man appears one evening with a request that we pray for his seriously ill father. An outstanding *Talmid Chochom* issues a standing invitation to the members of our Yeshiva to use his extensive library . . . a youngster who has recently become observant joins us for the summer, assiduously aided in his studies by two of our *bochrim*—and his parents become *Shomre Shabbos* . . . one of our most devoted supporters personally delivers a load of fruit for us every Friday afternoon

. . . not to be outdone, another warm friend appears one evening, with a broad grin—and a dozen water-melons . . . a young doctor donates his services, managing to find time in an already packed schedule . . . a properous real estate magnate slips into the *Bais Medrash* one evening, watching closely as the *bochrim* engage in animated debate. He mentions afterward that he has never seen such total concentration, adding that he is filled with a sense of wonder and admiration.

An entire community had transformed a vision into meaningful, fruitful reality; and this was not accomplished without sacrifice. The project was financed by families throughout the community who share significantly in the support of many worthwhile institutions, in and out of Memphis. There is, however, this difference. For them the support of our project was not only mere *tzedaka*, it was an investment; a wiser one, perhaps, than even they realize.



THE TEST

a dramatic presentation based on

THE BINDING OF YITZCHOK

Pinchas Stolper

SCENE I

(Avraham is standing outside his tent)

NARRATOR: It was after Avraham and Avimelech concluded their treaty that the Voice of G-d again spoke to Avraham. . . .

AVRAHAM: *I am here* (I am ready to do as You bid, but I cannot fathom why You find me worthy).

HASHEM: I hope that it is within you to withstand this new test — Take your son — stand firm in this trial — so that people will not say that the previous nine trials were not real tests. . . .

AVRAHAM: Which son — I have two . . .

HASHEM: *Your only son* . . .

AVRAHAM: Yitzchok is my wife Sarah's son and Yishmael is my wife Hagar's only son. Tell me then, which son?

HASHEM: *Your beloved son* . . .

AVRAHAM: I love both my sons . . .

HASHEM: I speak of Yitzchok — (I did not first specify which son, so that you might more highly value My commands and that you might be rewarded for the increasing sacrifice demanded by obedience to each new expression I uttered in making My command more specific) — Now, *go to the land of Moriah. There bring Yitzchok as an offering upon one of the mountains I will designate.*

AVRAHAM: *(Thinking out loud)* Moriah is in Yerushalayim — it is called Moriah meaning instruction, for from there my descendants will teach Torah to a mighty people and on that spot will the *Bais Hamikdash* be built. The *Bais Hamikdash*

will radiate holiness and will draw men to G-d's service.

(curtain is drawn)

NARRATOR I: On the next morning Avraham hastened to observe G-d's command — *Avraham rose early in the morning and saddled his donkey.* He did not delegate this task to a servant — he did it himself. *And he took two of his young men with him* (we are told that they were Ishmael and Eliezer. *And Isaac his son, and he cut the wood for the burnt offering and arose and went to the place concerning which G-d had spoken to him —*

SCENE II

(Avraham, Yishmael, Eliezer and Yitzchok on the road)

NARRATOR II: *On the third day when Avraham lifted up his eyes, he saw the place far off . . .*

AVRAHAM: *Remain here with the donkey. I and the lad will go up yonder, and worship, and will then return to you. This is the will of G-d.*
(Eliezer takes Avraham aside)

ELIEZER: Think, Avraham; consider it some more, — maybe Hashem will change his command.

AVRAHAM: It is not for me to doubt His word in the hope that His instructions will change. I must go and do as I have been told. I dare not delay.

ELIEZER: Avraham — Did Yitzchok sin that he is being punished — he is pure and innocent. Where is the justice of the G-d of Justice? Where is the mercy of the G-d of Mercy? How can I continue to believe if all this is possible?

AVRAHAM: He is G-d and you are only a man. Justice is a quality which we learn from G-d's compassion toward us. Sometimes G-d's justice and mercy are beyond our comprehension, sometimes we are expected, not to understand, but to

RABBI PINCHAS STOLPER is the National Director of the National Conference of Synagogue Youth of the Union of Orthodox Congregations of America.

be faithful. If G-d has set the standard for justice, then everything He does is just. Sometimes we can only see the trees, while the forest is too vast to be seen. If G-d wants me to sacrifice Yitzchok, then this must be justice. Otherwise, G-d would not desire this.

ELIEZER: But, all of this is not possible. G-d could not want the negation of His own promise. You, Avraham are to be the father of a great Nation and in your seed will the nations of the earth be blessed. Is this not G-d's promise? Did you not hear this as well? Did not G-d Himself promise you that *BE'YITZCHOK YI'KOREI LE'CHA ZERA — through Yitzchok you will have descendants*. If you go ahead with this impossible plan, you will be sacrificing not Yitzchok alone — but scores of generations of Jews. What will become of your dream; of what value is your quest for G-d and your hope for a world established on His laws? Who will be left to observe the Shabbos and Kashrus; the laws of justice and morality? Who will establish your nation? Who will receive the Torah if you sacrifice Yitzchok? It is the end — this is it! Save our Faith — *I beg you*. This voice cannot be the true voice of G-d. Your destiny is to establish the Jewish people — if you really understand the implications of this destiny you cannot destroy your son. Is this not *AYS LA' ASOS LA'SHEM, A time to act for G-d*. Does not the need of the hour call for compromise; for some accomodation to the practical necessities of life, so that Judaism and Torah may live on in your descendants. Did you not plead before G-d, Give me a son to carry on Torah ideals, and the *mitzvos* that make these become alive. Did you not say that the only alternative was that I, Eliezer, the administrator of your household would inherit you, and that this was no substitute for a son; that only a son could maintain the direct chain of tradition from father to son?

