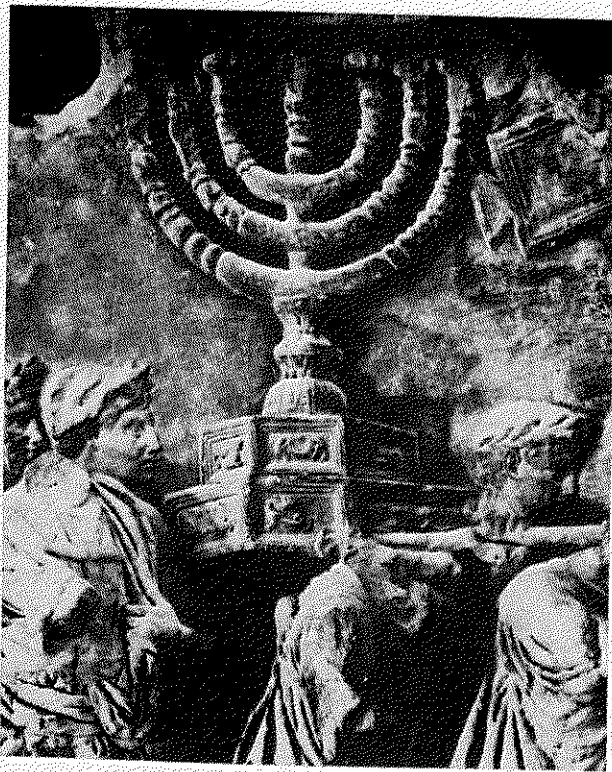


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THE JEWISH OBSERVER



The Vatican Council
and the Jew



Hatred Comes
Forth From Zion



Agudath Israel
In the U.N.



Assimilation —
Two Sides of the Coin

THE JEWISH OBSERVER

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the cover

A section of the Arch of Titus, in Rome, portraying Roman troops carrying the Menorah removed from the *Bais Hamikdosh*. (See SAMSON RAPHAEL HIRSCH ON CHANUKAH, page 20.)

The Vatican Council and the Jew

Is ecumenicism as friendly as it appears to be?

IT WOULD BE DIFFICULT to find a single word that has had a greater impact on religion in recent times, than the word ecumenicism. It catapulted to fame an "interim pope" of the Church; it has shaken old-line theologians in Rome beyond their wildest nightmares; it has caused an upheaval in world Protestantism; and finally it has betrayed the weakness and lack of common purpose of a Jewish society without Torah.

Until only a few years ago, the word in any of its forms was unknown to most Americans, few could even pronounce it if they saw it in print. Today it is on everyone's lips; it exercises a magnetic hold on Christian thought and it continues to cast confusion and chaos whenever it intrudes into the crazy-quilt patterns of the American Jewish community.

What is this magical word; where did it come from, seemingly so suddenly; and how has it been used with such effectiveness?

These questions need be answered if some sensible Jewish posture in regard to ecumenicism is to be arrived at; if we are to preserve the dignity and the integrity of the Jewish people. Failure to react intelligently and from the well-spring of Jewish tradition, may, as we shall see, prove to be the greatest threat to Jewish survival since World War II.

Webster's New World Dictionary tells us that the word ecumenical is from the Greek, *oikoumenikos*, meaning: *of or from the whole world; universal; especially, of the Christian church as a whole*. The dictionary definition, revealing though it be, does not offer the clue we seek. *The Encyclopedia of Religion and Religions* (E. Royston Pike, The Meridian Library/New York/1958) writes, under the heading, ECUMENICAL MOVEMENT:

A movement, chiefly among Protestants of the evangelical tradition, aiming at the establishment of as large a measure as possible of Christian unity. Since the end of the last century some success has been achieved in the union of some churches.

Having come to think of the ecumenical movement as synonymous with the Catholic Church the above reference may come as a surprise. Actually, while the Catholic Church has used the word ecumenical to

describe certain conclaves, during at least the last century, the Ecumenical Movement as such has been an exclusively Protestant force, even looked askance at by the Roman Church.

Protestantism has long been sensitive to its division in this country into over 200 separate sects. (Some of these sects originally started as a movement to unify other groups only to end up adding to the list of denominations themselves.) The embarrassment however went beyond divisiveness itself; Protestantism was waking up to the realization that the growth of Catholicism in the world was creating a competitive religious force that could hardly be adequately met by a mass of splinter groups.

The adoption by the Catholic Church of the ecumenical theme was a counter-thrust (a counter-reformation of sorts) at Protestantism's attempts to create a universal Christian church.

In essence, the Catholic Church has served notice on the Christian world, that if there is going to be any consolidation in Christianity, it is Rome that will do the consolidating, as the true universal church.

Intra-Church Power Struggle

What emerges from this brief look at ecumenicism, is that there now rages a power struggle for the control of Christianity, a struggle in which the Jew clearly has no place. The aborted attempt to send a 'Jewish observer' to the first Vatican Council was simply another manifestation of a Torah-less Jewish society trying to ape in every way possible the non-Jewish world. So weak-egoed is the secular and non-Orthodox leadership, that they feel defeated and compromised if there is any area in which they can not participate as equals, be it the exclusive and restricted country club or a drive for Christian unity.

The much-discussed schema on the Jews can be viewed only against the background of the intra-Christian power struggle. Prior to the convening of the Vatican Council, the World Council of Churches (Protestant) met in India and approved a statement declaring anti-Semitism to be un-Christian. This placed the onus on Rome to make a similar declaration on the Jews or to be open to the charge of official Church anti-Semitism.

As it turned out, this was not to be so easily accomplished, with opposition developing from old-line conservatives concerned with theology and Arab-country bishops concerned with politics.

The Church's historic desire to submerge the Jewish people and wean them from their faith to Christianity has taken many forms. For centuries the sword won forced conversions; the threat of torture and death was the Christian reply to Jewish stubbornness. Another aspect of this approach was the forced debates on comparative theology where the single ground rule was: If you win—you lose.

The New Missionary Look

In recent times we have become accustomed to the crudely-written and crudely-printed pamphlet with the face of a mythical 'rabbi' on the cover who had "seen the light." (In Israel, the Church has applied the technique which in China, for example, succeeded in winning many "rice-Christians," offering food, housing and repatriation to South America and jobs to poor immigrants from Arab countries.)

Today the crude pamphlet is being replaced by scholarly works and overtures for Christian-Jewish "dialogue" on a highly intellectual level, without overt tones of *Shmad*, but rather "... in the name of the one God; (to) seek a meeting of Jews and Christians."

Headquarters of this new look in *Shmad* is the Institute of Judaeo-Christian Studies at Seton Hall University in Newark, New Jersey. The Institute is headed by Rev. John M. Oesterreicher, himself a *Mesumad*, who is editor of *The Bridge*, a yearbook of Judaeo-Christian Studies and has played a leading role in framing the schema on the Jews presented to the Vatican Council. He has been the ideological guide of the so-called liberal wing of the Church which has pressured for a "liberal" statement in opposition to the conservative Roman curia.

Volume three of *The Bridge* opens with the words, *Baruh Hashem*, whereby the editor expresses his gratitude for the response to his work. *Baruh Hashem*, he goes on, "for the many friends we have found among our Jewish readers ... there have been sympathetic readers, rabbis and scholars among them, who have told us of their appreciation." (One of the "most friendly reviews the Editor cites was published in *The Jerusalem Post*.)

In this volume a most delicate and embarrassing point of Catholic theology is discussed, which sheds a good deal of light on the significance of the Vatican Council for the Jew. In a paper called, "Theological Aspects of the State of Israel," Rev. Edward H. Flannery reveals the stunning blow suffered by the church in 1948 when the State of Israel was created. While attempting to deny the commonly accepted belief that the "existence of this state is a living contradiction of

scriptural prophecies," he musters sufficient citations which indicate that the question, at best, is still an open one.

Here are some of his citations from ancient and modern sources:

[A 19th-century theologian advised] *the Jews not to rebuild the Temple in Jerusalem, not to reorganize as a people, for the moment that they succeeded, 'the Catholic Church will have been slain . . . ' till the last judgment they will be without a country of their own, without a fixed abode, without prince, without sacrifice . . . the Jews bore the curse which Moses uttered against all who break the law of God . . . St. Augustine too, was convinced that the Jews suffered lasting exile for their rejection of J . . . [and from the New Testament itself.] . . . They (the Jews) will fall by the edge of the sword, and will be led away as captives to all nations. And Jerusalem will be trodden down by the Gentiles, until the times of the nations be fulfilled.*

Strange Bed-fellows

Turning to the "realities of the State of Israel" Flannery finds consolation, and a softening of the blow of Israel's continued existence in the secular nature of the State and many of its citizens, who have "an almost religious respect for the tractor or the frigidaire." Taking delight in the tension between religious and nonreligious Jews in Israel, he quotes another Catholic writer who takes up the line of the secularists and fighters for "religious freedom in Israel":

"By making ritual food obligatory in the army, in hospitals and in government canteens, by bringing public transportation to a standstill, by ordering the closing of newsstands, restaurants, and motion picture theaters on the Sabbath, by considerably extending the power of the rabbinate, the religious parties think they have deserved well of religion, without realizing the odious nature of imposing religious practices by law."

Quite astutely, the writer quotes from the "confession of faith" of David Ben Gurion, who speaks of the Messianic vision of the prophets of Israel, while "leaving the G-d of Israel unmentioned."

In his conclusion Flannery makes clear to us the manner in which the Catholic Church has adjusted itself to the "realities" of the State.

An "ingathering of exiles" without Messiah will always be an abnormal situation for all Jews who adhere to a modicum of Jewish tradition. The disillusionment springing from this situation can only grow with time; eventually it may force them to weigh reality against promise and lead them to a new search . . .

. . . We may then think that God wished to bring a representative cross section of the Jewish people to the Holy Land in order to bring it face

"Anti-Semitism arises because people are irritated by their own consciences"

to face with the great question of the Messiah. Israel's restoration to the land of promise, even though under secular auspices, may thus be a distant preparation for her final encounter with grace.