AVRAHAM: Eliezer you are in a panic. First you speak of G-d and of Torah. You say — Save our Faith, but of what value is this Faith if it is based on a truncated Torah, built on a lie; built on disobedience to the clear word of G-d? Didn't G-d expressly command, *Take your son, your only son, take Yitzchok, and place him upon the altar*. My mind may direct me to G-d, but without the voice of G-d I can never be sure of G-d's will. When G-d speaks He means for us to follow and to do so with joy and gladness. If we select what and where we will or will not do, then it is our own intellect which we obey and not G-d. How would we differ from those who worship idols of their own creation?

ELIEZER: But the Torah! What shall we do to save the Torah?

Avraham! don't be hasty. Remember the greatness for which you and your people are destined if you will be practical and realistic enough to make a small concession to logic. Don't be an extremist. Sometimes we must compromise, sometimes we must capitulate to logical necessity. Most important is for our Faith to survive and for this we must have our youth. But if you go ahead with your stubborn, bullheaded plan — we will have *no* youth and *no* Faith.

AVRAHAM: You don't seem to be able to get it through your head that at this moment there is but one overriding *mitzvah* — the clear command of G-d to take my son Yitzchok and do as G-d has bid me to do. As for destiny, the destiny of a servant of G-d is to obey His word. It is G-d's world and G-d's Torah; He knows best how to further our Faith and its destiny. My duty is clear . . .

ELIEZER: Do that and destroy your life's work — and the one hope of the entire world. (to himself: How can he be so impetuous and foolish?)

AVRAHAM: You seem to forget who is the Creator and who His creature. You are on the verge of doing to Torah what has been done by man each time there stirs in him a religious sentiment or a striving toward the Divine. In place of searching for the true voice of G-d, in place of loyalty to the authentic voice, man presumptuously speaks instead of listening. He creates god in his own image, and makes his god a reflection of his fears and desires. The religions about us are man-made. Their gods are fashioned by their own hands and minds. But Torah teaches that man must change himself and become G-dly even when he cannot fully comprehend G-d's Word.

ELIEZER: But is there not a contradiction here which demands clarification? Does not G-d's promise that *through Yitzchok will you achieve descendants* contradict the last words you heard, to take your son Yitzchok to the *Mizbaiach*?

AVRAHAM: Contradict? Am I able always to fathom the infinite wisdom of the Divine Word? When things seem not to make sense, the fault is with me, with my failure to understand that which may eventually become clear to me. It is at times like this that I must be more loyal, not less; that I must express my complete commitment because I have failed to understand that which I am called upon to do. Right now my job is to . . .

ELIEZER: Yes, Yes, I know — you must obey, obey, obey. That's all I hear — why don't you think for yourself? use your own mind. Didn't G-d give you a mind to think with? One day G-d tells you that Yitzchok will live — that his descendants will outnumber the stars in the sky — and today you are told to destroy G-d's promise. Before you take another frightful step towards that mountain — you must be sure. Wait, reconsider. Ask G-d for an explanation.

AVRAHAM: Did I not teach you that G-d's promise forever remains a promise; that even though we may be unable to understand how G-d will in His time, in His way bring about the fulfillment of all His promises — it is G-d who directs history; it is He who has created the world with purpose and with a goal. We must study these goals and work to achieve them.

But in practical terms, our job in the here and now is to observe G-d's *mitzvos* — to follow His commandments—to journey on a road of deeds and actions which will bring about the fulfillment of our dreams. The only way man knows to become a partner with G-d in the building of a better world is through the living of His law and instruction. A law which man makes, man can abolish, but a law established by Divine command, abides forever. I do the bidding of G-d without fear, without hesitation, with confidence that all that G-d commands is for the good — that all His words are truth and justice.

SCENE III

(Avraham and Yitzchok walk hand-in-hand)

NARRATOR I: *And Avraham took the wood for the burnt offering and laid it on Yitzchok his son. He had three days to think and consider, no one could possibly say that this was a hasty decision. And he took in his hand the fire and the knife. And they went both of them, together.*

NARRATOR II: Avraham knew that he was going to sacrifice his son. He went voluntarily and with joy, but Yitzchok thus far, realized nothing . . .

YITZCHOK: My father . . .

AVRAHAM: Here I am, my son . . .

YITZCHOK: *Behold, here is the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?*

AVRAHAM: G-d will provide a lamb, my son . . .
(The curtain is drawn)

NARRATOR II: Although Yitzchok now understood who the burnt offering was to be . . . *They went, both of them, together. They came to the place which G-d had indicated. And Avraham built the altar, arranged the wood, bound his son Yitzchok and laid him on the altar on top of the wood . . .*

NARRATOR I: *Then Avraham extended his hand — took the knife — raised it — Suddenly — an Angel of the Lord called to him from the Heavens.*

HEAVENLY VOICE: *Avraham . . . Avraham . . .*

AVRAHAM: *Here I am, I am ready to serve You as willingly as in the past.*

HEAVENLY VOICE: *Stretch not your hand against the lad, do nothing to him, for I know that you are G-d-fearing, since you have not refused Me your son, your only son . . .*

SECOND VOICE: G-d did not desire that you bring Yitzchok as a burnt offering, but only that you be prepared to do so. Your understanding of G-d's command was precisely the manner in which it was to be understood by you and acted upon, but the ultimate Will of G-d was not that you actually sacrifice your son; *Korbon* in this instance was to be understood in its literal sense: to come closer, to rise higher.

This *Olah*, this elevation could not take place at your home. Your home in Beersheba is the focal point of Torah for now, but in the future Torah will come forth from Zion, from this mountain, *Har Hamoriah*, the mountain of Torah instruction.

HEAVENLY VOICE: Dedicate Yitzchok to that future, bring him to this great height. Send him from Beersheva to a house of Torah study, allow him to leave your home so that he may grow to the caliber of Torah leadership that the future needs. On this mountain of Torah instruction, see to it that your son becomes The Man of Torah learning.

NARRATOR I: *Then Avraham lifted up his eyes and looked — Behold — a ram was caught in the thicket by its horns. He took the ram and offered it as a burnt offering in place of his son.*

AVRAHAM: I will call this mountain *Ha'shem Yireh*. On this mountain is the Lord seen.