Let us paraphrase the words above.

The theological question is now academic. Israel is alive and thriving. But . . . all is not lost. Secularism is rampant in Israel, hostility toward religion is growing. The rabbis add to this hostility by forcing religion on the people. Jews in Israel will soon tire of their flirtation with the "tractor and the frigidaire." Their leaders speak of a Messianic vision, completely divorced from traditional beliefs; they have created a secular religion which can not for long nurture the souls of those who follow them.

We need not despair; the creation of the State of Israel and the "ingathering of the exiles" need no longer discourage us in our efforts to convert masses of Jews. On the contrary, it now becomes clear to us that this was part of the divine plan. Israel presents a historic, and final, opportunity to bring Jews to the Cross. That which we felt to be a blow, now reveals itself to be a hidden blessing. Let us make the most of it.

Let us return to the Vatican Council and the tortuous discussion and debate surrounding the schema on the Jews. One of the results of the Council sessions will most certainly be a major offensive by the Catholic Church to convert Jews. A good indication of the proportions of this drive is the passage at the first session—with little difficulty—of a schema on mass communications which pledged the Church to make use of every instrument offered by modern technology to spread Church teachings. There can hardly be any doubt that a substantial portion of the budget for this program will be allocated for the propagation of the faith among Jews throughout the world with particular emphasis on the State of Israel.

The last-minute approval of the schema, hailed with enthusiasm by secular and Reform Jewish groups, can only be viewed as a tactical measure to break down Jewish resistance to *Shmad* by upgrading the poor image the Church has had in its relationship to the Jew. The intra-Church disputes on the schema boil down simply to the question: How can we be patronizing to the Jew without doing violence to basic dogma and the sensitivity of Catholics in Arab countries? The members of the "liberal" bloc coming from democratic countries where the traditional methodology of conversion simply won't work, supported the "soft-sell" approach.

Any doubts as to the Church's motives were dispelled

when the pope recently visited, for the first time, a session of the Council. Speaking of the Church's missionary program, his unprecedented presence and his words underlined his desire to be known as a "missionary pope."

Fortunately, most Jews have recognized that we have no place at the Vatican Council, neither as observers nor as lobbyists. What many fail to understand is that in the Church's drive for "unity," the Jew has been pin-pointed as a major target. While the splintered Protestant sects are numerically the greater prize, the Jew represents the greater challenge. Unlike the "separated brethren," he rejects the very basis of Christian belief and clings to his timeless faith.

A proper Jewish response to the Vatican Council can be arrived at by examining the distorted reaction of the Jews alienated from Torah. Their high expectations are based on the false notion that a statement by the Church "absolving" us from the age-old charge of deicide, will go a long way toward wiping out hatred for the Jew.

The Sages long ago revealed to us the basic motivation of the anti-Semite. The mountain of Sinai, they tell us, was so named because upon that mountain *sinoh* (hatred) descended upon Israel. While these words need no support it is interesting to note that a modern psychologist arrives at a similar conclusion in examining the nature of anti-Semitism. He writes:

"Anti-Semitism arises because people are irritated by their own consciences. Jews are symbolically their superego. Ethical conduct is insisted upon by Judaism, relentlessly, immediately, hauntingly. People who dislike this insistence, along with the self-discipline and acts of charity implied, are likely to justify their rejection by discrediting the whole race that produced such high ethical ideals." (Gordon W. Allport / The Nature of Prejudice)

Assimilationists have believed that as they remove themselves further from Sinai, the *sinoh* would decrease proportionately. Historical experience has proven otherwise. While their methodology appears to be logical—one does not pour oil on a flame—*Klal Yisroel* is not governed by the rules of logic. The most effective weapon against *sinoh*—is Sinai; the only Torah response to hatred is more Torah. The millions of dollars spent by Jewish defense organizations would provide a more effective defense against anti-Semitism if used to teach Torah to Jewish children.

Our reaction to the sword in Israel's bitter encounter with the Catholic Church has been a strengthening of our faith in *Hakodosh Baruch Hu* and His Torah. Confronted with "Christian love" and ecumenicism, we need seek no other response.

Hatred Comes Forth From Zion

A close look at the campaign to vilify religious Jewry

JEWISH LIFE TODAY is blessed with many paradoxes. One which has not yet been catalogued and carefully documented might be briefly stated as follows.

While the appearance of anti-Semitic literature in the Soviet Union is greeted with press conferences and loud protests, defamatory propaganda which emanates from semi-official sources in the State of Israel which is directed against Orthodox Jewry, and smacks of classical anti-Semitism, is not only not subject to condemnation, but is disseminated in the American Jewish press.

This barrage of hostility and distorted statements of Torah points-of-view is a daily feature of the Hebrew press in Israel, but it finds its way into the homes and minds of American Jews through the widely-read *Jerusalem Post*, Israel's English-language daily, and in syndicated columns by Israeli journalists which appear in American Jewish weeklies.

So blatant is the output of much of Israel's press, which finds its way into Jewish journals in this country, that Uri Zvi Greenberg, the uncrowned poet laureate of Israel recently wrote in a Tel Aviv daily, that in the decades he has been in the Holy Land he has not witnessed such unbridled hatred as is now displayed by what he termed in Yiddish, *die journalistische hunt*, the "dogs of the press." Greenberg tilts at no imaginary windmills; to ignore hatred and rancor against Jews because it emanates from Tel Aviv or Jerusalem (and not from Berlin or Moscow) is hardly logical. Even a superficial study of the methods and tools used by opponents of Orthodoxy in Israel reveals incredible indifference to facts; an almost paranoid fear of a growing Orthodoxy, and racist tactics which bring no glory to the Jewish people.

The Jerusalem Post presents a most impressive facade and it strives to create an impression of respectability and objectivity among its many readers in the English-speaking world, while at the same time hammering away at the rabbinate and Orthodoxy with relentless rancor.

The Mission "Riots"

When for instance, a group of yeshiva students demonstrated against missionary assaults on Jewish

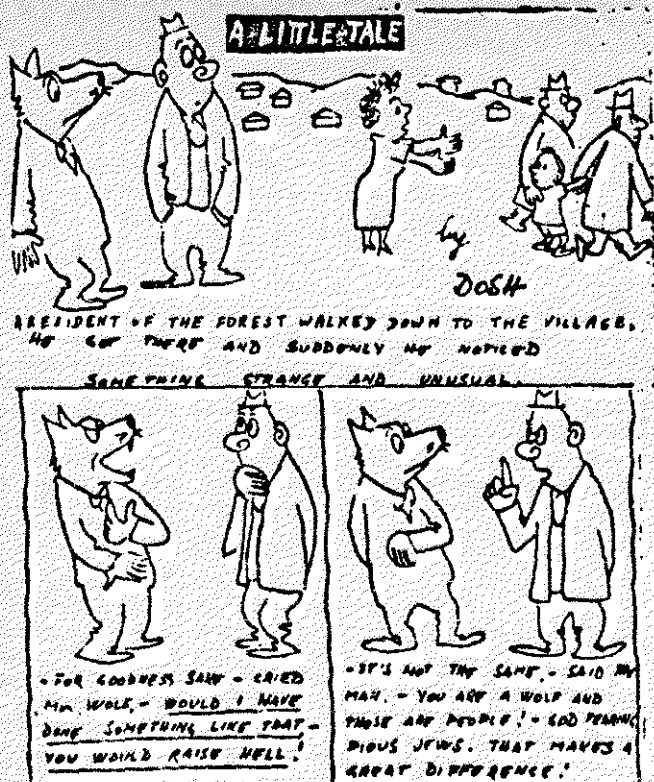
children in Israel, virtually all of the newspapers, in Israel and throughout the world, reported that they had "raided" the mission schools, and their accounts were embroidered with details of assaults on clericals and church property. When the young men were sentenced after trial, Jerusalem Chief Magistrate Elazar Halevy commented that "criminal trespass" was a "serious offence" but went on to state that "the convicted had clean records; had not inflicted damage to person or property; and had obeyed the police when the latter arrived on the scene." *The Jerusalem Post Weekly* duly reported these facts on March 27, 1964. One might have thought that these facts would have closed the case; but the *Post* was far from finished.

In an editorial two weeks later, the *Post* seized upon the day observed in Israel for remembering "our People lost in the Holocaust" to lash out savagely at the "pseudo-martyrs of today . . . the yeshiva students and their supporters who make a display of 'martyrdom' in the State of Israel." Impressed with its own righteousness, the *Post* went on to find the yeshiva students "guilty of distorting the very meaning of Jewish heroism and blurring the sources of contemporary danger to Jewish survival."

The yeshiva students, it will be remembered, demonstrated against the tactics of missionaries in seducing Jewish children; to *The Jerusalem Post*, they therefore rank as a serious threat to national security.

Even this display of unqualified hatred did not sate the *Post's* hunger. On September 4, in a review of the past year, the *Post* returned to the attack, referring to the "raids" on "missionary and other Christian premises" and to the "anti-mission rioters" who "basked in their self-proclaimed martyrdom." The *Post's* own report that the demonstrators were absolved from any charges of "damage to person or to property" does not interfere with their own repetition of the false charges.

Readers of THE JEWISH OBSERVER will recall the facts of the *B'nai Israel* affair (Sept. 1964). *The Jerusalem Post* hastened to make political capitol of the matter. While conceding that "by means of a rather clumsy legal fiction" the *B'nai Israel* had been marrying other Jews "without too much trouble," they quickly declared that, "Halacha placed apparently insuperable obstacles in the lives of many non-religious Israelis and this is regrettable enough." (July 31, 1964)



To the right: a caricature from *Judaism Without Embellishment* published in the Soviet Union, characterizing the religious Jew as one who bribes youth into religion.

Above: a cartoon from *The Jerusalem Post* commenting on the Yossele affair. The wolf, complaining that he couldn't "do something like that," is told: "its not the same . . . you are a wolf and these are people . . . pious Jews. That makes a great difference."