HEAVENLY VOICE: *Because you have done this thing and have not withheld your son, your only son, I will bless you. I will multiply your seed as the*

stars of heaven and the sand on the seashore.
Your seed shall possess the gate of their enemies
and through your seed shall all the nations of
the earth be blessed . . . because you have obeyed
My voice . . .

NARRATOR II: Throughout the generations this covenant of our fathers is recalled . . . We pray:
Even as Avraham our father mastered his compassion for his only son in order to perform Thy

*In my heart I will build a House for the glory of G-d,
In this House I will place an altar to His majesty.
For an Eternal Light I shall take the fire of the Akeida,
For my sacrifice I shall bring—my soul.*

Will, so may Thy mercy prevail over stern justice.

NARRATOR I: In our day may the altar of Avraham be rebuilt on *Har Ha'moriah*, may the third *Bais Hamikdosh* be built on its ancient site in the city of Yerushalayim near which stands the *Kosel Hamaaravi*, the only remnant of the *Bais Hashem*.

NARRATOR II: May we all learn the lesson of Moriah and become as Yitzchok.

בלבבי משכן אבנה להדר כבודו,
ובמשכן מזבח אשים לקרני הודו,
ולנר תמיד אקח לי את אש העקדה,
ולקרבן אקריב לו את נפשי היחידה.

מאת הרב יצחק הוטנר

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BOOK REVIEW

CUSTOM AND SURVIVAL by *Sidney Steiman* (New York, 1963, Bloch Publ. Co., \$4.00).

THE "BLACK DEATH" (1348-1349) AND THE pogroms that swept Western Europe in its wake formed a crucial turning point in Jewish history. They triggered the great migration which turned Eastern Europe into the center of Jewish life until our times; and they left Western European Jewry decimated and disorganized. The credit for rebuilding its communities and preserving its spiritual strength belongs to Rabbi Jacob Moeller (also known as the *Maharil*) whose teachings, through his disciples, molded the future of German Jewry.

The book before us is devoted to this man and his work; in the first part the author deals with his life and the historical background, while the second part aims to present his teachings. Dr. Steiman has conscientiously studied the historical data and this has forced him to reject some of the erroneous ideas about medieval German Jewry propounded by earlier writers. Thus he quotes Graetz concerning "*the insignificance of even the most respected of German Rabbis of this period . . . they all pursued a course productive of mental stagnation,*" and rejects this view, even though he does not seem to realize that Graetz's opinion—here as in so many other places—was merely an expression of his personal bias. He likewise quotes the view that "*in general, the Humra (strict approach to Halakhah) tends to . . . restrict the emotional aspect of religion,*" but feels compelled to state that, "at least" in the period which he writes about, "*the Humra . . . in fact was the expression of the deep piety of the Hasidey Ashkenaz*" (Introduction).

The author most competently describes Jewish self-government in the Middle Ages, "possible only through the strong desire of the Jews to live according to the dictates of Jewish law . . . (which) offered them a realistic means of organizing a community life and cooperative activities" (p. 27). To this end there was available the guidance of the inherited *Halachah* and *Minhag*, supplemented in case of need by *Takanoth* issued by the Rabbinic leaders. In view of the chaos left by the Black Death, the *Maharil* concentrated on re-establishing firm standards of Jewish life by defining and strengthening the right ways of conduct in all spheres of human existence.

DR. STEIMAN IS RIGHT ABOUT THE IMPORTANCE OF *Minhag*; it regulates aspects of life where *Halachah* directly does not speak. He is also correct in stressing the significance of *Takanoth*, to meet special needs

within the framework of *Halachah*. However, he is quite wrong about the scope of *Minhag* and *Takanoth*. For both of them he claims authority overriding the *Halachah*. In reality, the Jewish Encyclopedia's sweeping and inaccurate definition of *Takanoth* is certainly a very poor "proof" and, as for *Minhag*, the *Maharil* himself stated that "the *Minhag* which contradicts a rabbinic principle is considered an error and should not be continued" (*Hilchos Pesach*). The fact is that both *Minhag* and *Takanoth* have a significant role but only within the circumscribed area assigned to them by *Halachah* (see *Sdey Chemed* on *Minhag*, for instance).

However, Dr. Steiman goes even further in propounding the flexibility of *Halachah*; he is of the view that *Rabbinic authorities*—such as the *Maharil*—do not merely interpret the *Halachah*, but actually *reinterpret* it to make it viable to meet the challenging needs of the times. "The *Maharil* very often took a lenient attitude even though the letter of the law was against it" (Introduction), and Dr. Steiman claims that this was "when he felt a law had to be adjusted to meet the difficult conditions of Jewish life in the fifteenth century" (p. 123); on the other hand "he was equally adamant to preserve the law from being treated lightly . . . even if this meant taking a stricter view than the law" (p. 123). In proof of this approach, Dr. Steiman ascribes many rulings of the *Maharil* to his personal feelings and to economic and political conditions whereas in reality they represent the application of generally valid objective halachic principles and, moreover, in many cases did not originate with the *Maharil* but much earlier authorities. Some of Dr. Steiman's "interpretations" of legal rulings are in fact quite ridiculous (e.g. concerning the woman's question at the Seder, p. 72, the question of a *Chazan* who is still a minor, p. 78, bathing and haircutting on Friday afternoon, p. 83).

Dr. Steiman actually offers a number of instances where, in his opinion, the *Maharil* decided *contrary to the Law*. Not one of these cases, I am afraid, can stand up to scrutiny. One example will suffice: "He allowed food to be kept on top of the stove on Sabbath eve . . . even though he stated this was against the *Halachah*" (p. 122). The actual language in the *Sefer Maharil* is: "It does seem to me completely permissible . . . because it is only permitted if the food stays hot, but most times the Gentile (stoker) falls asleep and it cools off completely . . . and the *Sefer Trumoh* only permits it in case of special need." Obviously, leaving the food on top of the stove is not, per se, forbidden—and therefore in case of need the *Maharil* followed the *Sefer Trumoh*, undoubtedly making sure the food would stay hot.

A good many of Dr. Steiman's examples merely indicate the author's limitations in Rabbinic scholarship.

Thus he is not aware that the remarks about the *Chalitzah* shoe, which he considers such a "dramatic" statement of the *Maharil's* views, are actually a mere summary of the Talmudic passage in *Yevamos* 102a—and neither the *Maharil* nor the Talmud itself permit the use of a shoe not approved by the Bible. More surprising than Dr. Steiman's misunderstanding of this passage are a number of other glaring misunderstandings of the text of the *Sefer Maharil*: "The greeting *Shalom* is never to be written full, for the *vov* is part of the divine name" (p. 88), ". . . visiting the graves of loved ones on *Tishah Be'Av*" (p. 100), "according to the tradition the *Shofar* could only be sounded in the presence of at least ten men" (p. 113).

IN CONCLUSION, IT IS TO BE REGRETTED THAT, IN delineating the personality and teachings of the *Maharil*—a most worthwhile and important undertaking—Dr. Steiman assigned to him a role which he never assumed. The *Maharil* crystallized the *Minhag Ashkenaz*, defined it, applied it to new problems of his time, made it generally known, and assured the community's compliance with it. In this sense Dr. Steiman's thesis of "survival through custom" is certainly correct, and the *Maharil's* vital place in Jewish history assured. But he was not the *creator* of the *Minhag Ashkenaz*, nor did he *adapt* it to the needs of his age. At no time were the authentic Rabbinic leaders of our people innovators or "adapters"—and one cannot escape the slight suspicion that, in presenting them in this light, a present-day writer is influenced by the desire to find a respectable ancestry for modern efforts to assure Jewish survival by innovations or adaptation.

WORLD LOST, by Rabbi Ahron Jeruchem (Sinai Publishing Society, 272 W. 86th St., N. Y. C.).

THE SLIM VOLUME, SUBTITLED "THE WAY OF LIFE and Thought in Jewish Eastern Europe, with Reflections on its Tragic End," is a most moving work—a paean to a world that is no more. In the preface the author stresses that he did not mean to write "an epitaph on a glorious age, but a challenge for times to come." (p. 19) "The end of European Jewry spells great peril. It is therefore upon us, the remnants . . . to pass it along . . . to show our children what their valiant forefathers looked like . . . to induce them to take up their work." With this object in mind, the author talks about such topics as "the uniform," "inward otherness," "personification of faith," "the stewardess of the home," "the power to say no," and "preferring the lasting over the passing." He does not philosophize, nor does he preach—in simple eloquent, if sometimes a little awkward language he endeavors to describe the day-by-day life, ideas and ideals of Eastern Europe.

"GIMME"

Something dangerous has happened to this country — spread of the cowardly idea that the world owes you and me a living just because we are here.

Socialists love to mouth the DECLARATION "Life, Liberty and Happiness" but they omit the most important word — "Pursuit." Pursuit takes energy and intestinal fortitude which beatnicks and rabble-rousers and their ilk haven't got and haven't the courage to acquire.

The refrain is familiar, "Automation took my job of blacksmith or ice-man or whatever, so you owe me relief." Political Conservatives say, get out and mend shoes or sell vegetables or repair radios, and if you haven't got a skill, be the best floor-sweeper or day-laborer in town — and you'll get along.

If you or I drop out of school or won't go to night-school because it's too hard, whose fault is it that we haven't got a job or a salable skill, but your's or mine?

This once-great nation was built on self-respect, self-reliance, not self-pity. "Gimme" can wreck it.

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IN RETROSPECT the author somewhat deceives himself. The Twentieth Century did not see such utterly monolithic, stable and perfect Eastern European Jewry as the author describes. But this does not really matter—even if it was not as perfect as the author would have it, it still stands as a challenge worth taking up. Even if Krakow or Warsaw of the Nineteen Twenties lacked some of the glory that the author ascribes to the entire East, Jewish life there attained heights of which we can only dream. Even if not every single Jew personified holiness, saints and sages moulded the face of the community and “established many disciples” (in fact, it is their sayings and deeds, recounted in large numbers in this book which help make it such thoughtful reading).

Why mention at all the fact that the author has somewhat over-simplified his subject? The reason is obvious. Anybody who goes through this book will lay it down with a feeling of deep reverence for the

world he has encountered in its pages. But it is easier to dream of a golden life than to create it. In order to respond courageously to the challenge which our author offers, it is important to realize that Eastern Jewry, too, had its temptations, its problems, its failures, particularly in the last generations. Such a realization will make its situation more comparable to what we face in America—and will bring it home to us that if Eastern Jewry could attain such heights, despite its problems, so can we.

Of course, there are differences, and more than a mere recollection of the past is needed to create within the American environment the strong Torah community that we need. A great deal of Torah wisdom and Torah guidance will be required to achieve this goal. But in order to work for it we must at least see the challenge before us—and for presenting it so touchingly the author deserves our sincere appreciation.

Mapam and Mixed-Marriage

If an episode which recently occurred in the Mapam Kibbutz *Gan Shmuel*, had occurred—in slightly different form—in a non-Kibbutz community, a veritable torrent of hate would now be raining down again on the heads of the Israeli Rabbinate, religious Jewry, and the “religious fanatics” in general. We would be in the midst of another *cause celebre* in the ongoing “holy war” for civil liberties directed against the “clericalists.”

It seems that a Jewish girl from the Mapai Kibbutz *Givath Hashlosha* fell in love with a young Arab from the area. Despite parental opposition, the pair were married (the type of marriage isn't clear), whereupon the Kibbutz expelled them. The girl's pleas that she had in no way sinned against Kibbutz ideology; that she had been taught that religion was a thing of the past; that her Arab husband wanted to work in the Kibbutz with her—all apparently fell on deaf ears. She was given an option: “Choose between the Arab and the Kibbutz.”