The *journalistische hunt*, as Zvi Greenberg calls them, operate in the United States and Canada through a network of Jewish weeklies read by Jews in New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Chicago, Boston and other metropolitan areas. One of these syndicated writers, in the course of the dispute surrounding the Kashrus of the Zim liner *Shalom*, categorized rabbis and Orthodox leaders who threatened a boycott of the Zim Lines, with those who seek to destroy the State of Israel. They must feel in strange company, he observes, with "the Arab Boycott Office on the same side of the net, but they are playing the same game and against the same opponent. It sounds very much like a case not of phony religious certificates but of questionable religious ethics." (*The Chicago Jewish Sentinel*, Jan. 2, 1964)

The same writer tried to make a case for a *treifa* kitchen aboard the *Shalom* stronger, by jeering "at the sight of grown men threatening to boycott an airline [El Al] because a shipping firm believes that



passengers of differing beliefs should be accommodated on the same vessel." Few American Jews are aware that El Al consistently flies on the *Shabbos*, yet this writer advises his readers that "El Al has had its own arguments with the rabbinate and has ended up by giving way on every one of them."

It is a fascinating index to the Jewishness of this writer that in June 1963, in discussing intermarriage, he confesses, "I am not sure that I would want my children to marry them (Christians)." After telling the sad story of a Christian in Israel who had not been "invited to a Seder" in four years, he finds that the more Orthodox Jews in Israel are most guilty of prejudice towards Christians, and proceeds to equate this with the racial atrocities in Mississippi. Orthodox Jews, he finds, resist any attempt to improve relations with the Christian communities because they "see in every move of this kind another threat to the purity of the race."

An Old Slander

The "purity of race" slander, popular with anti-Semites, dies hard with enlightened Jewish writers. It will be recalled that Haim Cohen, still sitting on Israel's Supreme Court, made the odious comparison between the rabbinic laws on marriage and the Nuremberg laws. In spite of the fact that for instance *Shemaya* and *Avtalyon*, the first generation of teachers in the Mishnah, who were not of Jewish birth, became *Gerai Tzedek* and the teachers of Hillel and Shamai, thereby forging a link in the Divine chain of *Halochah*, the "purity of race" canard is used by hate-mongering Israelis, almost two thousand years later.

As another syndicated writer from Israel who appears weekly in *The National Jewish Post and Opinion* and other Jewish weeklies sees it, there is no "perfect faith," no "perfect justice" and no "true religion" in Israel. Ridiculous as this may seem, all of Israel's religious problems, he insists, may be laid at the feet of the rabbis who threaten boycotts because of "dietary considerations" and who "close airports and halt all rail traffic on the Sabbath." Also creating a bad impression, he writes, is the use of "medieval garb brought from the ancient ghettos of Poland and still worn in the warm, sunny clime of Israel." Most Israelis, he continues, revolt against the "shortsightedness" of Orthodoxy in Israel and deplore the fact that "the great principles of Judaism are being subordinated to trivia." The solution to all this? he asks,— "Is there a Hillel anywhere on the horizon?" Presumably he expects that "a Hillel" would nullify any and all laws which Jews might find uncomfortable and thus leave Israelis free to concentrate on "true religion."

A recurring theme, pounded out by Israeli columnists is the "intolerance" of Orthodox Jews in Israel. One of them, writing in the *Baltimore Jewish Times* (Apr. 10, 1964) finds that "Jews fleeing religious persecution in Europe have established religious intolerance here." Some months earlier this writer had exulted that "here in Israel there is freedom to be a religious renegade and still remain within the ranks of the Jewish people." (Oct. 18, 1963) This same writer, who describes the Sea of Galilee as the place where the founder of Christianity "performed the miracle of the loaves and fishes" rejoices that in Israel he need not "join a synagogue in order 'to belong'."

MEYER LEVIN, THE FAMED AMERICAN NOVELIST, has lived in Israel for some time, making him, to the average American Jewish reader, an unimpeachable source of wisdom. Mr. Levin finds an "absence of moral tone" and a bypassing of "the true, the real function of religion" for two reasons, one of which is for "the sake of income." The theme that rabbis are

dishonest and easily bought has a classical anti-Semitic ring, and Levin drives his point home by charging that Orthodox Jews have the notion that "one can get around the Almighty himself by double-dealing."

Even the *Shabbos*-clock does not escape Levin's wrath, and again produces a classic anti-Semitic argument. "The *Shabbos-goy* attitude presupposes a contempt for the non-Jew. Even when the firelighter becomes electronic, the superior attitude remains." He is especially disturbed by the rabbinate's exclusive control over marriage in Israel which results in "discomforts" and "sometimes . . . wrecked lives." It is pertinent to note that Levin is married to a Catholic woman who proudly proclaims her loyalty to her faith.

Mrs. Levin is the former Tereska Torres, born Jewish and converted to Catholicism by her parents. Her remarkable pronouncements on Israel and Jews were published by *The Jerusalem Post*. Mrs. Levin, who describes herself as a "Jew of Catholic religion," insists that in Israel there are "hundreds of Jews converted to Catholicism who believe passionately in the State of Israel, and who live here, but are frightened to admit their Catholicism openly, because they are worried about their children who may be made to suffer." (Quoted in *The Jewish Spectator*, March, 1963)

We have cited only several examples of the slander which daily "comes forth from Zion." Jews with Catholic wives, Jews who are "not sure" if they wish their children to marry non-Jews, Jews who propagate the "racial purity"-libel, find that Orthodox rabbis are guilty of "questionable ethics," do things "for the sake of income" and that opposition by American Orthodox rabbinical bodies to Reform and particularly Conservatism in Israel, is merely a fear of "competition."

The Jerusalem Post, nominally independent, is considered to be a semi-official organ of the State, or at the very least, to reflect the government's opinions. The Jewish weeklies that are the American pipeline for the *journalistiche hunt* are in many cases published, endowed or supported by local federations and drives which Orthodox Jews contribute to. We must ask ourselves how long we can ourselves be guilty of abetting the enemies of Torah and remaining silent in the face of constant attacks by those who flaunt their hatred and prejudice as though they were banners of honor.

A united Orthodoxy must organize its proven strength to combat and to counteract this monopoly of the news media which poisons the minds of American Jewry. To react to anti-Semitism manufactured in Moscow, while remaining indifferent to hate which pours forth from Zion, is sheer folly.

Assimilation — Two Sides of the Coin

The light that Chanukah sheds on an age-old problem

DURING APPROXIMATELY THE SAME PERIOD THAT Judah Maccabee was raising the banner of armed resistance against the inroads of Hellenism in Judea, another event took place in Alexandria which was of sufficient historic importance to also become immortalized on the Jewish calendar. This event was the translation of the Pentateuch into Greek during the reign of Ptolemy Philometor which became known as the Septuagint. However, while the event marked by the festival of Chanukah made the "good list" to be celebrated as days of "praise and thanksgiving," the eighth day of Teves is recorded in the *Shulchon Aruch* in the infamy column as one suitable for fasting; a day in which "*calamities occurred to the Jewish people*" because that day witnessed the completion of the translation of the Torah into Greek and "*darkness descended upon the world for three days.*"

How can we understand this very negative reaction to what must in some sense be surely considered a great cultural achievement? That this day became an occasion for great rejoicing among the Egyptian Jews and its innovation observed as a holiday with special religious ceremonies is certainly more comprehensible. For surely there is some truth in the words of the historian who said, "*The Greek translation was the first apostle Judaism sent forth to the heathen world to heal it of its perversity and godlessness and was another sanctuary erected to the glory of G-d in a foreign land.*"

What I wish to suggest is that the reaction of Jewish tradition to the Greek translation of the Torah can serve as a pattern in our understanding of the dynamics of that much used and abused term—*assimilation*. The question, as I shall show, resolves itself into the following issue: When shall a specific innovation be considered an attempt to assimilate Torah to some other culture—which is to be opposed, and when shall it be judged a process of assimilating a foreign element to the Torah which is to be permitted?

UNDERSTANDING THE EVENT WHICH TOOK PLACE on the eighth day of Teves can also help us to better comprehend the significance of the event of the 25th of Kislev. For students of history are wont to point out that the Hasmoneans, after defeating the Syrian Greeks on the battlefield, proceeded to incorporate many Greek notions into their own way of life. The

coronation decree of Simon already portrays a strong Hellenistic influence. The army set up by Johanan Hyrcanus followed the Hellenistic model. The court life led by Aristobulus and Alexander Jannaeus was patterned after that of the typical debauched Hellenistic monarch; so that Chanukah itself raises the question of assimilation. Did the Maccabees drive out the Hellenists through the front door only to permit them to enter through the back?

What must be recognized from the outset is that the word "assimilation" denoting "the process of being absorbed or incorporated" is a neutral term denoting something which from the Torah point of view is of and by itself neither desirable nor undesirable. Before one can react, one must have more information. First, one must know what is being assimilated to what? Secondly, one must have as full a picture as possible of the social, religious and political conditions of the times in question.

The Torah does not hesitate to describe how a suggestion by *Yisro*, the Midianite priest, for a system of lower courts is accepted by *Moshe* and assimilated into Jewish life. Even the institution of monarchy in Israel is accepted by the Torah with explicit awareness of the fact that the request for it will be motivated, at least in part, by a desire "to be as all the nations that are about me." Thus the fact that something is "new" or that it emanates from "without" is not a sufficient condition for its rejection by Judaism.

SOMETIMES ANOTHER SORT OF DISTINCTION IS offered as the criterion for judging what sort of assimilation is permissible. It has been maintained, for example, that the instances referred to above are essentially innovations of *form* rather than *content*, of external organization rather than inner substance. So long as the judges meet the Torah requirements and rule by Torah law, the precise method of the judicial organization may be borrowed from elsewhere. Similarly, it has been argued, there is no great concession involved in calling a ruler "king" if he constantly carries the Torah by his side and abides by the special *mitzvohs* given to the king. This same kind of distinction has also been offered to explain *Rambam's* presentation of Jewish ethics in the form of Aristotle's Doctrine of the Mean. For this too can be viewed as merely the adoption of an external principle of organization which

does not really affect the ethical teachings themselves. As one writer recently put it: In leaving Egypt the Jews were able to borrow vessels only, the content was to come from *Moshe*.