Since however, the girl's parents

SECOND LOOKS

at the Jewish scene

by Ben-Meir

had contributed much to the progress of the Kibbutz, the Kibbutz purchased an apartment for the couple in Chadera, and even attempted to provide a job for the husband.

A child was born. Several months later, the couple found adjustment to city life too difficult, and applied to another Kibbutz—this time the militantly anti-religious Mapam Kibbutz *Gan Shmuel*—for admission as members.

Now, as even “infants in their cribs” know, Mapam is in the forefront of the struggle for the institution of civil marriage in the State of Israel.

It is the most vociferous, the bitterest and most constant opponent of Rabbinic control over marriage. When Christian wives of mixed families, who recently arrived in Israel, refused to be converted to Judaism—and the Rabbinate refused to validate such marriages—no condemnation could have been more vituperative and frenzied than that which Mapam heaped upon the Rabbinate and Torah law in general.

The fact that the Rabbinate was *extremely lenient* in making such conversions possible (lenient to the point that its procedures were alas open to grave criticism on halachic grounds) made not the slightest difference, in Mapam's judgment. To Mapam, the only acceptable solution was, either for the Rabbinate to validate such marriages—with or without conversion—or for instituting civil marriage.

On the other hand, in the present instance, the poor Arab involved was ready to accept all the “dinim and duties of the Mapam *Shulchan Aruch*” (David Flinker—*The Day-Morning Journal*—Sept. 3). In the Mapam sense he was—one might say—willing to become a conscientious Marxist. He was just unwilling to fraudulently be converted to the

A LETTER FROM HARRY GOLDEN

Have I a right to say a word about the Senatorial campaign in New York?

Well, let us look at it this way. My book, *Only in America, about the Lower East Side of New York, is being used as a textbook (Studies in the American Essay) in over 2,000 American High Schools. For 2c Plain has been translated into Japanese, Arabic, Hindi, Hebrew, Spanish, and German.*

I live in North Carolina, but I have an advantage over so many of our brothers and sisters of the past. They had to go to the Thalia or the Windsor to hear LUDWIG SATZ sing *Ich benk a heim*. Modern communication and transportation has given us this great privilege. I can come "back home" as often as I feel like it — in a matter of two hours.

I am disturbed that Kenneth Keating, running for Senator in the State of New York, remains silent about his party's candidate after Senator Barry Goldwater's hyphenated-American speech in a suburb of Pittsburgh on October 5th. What kind of a carpe-bagger is that who stands still for Goldwater's reference to most of the citizens of this state as "hyphenated Americans?"

"The lobbyists of the minority groups are running this country," said Goldwater, echoing the words of the racist *Charlestown News and Courier*: "At last a candidate for the White Anglo-Saxons."

We haven't heard that phrase, "hyphenated Americans," since the 1916 campaign.

Senator Keating says he is a hero for remaining silent about Barry Goldwater. At least the racist Strom Thurmond is less cynical. Old Strom took the plunge, left the Democratic Party and he is now a Republican.

Senator Keating thinks his silence is enough. But it was not enough for Al Smith, a Catholic who went into the New York Hippodrome and told an audience of thousands that Father Coughlin speaks only for himself, and that he, Al Smith, condemns the priest for his racist views. And silence was not enough for Wendell Wilkie. When the hate-monger Gerald L. K. Smith came out for the Republican, Mr. Wilkie issued a statement, "I don't have to be the President, but I will have to look myself in the mirror, and I do not want Gerald L. K. Smith or any of his kind to vote for me."

And now we come to Robert F. Kennedy. Forgive me if I get a bit sentimental, I love him like a brother. I spent about ten days with him in 1962. He had no idea he would be plugging for votes himself in 1964. Mr. Kennedy's brother was in the White House. His only thought was to serve the President. He was not trying to impress me — why should he? He said matter-of-factly, "The administration has changed the Eisenhower policy, we have given the Hawk missile for the defense of Israel." And he added, "You know my younger brother Teddy made us all Zionists."

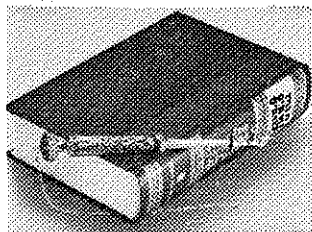
But my love for Robert F. Kennedy is not only as a Jew but as a liberal, one who is deeply interested in trade-unionism, in medical insurance, in liberalizing the immigration laws, and in standing in the tradition of Herbert Lehman and Eleanor Roosevelt. The greatest joy of my life was that I became a friend of Herbert H. Lehman and Eleanor Roosevelt. I would do injustice to their memory if I did not believe with all my heart and soul that Robert F. Kennedy is their logical successor.

Harry Golden

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Jewish religion. Could Mapam—of all groups—fault him—much less reject him, together with his wife, who was herself a daughter of Kibbutz ideology?

In a Marxist-secularist view of things—what ought one to call such an act other than barbarous—racistic? Why, for acts not one-tenth as “dastardly”, for acts which were dictated by a Torah conscience (which is at least intelligible in its

terms), the Rabbinate has been “hanged and quartered!”

What was the decision of the Mapam Kibbutz?

There were passionate debates for long months.

The final vote was: 120 against accepting the couple into Kibbutz membership — 80 for accepting them.

One is tempted to ask: “Who is more fanatic, *Meah She'arim* or Kibbutz *Gan Shmuel*?”

Who is more fanatic, *Meah She'arim*, when it says (in the name of our Gd-given Torah) to desecrators of *Shabbos* who invade its streets: “Go elsewhere;” or *Gan Shmuel*, when it says (in the name of Marxist-secularist nationalism) to a mixed couple (of whom the wife is herself a Kibbutz product): “Go elsewhere.”

But we would rather not ask the question.

There are times when the inconsistency of our non-religious brothers is welcome to us. They would be surprised to hear that we fervently pray that—in *this direction*—they may become even more inconsistent.

Though we wrestle with them, we have not lost the faith, that deep below their own consciousness, the ancestral wellsprings of Jewish holiness still flow.