In spite of the apparent plausibility of this distinction, I am afraid it is not adequate for our purposes. That a certain innovation is of a formal nature might be a *necessary* condition for its acceptance in Judaism, but it is not a *sufficient* condition. Certain principles of organization might conceivably have to be rejected because they affect the content in a certain adverse way. This was undoubtedly behind the opposition of *Shmuel* to the monarchy and the understanding of those who insist that kingship in Israel is not a *mitzvoh*.

But more important, can one always clearly distinguish between *form* and *content* with the implication that the former is somehow not essential? The rabbis tell us that the Jews merited redemption from Egypt because they did not change their names or their language or their dress. Surely these three conventions are to be regarded more as matters of form than content. Yet their retention is taken as the barometer of the loyalty of the enslaved Jews in Egypt.

Let us return now to a consideration of the case of the translation of the Torah into Greek. There are obviously many difficulties and even dangers involved in translating scripture into another language. Yet, if the ultimate purpose of Torah is to penetrate the hearts and minds of people, the Torah must speak in "the language of men" whatever that language may happen to be. Was not the Torah translated into Aramaic? Did not Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch translate the *Chumosh* into German? And while in our own day we have reservations about certain English translations, we have never opposed translations in principle. Why then the fasting on the eighth day of Teves?

THE ANSWER CANNOT BE FORMULATED SOLELY IN terms of the specific action involved nor in its particular origin, but rather must be seen in the overall social context in which it is to take place and must be accompanied by a projection of the consequences of the proposed action.

Jerusalem considered the Septuagint a tragedy because after gauging the direction taken by Hellenism and the spiritual strength of the Alexandrian Jewish community, it realized that the Greek translation would ultimately replace the original in the hearts of the Jews of the Hellenic world and sever them from the well-springs of their faith.

In spite of the creation of a considerable Hellenist-Jewish literature and the building of vast synagogues and even a temple, the Hellenic Diaspora ultimately succumbed to the pressures of their environment. Alienated from the sources of Torah, they perished.

In the year 24, Alexandrian Jewry alone numbered roughly one million souls! *When Cyril and his monks arose to drive out the Jews in 412, he found a bare 40,000.*

Thus for Jews who know no Hebrew to pray in English while they are making efforts to educate themselves and their children, is fine. But for an entire movement to institutionalize prayer in English so that knowledge of Hebrew becomes unnecessary and is reflected in a Sunday School program which can conveniently ignore Hebrew, is assimilation of the deadliest sort. Prayer in English in itself is innocuous. Much depends upon the direction in which you are headed. One must always ask—"Is this innovation to be employed the better to serve G-d and draw closer to Torah, or to elude Him the more adroitly?"

There is no doubt that in Judea, even among the masses and the Pharises, certain Hellenistic elements were assimilated into the Torah way of life. Almost all of the synagogues dating from the Roman period excavated in Israel were built in the form of the Hellenist-Roman basilica. The pillars and the decorations of the capitals are all provincial adaptations of the Hellenist style. The Hebrew and Aramaic language of the early Talmudic period contain well over two thousand words of Greek and Latin origin. We have retained the Greek name *Sanhedrin* for that great and sacred institution in Jewish life. Even more surprising are the Greek names carried by some of the Pharisaic teachers—*Antigonus of Socho, Dosa ben Hyrcanus, Rabbi Tarphon.*

Was this indicative of a "creeping assimilation?" History answers in the negative. And the inescapable inference seems to be that when a Jewish community is relating to another culture out of a position of strength; when it itself is in creative interaction with Torah and in meaningful pursuit of intensifying its piety and its relationship to G-d, it can then safely assimilate cultural elements providing they are not in conflict with the *Halochah*.

For it should be noted that in absorbing elements from without, Judaism does not really accept them as they are. The poison, as it were, must first be drawn from them. The "convert" must first put on an *arba konfose*. In adopting the Yiddish language, for example, we have in effect assimilated a low-German dialect to Jewish use. Yet in the process, we have done something to raise the German dialect. The Jewish personality has transformed it in use and the infusion of Hebrewisms has sanctified it. Or again, the origin of the *Schtreimel* need not perturb us. In the process of being absorbed into a living Torah milieu, it became something else.

Samson Raphael Hirsch made it quite clear that Judaism does not reject Hellenism in toto. He has shown that Hellenistic culture has an important role to play in the development of mankind; that Greek

civilization is capable of creating and spreading ideas of truth and justice, morality and love. However, while "G-d opens to Japheth the gates of the mind" (יפת ד' ליפת), it is only a single fraction of that truth which some day will bring salvation to mankind. For in order to establish a society based on the rule of Law

See *Samson Raphael Hirsch on Chanukah* on page 20

and a home suffused with the inner discipline of holiness, Judaism is needed—"but He shall dwell in the tents of Shem" (וישכן באהלי שם) so that, while Hellenic idealism is, in a sense, our ally, "as long as it is not wedded to that Hebraic spirit, as long as it prides itself on being sublime and self-sufficient, it falls into error and degeneration."

Yet it is precisely this ambivalent attitude towards Hellenism, this realization that the symmetry of harmony and sensual beauty have a place not only in the world but in Judaism, that makes the spirit of Hellenism so dangerous. For, as one walks in beauty there is always the temptation to forget where you are going and, becoming entranced with beauty, begin to consider its contemplation an end in itself. The beauty of our synagogue, the imagery of our ceremonies, indeed the very physicalism of every religious symbol constantly threatens to detract us from the meaning behind the symbol, the intention behind the words and the Presence behind the ark. The Prophets were iconoclasts because in their day almost every institution sacred to Judaism—ark, temple, sacrifice, Day of the Lord—was at one time or another corrupted by being regarded as an end in itself.

THERE IS, HOEWER, A VERY DRAMATIC WAY IN WHICH the Miracle of Chanukah teaches us the means of

overcoming the blandishments of Hellenism. You recall that the crue of oil found had on it the seal of the High Priest. This, says the *Maharal*, was most significant. For the light that would have the power to penetrate the darkness of Hellenism could only be fed by the holiness of the High Priest. For he alone drew his spiritual inspiration from his awesome entrance once a year into the Holy of Holies where the presence of G-d was manifest. All else in the *Bais Hamikdosh* can be overpowered and rendered unclean by Hellenism. The *Haichol* contains visual objects—*Menorah*, *Shulchon*, altar—so that the distracting allure of external beauty can corrupt and blind. Indeed, the *Maharal* points out that the numerical equivalent of the word Yavan (יָוָן) is 66, while that of *Haichol* (הַיְחֹל) is 65. Hellenism can always triumph over the religiosity that depends upon objects. He, however, who penetrates to the Holy of Holies; he who draws his piety and his religious sustenance from a deep commitment to the unseen reality of G-d Himself, can light a lamp whose rays will banish the shadows of Hellenism.

And thus the *Al Hanisim* prayer reads, "and thereupon thy sons came into the *inner sanctuary* of thy House" (דביר). To overcome Hellenism, to assimilate rather than to be assimilated, they had to first renew their loyalty and reinforce their piety with the sanctity of the Holy of Holies. Only then could they "cleanse the *temple* (היכל), purify thy *holy place* and kindle lights in thy *sacred courts*." So that when the Hasmonian dynasty, "in the vanity of its kingly splendor, alienated from Torah, crumbled and dragged altar and throne to destruction," the people in the communities formed by the Chasidim and the Pharises, fortified by the inner strength of the Chanukah lights, cultivated the Torah and lived on.

On the twelfth of Kislev

Harav Chaim Mordecai Katz

זכר צדיק לברכה

Rosh Yeshiva of Telshe (Wickliffe, Ohio)

passed away, as this issue was being prepared for the press.

An appreciation of the life and works of the great Gaon and world leader of Torah Jewry will appear in our next issue.

Agudath Israel in the United Nations

The following is an adaptation of a radio interview of Dr. Isaac Lewin, distinguished Agudath Israel leader who represents the world organization in the United

Nations. The interview was conducted by Joseph Friedenson, veteran journalist and Editor of DOS YIDDISHE VORT, on October 24, 1964 over Radio Station WEVD.

Q. Agudath Israel is the world body of Orthodox Jewry which deals with the problems of *Klal Yisroel*. Its goal is the solution of all Jewish problems in the spirit of Torah.

Therefore, when Agudath Israel was organized, the program called for the independent representation of Orthodox Jewry in its relations with world governments. It was deemed axiomatic that the secular Jewish bodies could not properly represent all of *Klal Yisroel*, primarily because they could not appreciate the specifically religious problems and secondly because Orthodox Jewry often has its unique approach to the interests of the Jewish people.

In implementation of this policy, Agudath Israel sent its own representatives to the parliaments of many Eastern European countries, such as Poland, Lithuania, Latvia and Rumania, where Agudist deputies wrote a glorious chapter in the defense of Jewish rights. Similarly, Agudah represented Jewish interests at the peace conference following World War I, and later in the League of Nations. In recent years Agudath Israel has played an active role in the United Nations.

In order to acquaint us with the significant work of Agudath Israel in the international arena, we have invited the prominent Agudah leader, Dr. Isaac Lewin, who represents Agudath Israel in the United Nations and who is well-known for his masterful presentations before the various bodies of the world organization. Dr. Lewin, we should first like to ask you, for how long has Agudah been in the U.N. and how did you gain admission?

A. The Charter of the United Nations made provisions in Article 71 for consultation by the Economic and Social Council with non-governmental organizations of an international character, in matters within its competence. A special committee was therefore established, composed of the five major powers, the United States, the Soviet Union, the United Kingdom, France and China, and other countries, which determines which organizations should be granted consultative status. Naturally, such certification brings prestige to the organizations, and offers them opportunities for concrete efforts in areas of prime importance. Admis-

sion to the list of non-governmental organizations (known as N.G.O.'s) accredited to the U.N. is not a simple matter. Agudath Israel, by virtue of its record during several decades and particularly during World War II, achieved accreditation in 1948, and has since been active in the U.N.

Q. What are the activities of an officially accredited organization?

A. The N.G.O.'s participate in all sessions of the Economic and Social Council and its commissions and sub-commissions, which Agudah finds beneficial to Jews and Jewish interests throughout the world. Perhaps the most important commission of the U.N. is the Commission on Human Rights, and its most significant affiliate is the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities. Agudath Israel sits in these bodies together with the most important international groups, and takes an active part in their work.

These groups may participate in the debate, they may submit written statements which are circulated together with the proposals of the various governments. While the N.G.O.'s have no voting rights, they are considered part of the U.N. family and their initiative has often lead to important actions. The personal contacts with government representatives established during sessions also are of great value.

Rights of Refugees

Q. Could you cite some actual achievements of Agudath Israel in the U.N.?

A. Our work has demonstrated to us the importance of our presence in the United Nations, for the entire Jewish people generally and for religious Jewry in particular. In the course of the years we have seen accomplishments of long-range importance. As an example we could cite the formulation of the rights of refugees. For a number of years an Ad Hoc Committee on Statelessness and Related Problems sought to clarify the rights of refugees who escape persecution. You can certainly understand that this subject is quite important to Jews who suffered so greatly during the last war and sought to escape the Nazi-hell. One of the prin-



Annual Conference of non-governmental organizations meeting at the United Nations

United Nations Photo

ciples it was hoped would be accepted was that no refugee should ever be sent back to the country where he had been persecuted. The Committee had before it two proposals; one worked out by the legal experts of the U.N. secretariat and the other presented by the government of France. We realized that the formulation had yet to be improved. We therefore asked for the floor to present our own draft. At the outset we pointed out that the prophet Amos was the first to consider prohibition of sending back refugees a binding rule of international law of his time. He proclaimed that two nations, Philistine Gaza and Phoenician Tyre committed an international crime by expelling refugees to the Kingdom of Edom. The delegate of the United Kingdom was so pleased that he moved the adoption of our proposal as a "working paper" for future debate, with the United States supporting his motion. A technical obstacle—proposals must be circulated in the official languages of the U.N., English, French, Russian and Spanish, and ours was only

available in English—was averted when the Chairman moved the temporary waiving of the four-language requirement, and the motion was unanimously adopted, thereby making our proposal a "working paper." After the session the work began of translating the Agudah proposal into the other three official languages. Interestingly, this was the only case in U.N. history when a proposal by a N.G.O. was used as a "working paper" over the formulation of a member government, or the U.N. secretariat.

Threat to the Shabbos

Q. In which other matters of interest to Jews has Agudath Israel taken a position in the United Nations?

A. Hardly an issue has come up which is of concern to Jewry where our voice has not been heard. Let me cite several examples. India had proposed that the calendar be reformed, whereby the year would be divided evenly into fifty two weeks and the three-

hundred-and-sixty-fifth day would be declared a "blank day," not considered to be a day of the week. As a result of this, the *Shabbos* each year would fall on a different day of the civil week. This would have led to tremendous confusion and made observance of *Shabbos* extremely difficult for many people.

Agudath Israel immediately made representations to the Indian and other delegations in order to remove this threat to the *Shabbos*. At the session of the N.G.O.'s Council Committee we discussed this matter not only in our own name, but we also spoke on behalf of other Jewish organizations. The Economic and Social Council subsequently voted to reject the calendar reform proposal.

We fought for the principle that Jewish children who remained in non-Jewish homes following the war, should be brought up in the faith of their martyred parents. For years we sought to stir the conscience of the world; it was not at all easy to do this. Starting with a small number of governments who supported our position, we have succeeded in increasing their number. As a result of these efforts, this principle is now embodied in a draft international declaration on elimination of religious discrimination which has been adopted by the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities and the Commission on Human Rights.

Protection of Shechita

We fought to protect the right of *Shechita* on the international level. The humane societies, which are very powerful in many countries resisted our efforts. The same world which remained silent in the face of the suffering of million of Jews who were lead to the crematoria, was very much concerned for the welfare of animals. We demonstrated on numerous occasions that *Shechita* is the most humane method of slaughtering animals and we succeeded in winning

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a guarantee for our religious rights in the declaration just mentioned.

At our initiative, the Sub-Commission spent several years in a study of discrimination in the matter of religious rights and practices throughout the world. A delegate of India, Mr. Krishnaswami, reported on the findings of his investigation. We participated actively in this work and the declaration is now on the agenda of the United Nations General Assembly.

We fought for the right of Jews to have access to the *Kosel Maaravi* and other holy places in Arab hands. This matter is now also on the agenda, with a provision in the declaration which would safeguard our rights.

Outlawing Anti-Semitism

Q. And what of the outlawing of anti-Semitism?

A. In this instance we clearly saw a miracle take place. There is rarely a case when a proposal gains the support of both power blocs in the U.N., that is the United States and the Soviet Union. Yet this took place when we proposed the outlawing of anti-Semitism by international agreement. Here is how it happened.

The United Nations is considering an international convention on the elimination of all forms of racial discrimination. We studied the document and took note that all forms of discrimination were mentioned—except anti-Semitism. We therefore prepared a statement on behalf of Agudath Israel which outlined historically the horrible troubles caused by anti-Semitism. We recalled the murder of six million Jews during World War II—and asked, "is this not enough?"—in order to prove to the governments the need for a clear statement on anti-Semitism. Several delegates from other Jewish N.G.O.'s with whom I consulted in this matter had doubts whether any government would endorse a clear denunciation of anti-Semitism. Nevertheless, I felt it my duty to demand justice for Jews. When I completed by presentation, the American delegate, Mrs. Marietta Tree rose and formally moved the addition of anti-Semitism to those forms of discrimination specifically denounced in the draft. She was followed by the delegates of ten nations which supported Agudah's position. The final speaker was the Soviet delegate, Ambassador Morozov, who also agreed in principle but proposed that Neo-Nazism be added to the list. This is how the unexpected took place; the proposal of Agudath Israel brought a unanimous condemnation of anti-Semitism by the United Nations.

While final adoption of the resolution awaits the approval of the next General Assembly, there is strong hope that it will be passed. In the age-long struggle of the Jewish people against their enemies, this is the very first time that an international body spoke out so firmly against anti-Semitism.

A Letter from Israel

Conscription of women still a live issue in the Holy Land

THE CONSCRIPTION of women for military service, one of the most contested steps taken by the State of Israel, is still a live issue. "Drafting of women was a mistake of historic proportions," Rabbi Shlomo Lorincz, M. K. told the Knesset on October 28, "but the worst mistake is that we are not prepared to reevaluate the original error and undo it." Rabbi Lorincz had presented a bill on behalf of Agudath Israel to repeal *Giyus Nashim*, but his motion for debate was defeated by a voice vote joined by all parties. The National Religious Party (Mizrachi) and Poale Agudah abstained.

"I speak first, in the name of the 40,000 citizens who sent us to express their opinions in the Knesset," Rabbi Lorincz declared. So great a number of citizens, demand that their voice be heard, and not simply met by shouting and ridicule, without even the need for examining the issue. These people represent in a historical sense, more than their mere percentage of the citizenry.

"In addition, I am certain that I speak not only for my own constituency, but also for all of Jewry to whom Torah is the sole guide. I also believe that I speak for most, if not all of Sephardic Jewry who are especially sensitive to the conscription of women."

Lorincz stated two axioms upon which he based his argument.

- Agudath Israel opposed the law when it was adopted 15 years ago in spite of the provision that women need not serve in the military who found it violated their religious principles, because all Jewish women are equal. It is not fitting to impose

upon them obligations that are contrary to Torah and opposed to the nature of woman generally and the Jewish woman in particular.

- Agudath Israel has never ceased to hope that even those who proposed female conscription as an emergency measure would one day see the need for its abolition.

He listed the following changes since the bill was enacted:

- an increase in the number of draftees which will continue to grow and should make possible the release of women from military service;

- greater emphasis on technological warfare which diminishes the need for manpower. Repeal of conscription of women would release budgetary funds for meeting the threat posed by German scientists working in Egypt.

Rabbi Lorincz argued that abolition of female conscription would remove the fear that Arab countries might draft women, something they are reluctant to do. He also cited the declining birth-rate in Israel due to the fact that military service creates an atmosphere not conducive to Jewish motherhood. Making women available to the general economy rather than to the military, he argued further, would help to solve the current shortage of civilian manpower.

In his motion, Rabbi Lorincz proposed the formation of an objective commission which would study all of the factors involved and make a recommendation to the Knesset.

Deputy Defense Minister Shimon

Peres, replying for the government, said he would not discuss the halachic aspect of the law. "There are however members of the Knesset as qualified as he (Lorincz) is who found no objection to *Giyus Nashim*," Peres declared. (Every religious authority in Israel, including the Chief Rabbinate, has ruled that conscripting women is a clear violation of Torah law.) He saw no need for a study commission since the various government departments concerned had already investigated the matter.

Peres underlined his government's awareness of responsibility to the "forty thousand citizens" which manifests itself in the provision of the law which releases women who object to military service on religious grounds.

In disputing Peres' rebuttal Rabbi Lorincz stated that while other nations had made use of women in the military during national emergencies, no country other than Israel had ever instituted compulsory military service for women. He clarified his call for an "objective" study committee by pointing to the many facets of the problem which could not be examined from a military perspective alone.

An amusing exchange ended the debate. The chairman asked for a show of hands of those who had abstained during the vote. Four members of the National Religious Party raised their hands. When asked if they would care to record the reasons for their abstention they shrugged their shoulders and made it clear to the chairman that they were unhappy about the question.