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The Jewish Observer invites your comments on issues discussed in our columns. Letters addressed to the Editor should be brief and preferably typed, double-spaced, to insure legibility. Letters must be signed but the writer's name may be withheld on request.

Your reactions are essential to the vitality of The Jewish Observer and we earnestly solicit your correspondence.

Public School Prayer

To the Editor:

Mr. Reuben E. Gross, who urges support for the Becker Amendment in your last issue, is an attorney while I am layman . . . Nevertheless, I am writing to oppose vehemently Mr. Gross' position and to urge . . . the defeat of the Becker Amendment as detrimental to our interest as Jews and to our democratic principles as Americans.

Mr. Gross . . . lists clearly all the dangers possible if such an amendment to our Constitution were adopted. He supports the position of the Union for a moment of silence as a positive approach and as "a position which Torah-true Jews may urge in safety and good conscience" (the Union position is not in support of the Becker Amendment and is in reality an attempt to solve the problem in another way). He specifically states that while we should not oppose religious programming in the public schools, nevertheless it is not deserving of our support. This in itself is contradictory because non-opposition is in reality support of a position.

And without solving the problems which he himself raises, without taking into account the further fact that the Becker Amendment has won the support of so many of the reactionary elements in our society, without considering the dangers of tampering with a Bill of Rights

which has protected us for close to two centuries—Mr. Gross publicly asks all Orthodox Jews and Jewish organizations to support the Becker Amendment.

In his final words, he urges "care to obtain unequivocal safeguards against sectarian exploitation of the privileges created under such an amendment." Mr. Gross would amend our Constitution and set a precedent of tampering with our public school system with the pious hope that such a course of action will not lead to abuses and to the exploitation of the religious freedom of all Americans.

I would rather follow the position of many organizations both in the Jewish and non-Jewish community and agree with the majority of the Supreme Court that the only true guarantee for our welfare as Americans and as Jews is to keep sacred the freedoms in the Bill of Rights and, as Orthodox Jews, to put our hopes and our efforts toward inculcating into our children a belief in G-d and His Torah, into our homes, our Synagogues, and our Religious Schools.

RABBI PHILIP KAPLAN
Colchester, Conn.

To the Editor:

In regard to the controversy on prayers in public schools, why couldn't a class in Ethics be substituted, for one hour a week? After all, that is the result which all

Letters to the Editor

religions (and all atheists) . . . seek to instill in their children. A one-minute prayer has never and will never make a saint of a child. Ethics is strictly a non-demoninational subject which all people can subscribe to regardless of belief.

J. ALEXANDER

Washington, D.C.

Yeshiva-Drop-outs

To the Editor:

I have just completed the article by Nisson Wolpin, *Prescription for Yeshiva Dropouts* in your May issue.

His attack on *Judy and Jeremy, Jewish Mother Goose*, et. al. is thoroughly unwarranted. These wonderful materials provide parents with excellent take-off points to introduce and explain many *mitzvohs* and customs to small children. Should small children not be approached childishly?

As to his derision of materialism, everyone enjoys comforts. All our Torah heroes were blessed with wealth. Perhaps if *Avraham Avinu*

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were living today, he might be driving a new model car too.

Why then are children today not immersed in Torah as he feels they should be? Because Dad screams *Daven!* while he talks his head off in shul, and curls up with "True" magazine when he should be learning with his son.

Until parents are willing to show, by their example, sincerity and true commitment, "prescriptions" will only be a superficial answer.

MIRIAM DANZIGER
Flushing, New York

Universal Jewish History

To the Editor:

Re: Review of Universal Jewish History, Vol. 2 (THE JEWISH OBSERVER, June 1964).

The reply of the Book Editor makes a rejoinder necessary.

1) The reviewer admits that his quotation of the words of *Reb* Ahron Kotler was not correct. He maintains that this is insignificant since the statement of *Reb* Ahron Kotler *de facto* refers also to the patriarchs.

This, however, is not in accord with the words of *Reb* Ahron Kotler. His very strong statement: "If there had been even the smallest shortcoming in them, the whole nature of the Jewish people would have been different," refers solely to the three patriarchs. Consequently it could not be quoted *at all* in connection with the incident of

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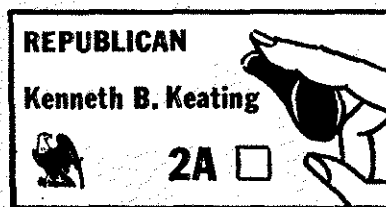
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TEN QUESTIONS

for Mr. Kennedy to answer

1. Mr. Kennedy, you stated that as Attorney General and brother of the late President, you participated prominently in decisions regarding U. S. foreign policy. Can you explain why the Administration broke pledges to bring about a direct peace talk between Israel and the Arabs? Why did the U. S. Delegation in the United Nations vote against the Brazzaville resolution calling upon the Arabs to negotiate for peace with Israel?
2. In 1962 Syria made repeated attacks on Israel, killing a number of Jews. The Israeli Army counter-attacked and destroyed the base from which the Syrian attacks were mounted. The U. S. Delegation then submitted a resolution to the U.N. condemning Israel as an aggressor without even referring to the Syrian provocations. What did you do to stop such a one-sided condemnation?
3. As Attorney General, you had the responsibility of branding as un-American, groups which were committed to the destruction of America's principles and ideals. Why did you not stamp as anti-American the pro-Arab groups which are carrying on incitement against America-Israel relations and against American Jews?
4. As Attorney General, why did you not insist upon the registration as foreign agents, of Arab students who were paid to disseminate anti-Israel propaganda on behalf of Nasser's Arab League? Why did you ignore this propaganda network which Senator Keating exposed on the Senate floor?
5. Why did you not act upon the demand of Senator Keating that Rockwell's Nazi Party be designated a subversive and un-American organization? Are the American Nazi-Fascists less dangerous than the Communists?
6. Congress voted to withhold financial support from aggressor governments which threaten the security of their neighbors. Nasser has publicly demanded the extermination of Israel and urged the organization of an Arab refugee army for sabotage and attack on Israel. Why did you, as chief legal officer of the United States, permit the Foreign Assistance Act to be violated and aid to go on to Nasser?
7. What did you do to have the Administration demand from Germany the recall of the German scientists and technicians, former Nazis, who are producing missiles and rockets for Nasser to destroy Israel and 2 million Jews?
8. When you recently visited Germany you declared: "Ich bin ein Berliner." (I am a Berliner.) Did you then urge the German Government to recall its scientists from Egypt where they are bent on destroying Israel and 2 million Jews?
9. As Attorney General, you and your predecessors declared in court that the Swiss company, Interhandel, was a Nazi front for the German company, General Aniline Farben. Why, then, did you settle with Interhandel by turning over to it 60 million dollars of American war assets? Did you not know that the General Aniline Farben Company, for which Interhandel was fronting, was engaged in providing Hitler with war material and poison gas for his crematoria where 6 million Jews were put to death? Why did you not wait to let the American courts establish the true ownership of Interhandel and prevent the Nazis from benefitting from this deal?
10. The Senate went on record condemning Soviet Russia for persecuting the Jews. The State Department, however, pressured Congress to water down the resolution. What did you do to exercise leadership on this moral question? What did you do to encourage the mighty voice of America to live up to its traditions and to protest against the persecution of Jews in Soviet Russia?