Three Missing Words

On the lost art of living in Eternity

THE ABILITY TO COMMUNICATE with one's fellow distinguishes man from the beast. *Koach Hadibur*, the power of speech, the ability to express one's feelings, emotions, ideas, needs and aspirations, in words, so that others may be aware of them, is one of the most wonderous gifts of G-d to man. The manner in which this divine ability is used is the measure of a man.

To the Jew, this power is of even greater significance. It makes it possible for him to receive the teachings of Torah as spoken to him by his teachers and as recorded in the *Sifrai Kodesh*. And as the words he uses are the measure of a man, so too are they the measure of a Jew.

From the words that are part of the every-day vocabulary of a man, one can determine what his values are; what is important to him; what he seeks in his life.

While the new vibrance that has been manifest in Torah life has restored to Jewish life some basic Torah concepts and the words and phrases to describe them, there is also evident the absence in the every-day vocabulary of the average Torah Jew, of some of the words most basic to Torah life and Torah values. We will list only three of them—we hope to list more in the future—and seek the meaning of their relative absence and the symptoms their absence represents.

The Concept of Hashlomo

In the Book of *B'raishis* we are told of the pending creation of man in the words, *Na'ase Odom*, "Let us make Man." The use of the plural has misled many students of the "Bible." The Sages characteristically realized that the text conceals—rather reveals—a rule of human behavior. The Almighty, they tell us, consulted with the angels and other beings already created, when he contemplated the creation of Man. The Torah thereby teaches us that one should consult with his subordinates even though the chain of command does not demand that he do so.

The Chassidic work *Yismach Moshe* extracts still another teaching from G-d's use of the words, "Let us make Man." The Almighty, he suggests, was addressing himself to man in potential and said, Let us together make Man.

In essence *Hakodosh Baruch Hu* presents to each human being the raw material of the *neshoma* and its rich potential; He presents to the Jew the instrument

of Torah and Mitzvohs with which Man may fashion a truly sublime human being, only a bit lower than the angels, and if he is worthy—even greater, because he exercises Free Will. At the heart of Torah and *Mitzvohs* is man's obligation to so live his life, that he is in a constant state of growth, *Hashlomo*; that he is constantly coming closer to *Hashem*.

To the Jew this striving has always been central to his being; it has ever been the criteria for determining his path in life. When confronted by a cross-road where either path seems to bear the sanction of Torah, the final determinant must be *Hashlomo*; the final question to be answered is: Which path will lead me to greater spiritual growth and further closeness to *Hashem*?

It is this striving for *Hashlomo* that placed study of Torah into the central position it occupied in Jewish life through the centuries. What act could more immediately and meaningfully contribute to one's *Hashlomo* than being in contact with the Will of G-d as manifest in His Torah. It was the goal of *Hashlomo* that gave vitality and vibrance to *T'fila* (prayer) not only as a means of expressing one's needs to the Creator but also as a means of keeping in tune with the Divine Will and thereby experiencing growth. It was the yearning for *neshoma*-growth that was central to the flow of warmth, kindness and love which was the mark of the Torah Jew and which colored his relationships with his fellow man.

In practical terms, it was the need for *Hashlomo* which determined how a Jew should occupy his years in this life and how he should earn his livelihood. In contrast, today the young man, sometimes even the *Ben Torah*, on the threshold of a career (a word alien to Torah) concerns himself with the manner in which he can enter his chosen profession and yet remain true to Torah and Mitzvohs, that is, how he can be a doctor, a merchant, an engineer, without violating the letter of Torah law.

The Knowledge of Geula

Geula—the hope, the dream, the firm belief which kept the Jew alive during his darkest hours, was the promise of the prophets of the coming of *Moshiach* who in turn would bring the *Geula*, the redemption of Israel and of all mankind. The false messiahs, though they brought tragic results, manifested strongly the

Jew's eagerness to believe, his unquenchable hope for *Geula*. As he strove for *Hashlomo* in his own life, so he prayed that the *Klal* would soon merit *Geula*.

It was said of the sainted *Chofetz Chaim*, that when he heard a commotion in the streets, he would grasp his walking-stick and look out the window to see if *Moshiach* was coming. He often quoted the promise of the Sages that just as the redemption from Egypt came in the month of Nissan, so too would the final *Geula* come during this month. This means, he said, that during each Nissan there is at least an even chance that *Moshiach* would come, and even on that basis we should make preparations for his coming.

In our day, though the *Geula* is obviously closer, and the need even greater, few of us have retained the firmness of believe, not only of a *Chofetz Chaim*, but of our grandmothers and grandfathers. We often hear people characterize an unlikely event as taking place, "when *Moshiach* will come," testifying to a lapse in our belief. The word, the concept, the hope for *Geula* must some how be restored to Jewish life.

Living in Eternity

Our failure to think in categories of *Hashlomo*; our weakened faith in the coming of the *Geula* can perhaps be attributed to the absence of still another word from our Torah vocabulary, *Nitzchius* (eternity). We live only in the present; we have lost our father's and mother's ability to live at once in the past, present and future; in a word—in *Nitzchius*.

Hashlomo, the search for *neshomo*-growth can have meaning only when we free ourselves of the constricting force of living merely in the present; only when we achieve the awareness that our lives point to—eternity.

It is this self-same awareness of eternity that can win back for us the longing for *Geula*, without which we can not be worthy of its coming.

Of course, these words, these concepts and the many others which are absent from our every-day speech have found a refuge, as Torah itself has found a refuge. They are to be found in the walls of the *Bais Medrash*, on the lips of the *B'nai Torah* whose constant exposure to the purity of Torah brings with it the sense of *Nitzchius*. But for those of us not sufficiently blessed to be confined to the "four *amos* of Torah" these words are only an echo.

Somehow, somehow, these words, these concepts must overflow the walls of the *Bais Medrash* and become the common possession of every believing Jew. The search for *Hashlomo*, the yearning for *Geula*, the capacity for *Nitzchius* must become ours. And by their very nature, sharing them with those outside the *Bais Medrash* will not diminish the share of those inside, it will rather multiply their blessings; increase their own measure of *Hashlomo*, and bring ever closer the footsteps of *Moshiach Tzidkainu*.

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BOOK REVIEW

Translations of Torah Classics

WHILE EMPIRES AND CIVILIZATIONS HAVE RISEN AND fallen on the stage of world history, the Jewish people has endured throughout the ages. Yet Jewish history, too, has witnessed change: centers of settlement and Torah learning emerged—to decline and be replaced by new centers. We have seen this process at work in our own lifetime—mourning the unimaginable catastrophe that befell Eastern European Jewry, and rejoicing at the new seeds, albeit still weak, that have been sown over the last decades.

Among those that have always contributed in varying degrees to the reconstruction of Jewish life under new conditions may be counted the translators. To be sure, no translation can ever take the place of any of the major and minor classics of our sacred heritage in their original Hebrew form; true Jewish scholarship, if it is to be authoritative, creative, and self-perpetuating, must be based on the study of the original texts.

However, in the first place, there are basic works of our Rabbinic literature that were not originally composed in Hebrew and only became accessible to all generations when they were translated into Hebrew—some of the writings of the *Rambam*, for instance, or of Rabbi Yehudah Halevi. In our days the lifework of a man who has a great deal to say to our age would remain a sealed book were it not for the devoted translators of the writings of Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch.

In the second place, while Rabbinic literature, with very rare exceptions, is of course available in Hebrew texts, there is a further crucial function that the translator discharges: introducing a wider public to its treasures. Until such time—and may it come very soon—when the road to the original text is open to every Jew, it falls to the translator to make available to all at least some glimpses of our great treasures that would otherwise remain inaccessible. It is therefore to be welcomed that an ever-increasing number of significant works of Torah literature have lately become available in English.

I am not referring here to such major efforts as the Talmud and Zohar translations of the Soncino Press, or the translation of the entire *Yad Hachasokoh* in the Yale Judaica series. Without going into the merits of these editions, it should be obvious that the major obstacle to a proper understanding and meaningful study of these works is not the language, and therefore even the best translations will always have a very limited function. After all, the highest purpose of the

translated work is to convey to the reader some true and adequate conception of the original; to stimulate his interest and insight; to provide at least some of the main ideas of the original; and to furnish guidance for further study.

From the point of view of the actual furtherance of Torah study, much more significance must be ascribed to the publication of such works as Dr. Silverman's edition of the *Chumash*, with the English translation of *Rashi* facing the Hebrew text on every page. A most welcome and valuable addition to this type of Torah literature is the reissue, in two volumes, of Dr. Hyamson's classical edition of the *Chovos Halevovos* by Rabbi Bachya Ibn Pakuda.

Written about 900 years ago, this work always was one of the most popular and beloved expositions of the "duties of the heart" which a Jew must take upon himself. Unlike the great philosophical treatises of the Middle Ages, the *Chovos Halevovos* was not written to counter any non-Jewish philosophies; it was meant to introduce the ordinary Jew to such themes as trust in G-d and devotion to Him, humility and self-perfection in His service. Thus it will occasion no surprise that in many communities of Eastern Europe, until our times, there were special study groups devoted to this work. However, its language is difficult, and thus Dr. Hyamson's translation, facing the Hebrew text on each page, is a boon to the student.

The publishers of this work, *Boys' Town of Jerusalem*, have also issued another of Dr. Hyamson's efforts—the Hebrew text and English translation of the first two books of the *Rambam's Yad Hachasokoh*, the Book of Knowledge and the Book of Adoration (as Dr. Hyamson chose to translate *Sefer Ahavoh*).

These two volumes contain most of the ideological concepts of Judaism presented in the *Yad Hachasokoh*, in contrast to the rest of the work which is much more technical. Of particular interest to the student will be the *Rambam's* introduction in which he traces the history of the Law.

Of course, many other medieval Jewish classics have been published in translation—and it is instructive to consider the pitfalls encountered in those cases where the editors are not scholars committed to Torah. The other day there appeared, for instance, *The Fountain of Life*, by Rabbi Shlomoh Ibn Gabirol, "an especially abridged edition," published by the *Philosophical Library*, with a preface by Theodore E. James. The interest of this treatise, which never made any impact on the Jewish world, lies in the fact that, translated into Latin, and with its authorship ascribed to a mysterious *Avicebron*, it exerted major influence on non-Jewish theology. The edition before us contains only excerpts from the third and middle section of the original work; the brief introduction, however, very sweepingly deals with the entire treatise, presenting it as rather

"non-Jewish" in its outlook, as far as its concepts of the First Cause, of emanations, form and matter etc. are concerned—without, apparently, any awareness on the part of the author of the introduction that Ibn Gabirol deals here with principles basic to the teachings of *Kabbalah* which are fundamental to the very foundations of the Jewish worldview. Thus the reader is confused and misled.

IT MUST BE REALIZED THAT, WITH THE BEST WILL in the world, a translator or editor who stands outside the pale of Torah teachings faces unsurmountable obstacles in trying to do justice to his subject. There are his unavoidable limitations of knowledge and real understanding of Rabbinic sources; and there are also, much more importantly, the preconceptions and changing modes of interpretation which, consciously or unconsciously, he is bound to inject into his work. We can see these problems not only in connection with medieval Jewish literature but also where translations of Talmudic sources are concerned.

A number of excellent works exist in this area, and open up to the reader an insight into the wisdom of the Rabbis. Thus Rabbi Kasher's *Torah Shelemoh*, in its English edition provides an insight into the teachings of the *Midrash Pirkai Ovos* have been translated repeatedly, most recently in Irving Bunim's *Ethics from Sinai*. On the other hand, we have before us the *The Midrash on Psalms*, translated by William G. Braude, and part of the Yale Judaica series; the translation is very readable and technically excellent—but what reliance can be placed on it, and on the many decisions concerning textual emendations, obscure passages, etc. which are involved in such a translation, when the author so glaringly reveals his own distance from the subject he treats? Throughout, he speaks of the "legends" of the Rabbis, and he calls *Aicho* "attributed to Jeremiah" (vol. 2, p. 517). With such an approach it is no wonder that inaccuracies abound.

While translations of ancient and medieval Rabbinic works have been produced for quite some years, it is only lately that writings from the more recent past have come into their own. The translation of the various works of Rabbi S. R. Hirsch, which was mentioned earlier, is of course in a category by itself, both on account of the scope of this undertaking and its impact on the Jewish scene. But there is a growing body of writings that, each in its way, make a significant contribution to the true understanding of Torah Judaism.

Of particular interest must be, of course, the recent publication of the *Chofetz Chayim's Chomas Hadas* under the name of "The Fortress of Faith," translated by Rabbi S. E. Brog. In moving and persuasive fashion, the author talks about the duty of every Jew "to strengthen himself and others to study the Torah

and to observe the *Mitzvos*, and that in every city there should be organizations of men who should watch over this. . . ." With his usual warmth and clarity, he outlines the concrete steps to be taken, in an age of decreasing Torah knowledge, to assure the adherence of every individual and of the entire people to Torah—pointing out that at a time such as this everybody is responsible for using all his G-d-given talents in order to work for Torah.

A number of books have appeared that are designed to aid the better understanding and observance of *Mitzvos*. There is the English edition of Dr. Munk's commentary on the *Siddur*, "The World of Prayers," translated by H. Biberfeld and G. Hirschler, previously reviewed. There is Rabbi Nathan Bulman's translation of Avrohom Kitov's splendid work on the Jewish home, *Ish Uvayso*. Quite some years ago there appeared an English translation of *The Days of Awe*, Agnon's selection of Rabbinic thought on the *Yomim Noroim* which captured so well the spirit of these days.

In a very different vein, but of great importance is the recent publication by P. Feldheim of Rabbi Tzvi Hirsch Chajes' *M'voh Hatalmud* in an English translation by Rabbi J. Shachter called "Student's Guide Through the Talmud." Despite this name it is not a guide to Talmud study but rather an exposition of the fundamental parts of the Oral Law, both its divinely revealed parts and those additions ordained by the Rabbis. At a time when it is popular to speak of the evolution of Jewish law—and to demand further changes—this clarification of its principles and dynamics is most valuable, even though issue should be taken with some of the translator's approaches in his introduction and footnotes.

Whether through clarification of what Torah means, or as aids to the observance of Torah, translations of Torah literature have an important role to play at this juncture in our history. It is to be hoped that we will continue to see such publications appear.

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Samson Raphael Hirsch on Chanukah

The following selections are from Samson Raphael Hirsch's JUDAISM ETERNAL translated from the original German by Dayan Dr. I. Grunfeld and published in 1959 by THE SONCINO PRESS.

ON THE EVE OF THE 25th of Kislev you kindle the first Chanukah light in your home, and for eight days with greeting of the ever-increasing light, the memory of an old story, of ancient times crosses the threshold of your mind.

Is it still the same old story? Do, then, the Jewish dead never die? Does the Jewish past never fade away?

No, the Jewish dead do not die. One who has died for Jewry, nay, one who has lived for the cause of Jewry, can never die; in eternal gratitude a people which knows how to value its past heroes cherishes his memory and past history; Jewish history in all its grandeur accosts every coming generation, ever fresh and ever new, to remind, to warn, to comfort and to elevate.

And now just this story—oh, that it were indeed old, if with its sorrow and its glory it would after 2,000 years be so old to us that its sorrow might seem incomprehensible to us, and its glory commonplace!

"But Joshua preferred to be called Jason, just as his younger brother (they succeeded one another as High Priest) preferred to be called Menelaus instead of Chonyah. Now, when Menelaus together with the sons of Tobias had (in the dispute with his brother over the office of the High Priest) to yield to this violence, they approached the King Antiochus, and offered to throw off immediately their Jewish laws and customs, and to conduct themselves in accordance with the statutes and customs of the king and the Greeks. They, therefore, asked permission to erect a Greek college in the city of Jerusalem, and when it was granted they let their foreskins grow, so that even when naked they might appear quite similar to the Greeks; and thus abandoning all the customs of their forefathers they adopted the habits of foreign people." (Josephus, Ant. Bk. 12, 5. 1)

Is this a story of the past? . . .

IF RELIGIOUS DECADENCE IN THE JEWISH SPHERE fills you with grief and sorrow, if you are nigh to despair of our future, if in fear you exclaim "Has there ever been so gruesome a situation in Israel," then consider this story; see how once before, 2,000 years ago, High Priests, men entrusted with what is most sacred in Jewry, with the highest religious office,

were themselves the first to betray G-d and His Holy Law, to woo the favor of kings by religious treachery, seducing the Jewish nation and its youth. They vied with the well-to-do and the educated of their people in contempt of the Divine laws and of Jewish morals, in honoring and adopting un-Jewish ways and un-Jewish culture—see how already thousands of years ago, the alluring light of culture and political advantage, in the shape of civic rights, has been employed by Israel's seducers to tempt them to revolt against G-d and His holy word. Yet observe how this epoch of betrayal and revolt was left behind, and how it was succeeded by the centuries, millennia of faithfulness, of devotion and self-sacrifice for G-d and Judaism; and learn from this to look to the future with confidence.

For you must note that this revolt of which voices of the past have just given an account, this revolt was not one provoked from without, it was not the consequence of Antiochus's wild attack on Judaism; this revolt of the Jewish teachers of G-d's Law and of the upper classes of society in Judea, was voluntary, it preceded the frenzy of the King; it was, strictly speaking, the actual cause, the real origin of the subsequent fanatical anti-Jewish outbreak. Not in his wildest dreams would it have occurred to Antiochus to convert Jews from Judaism to Greek culture, had not Jews and priests of Jewry disclosed to him that Judaism no longer held a first place in their heart, that they were only waiting for the royal command to place Zeus on the altar of the Eternal, and that at the same time the common people, the lower classes, could be easily lured into the other camp—or made to suffer martyrdom if they refused. Similarly even in the darkest centuries of persecution, it has never entered the mind of any despot to "reform" Jews and Jewry.

JEWRY WAS PERSECUTED, BUT EVERYONE BELIEVED that Judaism was everlasting. It required nineteenth-century priests and disciples to set the spectacle of disloyal Jews before the eyes of princes and people, before any statesman conceived the idea of reforming Jewry by means of decrees and legal measures. It is only natural; respect yourself, respect your past, respect your own sanctuary, and you will see that whatever opinion is held of you, whether you are regarded with favor or with disfavor—respect will not be denied you. But if you do not respect yourself, if you look contemptuously on the tombs of your ancestors, if you no longer consider your sanctuary worthy of respect even of recognition—how can you demand that a stranger shall respect you, or respect your fathers? You may find many things in the world, but for respect you will beg in vain.

What was the mistake made by these *men of progress, men of culture, priests of reform*, the political traffickers in religion of the time of Antiochus in Judea? Listen to the illuminating tale of the Chanukah lights:

"The renegade sons of Judea had gone to such lengths that the Greeks themselves finally dishonored the divine sanctuary by using it as a temple for Zeus. They had profaned all oil intended for the sacred lamp of G-d. The victorious Hasmoneans found but one small crucible undesecrated; and it was enough for only one day. But in this one crucible was revealed the miraculous salvation of Divine power. For eight days the lamp was tended with it, until fresh pure oil could be prepared."

One single pure spark, loyally treasured in but one single Jewish heart, is sufficient for G-d to set aflame

once more the whole spirit of Judaism. And if all the oil, if all the forces that were to have preserved the light of G-d in Israel, were to be misused for the light of paganism—even then, one little crucible of oil, one heart which in a forgotten hidden corner, imprinted with the High Priest's seal has faithfully remained untouched and undefiled, this one crucible is sufficient to become the salvation of the entire sanctuary when the right time and hour has come. *"And even though all countries were bowed in obedience to Antiochus, if every man forsook the land of his fathers and assented to the king's command, even then, I and my sons and brothers will not forsake the laws of our fathers"*—thus spoke the loyal Hasmonean heart of one single hero advanced in years—and Israel's sanctuary was saved.