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Column A — 2nd Line

VOTE FOR SENATOR KEATING

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Rachel and the *terofim*, even though also the moral and spiritual height of the matriarchs is beyond doubt.

2) The reviewer furthermore maintains that this statement of *Reb Ahron Kotler* "is very much in line" with the principle established and applied by S. R. Hirsch that the Torah does not depict the patriarchs as perfect ideals but with their human weaknesses, errors and faults. This seems impossible. It is quite obvious that these two opinions are irreconcilably contradictory.

3) Finally the reviewer maintains that, in discussing the failings of the patriarchs, S. R. Hirsch relies on the guidance of the Sages which means that he does in this respect not rely on his own judg-

ment. This again is not in accord with the facts. See e.g. the Commentary on Gen. 25:27 and 25:28 where S. R. Hirsch assumes failings of the *Ovos* without any support by a *Ma'amar Chazal*.

4) All this leads to the conclusion that neither the words of *Reb Ahron Kotler* nor the opinion of S. R. Hirsch can justify the severe criticism of the reviewer regarding the incident of Rachel and the *terofim*.

RABBI PH. BIBERFELD
New York City

Our Book Editor replies:

1. Whether the *one* quotation that Dr. Biberfeld criticizes should or should not have been quoted at all is a question of judgment which I leave to any reader of *Reb Ahron Kotler's* speech. However, I take it from his silence that Dr. Biberfeld has no quarrel with the half

a dozen other quotations of mine—which clearly show that *Reb Ahron Kotler's* general thesis applies just as much to the matriarchs as to the patriarchs. This and this alone, is the essential question involved.

2. I never said that *Reb Ahron Kotler's* statement "is very much in line with the principle established and applied by S. R. Hirsch that the Torah does not depict the patriarchs as perfect ideals. . . ." I said that "it is very much in line with *Reb Ahron Kotler's* point that *Rabbi S. R. Hirsch* discusses the temptations and failings of the *Ovos* with the utmost diffidence, relying for guidance upon *Chazal* or *Ramban*."

3. In *Braishis* 25:27, *Rabbi S. R. Hirsch* specifically bases his critique of the *Ovos* upon his understanding of a *Ma'amar Chazal*, and in 25:28, he does give his own explanation of why *Yitzchok* and *Rivkah* differed in their feelings—but he merely followed in the footsteps of *Chazal* who also assigned explanations (see *B'raishis Rabbah* 63) and saw *Yitzchok* as

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worthy of criticism for his feelings (*Koheles, Rabbosi 4*).

However, I must emphasize that these are all side issues, minor compared to the central point which I raised: can we propound that *one of our matriarchs acted under the influence of idolatry?* I believe that such a view is incompatible with a proper understanding of our forefathers, and dangerous in adding to the confusion of the minds. I have therefore felt compelled to make this point—without, as I want to stress again in closing this discussion, detracting from the importance and excellence of Dr. Biberfeld's work in general or his latest book in particular.

An Unpopular Position

To the Editor:

Enclosed is my subscription renewal for your second year. The other day (October 2nd) I came across a news-item in *The New York Times* which vindicates an unpopular position that your magazine took regarding the highly publicized Washington conference on Soviet Jews. Your readers will be interested in the following exact quote from that news report of a speech at the national convention of the Zionist Organization of America:

As an illustration, Dr. Max Nussbaum (president of Z. O. A.) called attention to a spe-

cial conference on Soviet Jews here last February that was sponsored by 24 Jewish religious and secular groups. He said resolutions were passed but nothing had been accomplished since then because of the insistence of each organization on maintaining its own individual position.

"The objective of the conference of Soviet Jews," he said, "namely, to aid 3 million Jews of the Soviet Union against discrimination, has now almost been forgotten in the shuffle."

It is to be regretted that these organizations have been falling over each other in a race for publicity on such a serious issue where Jewish lives are involved, instead of pursuing the course that you have been recommending of quiet diplomacy.

A. DEMBITZER
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World Congress of Agudist Women Held in Jerusalem

Thousands of Orthodox women from every part of the world participated in the World Congress of N'shei Agudath Israel, which took place in Jerusalem simultaneous with the Knessia Gedola in July. The Agudist Women met in separate sessions, and deliberated on problems facing the Jewish woman in every part of the world.

The opening session was an impressive demonstration of the bonds of the Torah-loyal Jewish woman to genuine *Yiddishkeit*. The thousands of participants enthusiastically listened to greetings from the leaders of the Bais Yaakov movement in Israel, and from Rabbi L. Kahanow of the United States and Rabbi A. Donner of England. Leaders of the Women's Agudist Organization from Israel, Europe and the United States also spoke, including Mrs. B. Sorotzkin of Cleveland. The speakers stressed the important role the Jewish woman plays in Judaism, and the necessity of the N'shei Agudath Israel World Movement to mobilize the huge potential force of Jewish women for united, purposeful activity.

The working session of the international conclave was opened with an introductory address on the Torah aspects of social welfare by Rabbi Moshe Porush, veteran Agudist leader and Vice-Mayor of Jerusalem. Mrs. William K. Friedman brought a message from the

N'shei organization of the United States, in which she reported on the multi-faceted activities of the American organization in providing help to the N'shei institutions in Israel, as well as on the American scene. The representatives of the N'shei Organization of Israel moved the entire assemblage with their reports on the huge accomplishments in the field of children's homes, as a result of which many hundreds of children have been saved from the missionaries. Delegates from various European and South American countries also reported on their activities.

One entire session of the conclave was devoted to Chinuch Atzmai. Delegates took great pride from the knowledge that many of the young girls studying in Chinuch Atzmai schools receive their early training in N'shei homes in Israel. Special sessions were also devoted to the problems of organizing young girls in B'nos Agudath Israel groups.

At the chinuch session, proposals were presented for the Bais Yaakov Seminary in Israel to organize a summer camp for girls from various parts of the world. It was also pointed out that the N'shei and B'nos organizations in Europe and the Americas could urgently use the services of B'nos leaders and Bais Yaakov teachers from Israel.

An entire day was devoted to a tour of some of the institutions for children sponsored by N'shei Agudath Israel in Israel, which left a marked impression upon the women who participated in these visits. The world congress of N'shei ended on an optimistic note, with the great enthusiasm indicating a renewed determination upon the part of all participants to strengthen the Agudist Women's Organization throughout the world.

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A 5-month series of weekly radio broadcasts was launched in mid-October by Agudath Israel of America over Station WEVD in New York, heard on Saturday nights at 9:30 P.M. The programs, which are sponsored by the Agudist Branch Presidents Council of Metropolitan New York, provide Torah-views on current Jewish events as well as brief talks on the ideals and accomplishments of the world movement. The series is directed by Mr. Joseph Friedenson.

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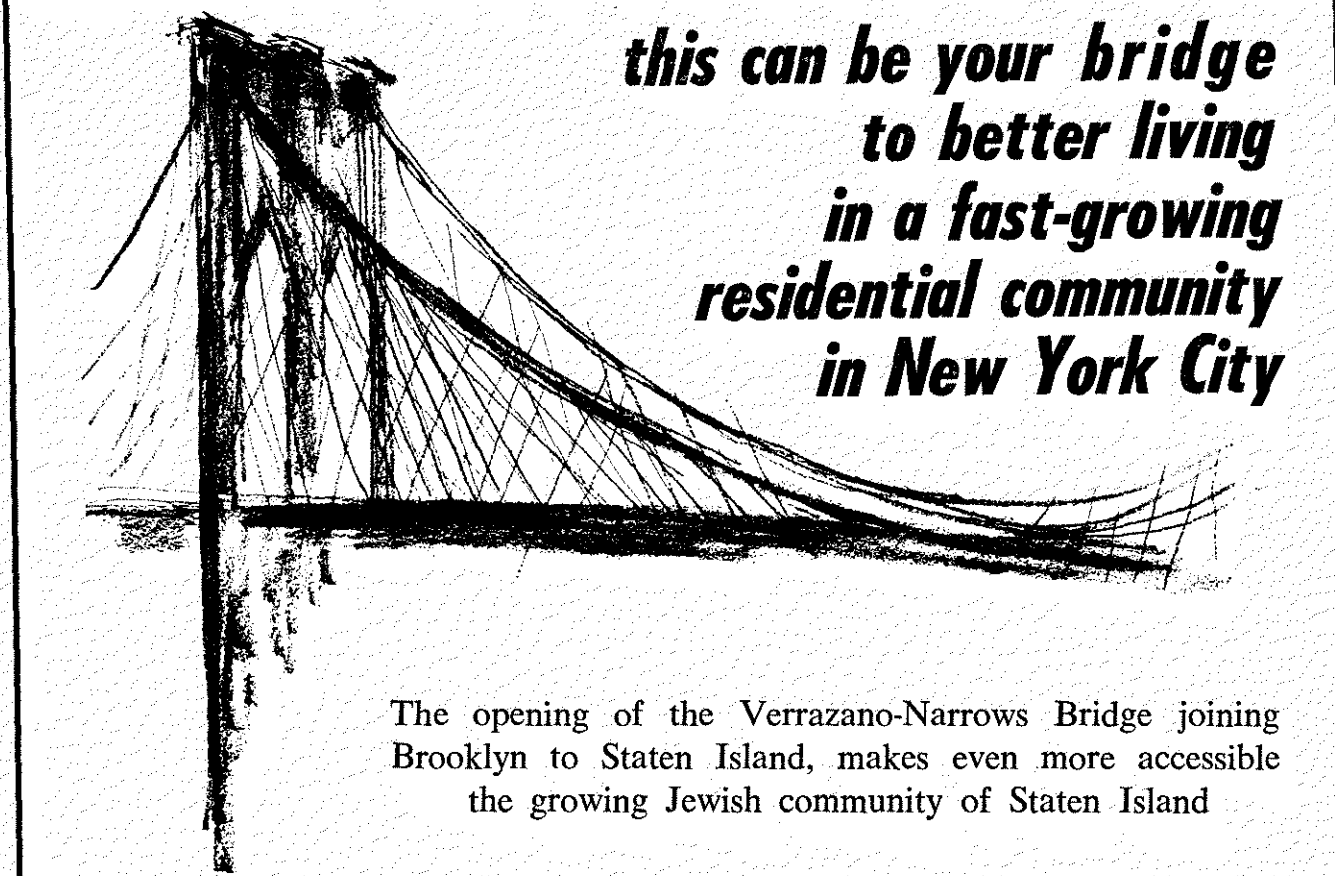
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