HELLENISM, JUDAISM AND ROME

KISLEV WITH ITS GAY FESTIVAL of lights, of the reconsecration of the Temple which the spirit of the Hasmoneans and the courage of the Maccabees had won; Tebeth with its first day of remembrance which marks the downfall of the Jewish Temple and state in all their glory; Kislev with its triumph over the Hellenic spirit, Tebeth with its defeat by Roman politics—this sequence of events is a challenge to serious reflection. It presents, for our consideration, the following thesis: It is not Hellas [Greece] that Judaism has to fear, but Rome. It is not the Hellenic spirit that caused the downfall of all that is sacred to Judah, but the Roman mind and Roman tendencies . . .

And, indeed, Israel can rejoice wherever the Hellenic spirit of civilization extends its realm among mankind. For this civilization in its pure essence is nothing but the flower of the highest development of human nature left to itself. From it Israel's mission to mankind has nothing to fear; on the contrary, it will thrive on it. The spirit of the religious Doctrine and the Law which mankind is destined to receive from the hands of Israel expects the mind and soul not to sink into a state of ignorance and dullness but to be enlightened and full of life. Only the enlightened mind is receptive to the light of the Jewish teaching; only the soul ennobled by freedom is receptive to the blissful life of the Law.

It is true, Israel also knows the trials and tribulations which the Hellenic spirit of civilization imposes on it, as it develops by its side. The times of Mattathias were not to remain the only ones in which that spirit—still developing, still immature, in its understandable overweening estimation of itself and pretentious vanity—believed in its own vocation to educate the house of Jacob which eluded its comprehension . . .

All that is sacred to Israel has nothing to fear from the spirit of human culture which originated in Hellas.

Israel has always welcomed the Hellenic spirit as a precursor and helpmeet of its own mission to enlighten and civilize mankind and likewise has wedded itself to the truth and humanity produced by that spirit. And although that spirit, with its immaturity and its excesses, occasionally, as in the days of Mattathias, has also caused confusion within Israel, the "Light of the Jewish Tents" has again and again triumphed anew and always led to a new Chanukah, to a new consecration of its old, undiminished, eternal Sanctuaries.

DIFFERENT IS ROME'S RELATIONSHIP TO Israel and all that it holds sacred—Rome, whose overwhelming onslaught spelt for Jerusalem the beginning of the catastrophe which is commemorated on the tenth day of Tebeth.

It was not Roman valour that triumphed over Jewish valour. The Jew can be proud of the catastrophe which meant his political annihilation. The valiant heroism of the men of Judea—striving so little for martial glory—the inexhaustible resourcefulness of their strategy, their cold-blooded defiance of death, their bravery, nay, their invincibility perplexed the Roman Emperors and their legions accustomed to conquest. It was not Rome's sword that triumphed over Judea.

It was the spirit of Roman politics which ever since Pompey had ensnared the all-too-willingly compliant heads of Judea's people; the Roman ideas and tendencies which had become more and more familiar especially among the political leadership of the Jewish state and had supplanted the Jewish spirit—it was all these that undermined the Jewish Sanctuary, that imposed Roman hirelings as kings on free Judea and that had made of Judea a "captive" of Rome long before the hand of the legionaries threw the fatal firebrand into the Jewish Capitol.

It is this Roman spirit which Israel has got to know if it wants to realize who is its most redoubtable enemy.

Whereas the Hellenes had safely enjoyed, from an early date, their own soil, sufficient for their peaceful development, where they could flourish under a serene sky and bring to fruition all that is noble in man, Rome's cradle, to speak in the tradition of our forefathers bears the inscription: על חרבך תחי, "Your sword is your soil."

The origin from which Rome was to grow into a giant was so insignificant, such an insecure foundation, that only the sword could make something of it; the sword which, once successfully brandished, would never willingly return to its scabbard. What the sword had conquered, only the sword could preserve, only the sword could enlarge. Whereas Hellas took recourse to the sword only in its prime and for its own defence, Rome's prime, even its mere existence, was the product of armed power, of cunning, rapacious force. Obadiah's words (1.2,3), "Behold, I have made thee small among the heathen: thou art greatly despised. The pride of thine heart has deceived thee, thou that dwellest in the clefts of the rock, whose habitation is high; that saith in his heart, Who shall bring me down to the ground?" were applied to Rome by the poignant perspicacity of the Jewish sages—Rome which devoid of national roots of its own, בלא כתב ובלא לשון (Aboda Zara 10), had climbed the rocky heights of such political eminence only by means of violent presumptuousness.

THUS ROME'S ESSENTIAL CHARACTER, IN CONTRAST to Hellas's idealistic outlook, bears the stamp of blatant materialism. Its aim was the aggrandisement of material possessions; and glory and might themselves were only a means towards it. Usefulness was the measure of things and actions. Rome had neither time nor inclination for anything that might elevate the mind and lead the soul to a noble, freer development, for anything that might render man more human, and only insofar as these nobler things of the spirit appeared necessary, or, at least, useful for the preservation and furtherance of the base, material things, did those higher and nobler things become significant factors in the calculations of Roman wisdom . . .

IT WAS AT THIS TIME of greatest degradation that the state of Judah first came into conflict with the Roman autocrats. Two brothers of the House of the Hasmoneans who were disputing the throne, which moreover, had been usurped, called upon one of the Roman legates, advancing at the head of his legions, to act as arbitrator. A third claimant also appeared—the people accused both of them that they, or rather their House, by usurping royal honours alien to the

Jewish institutions, had violated the people's most cherished rights and had endangered all that it held sacred.

At the very moment when Pompey's legate, Scaurus, saw Jewish envoys before him, some 130 years before the fall of Jerusalem, Jerusalem was lost. From that moment Rome did not take her eyes off Judea. While, through their Governors and the hirelings raised by them to the rank of princes, they sucked the blood of Judea, they inoculated Judea's princes and grandees with the spirit of their system, plunged them all into the sink of sensual debauchery and taught them at the same time to misuse religion, temple, priesthood, the judiciary, fatherland and their status as princes, as mere tools and means of power and self-aggrandisement, and to degrade everything holy and pure, everything great and divine to the role of counters in egotistic petty jobbery.

The spirit of Rome had banished the soul from the Jewish temple, and because of this the Majesty of G-d delivered up the temple and priests, king and throne in anger to the Roman legions and, with the faithful people, went into exile.

Let, therefore, the days in the Jewish Calendar that commemorate the downfall be to us a warning against the Roman spirit.

Not Hellenic idealism, but Roman materialism, is what we have to fear . . .

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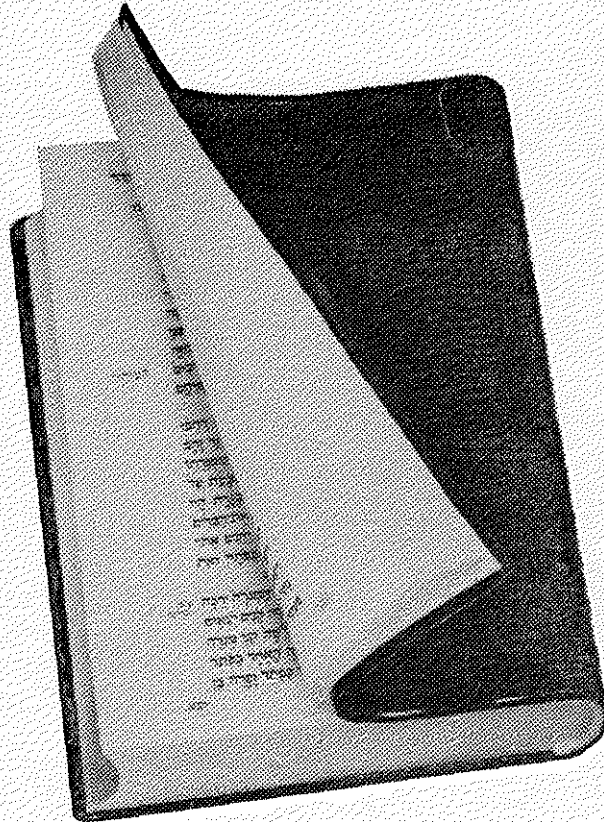
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In spite of the fantastic advances in American technology and the growing availability of sophisticated communications machines, the relatively simple mimeograph machine continues to play a major role in forming the opinions of American Jewry. The machine grinds out its copies; they are mailed to editors throughout the country and the official Jewish "position" finds its way into print; in most cases with hardly even the change of a comma to a semi-colon.

Whoever chooses to differ with the official position incurs the wrath of the mimeograph machine, which spouts fourth such phrases as "enemy of Israel" and calls for undivided allegiance to the State and to "Jewish unity."

This pattern may be changing however; a long-standing critic of Orthodox criticism of the State has decreed that disagreement with the State of Israel is no longer treasonable. Writing in *The Jewish Digest* (November 1964) Dr. Morris N. Kertzer declares, "It is, in a way, a great tribute to the strength and maturity of Israel that the shortcomings of the new nation can now be admitted, discussed—even criticized without hysteria in either New York or Jerusalem."

Of course, Dr. Kertzer is prompted to this open-mindedness by a series of critical articles which appeared in a non-Orthodox publication, *The Reconstructionist*. "How truly gratifying it is", he writes, "that friends of Israel can risk this kind of criticism in 1964—something which would have been unthinkable a decade ago. We American Jews know that Israel has come of age, that she is aware rebuke is not rejection."

Until we hear to the contrary, we will assume that this dispensation applies equally for Orthodox critics of the State of Israel. □

The mimeograph machine has

other powers that most of us are not aware of. A front-page story in *The Day-Jewish Journal* (Oct. 28, 1964) reporting a protest march to the Soviet U.N. delegation opens with the words (obviously from a press release) "Two thousand and five hundred Jewish leaders will carry out a silent march today, to the Soviet Embassy at the United Nations to protest against religious and cultural persecution of the three million Jews in the Soviet Union."

Anyone who has had the slightest contact with Jewish communal work knows how difficult it is to assemble twenty-five Jewish leaders at any given time; how foolhardy it would be to attempt to assemble two hundred and fifty; how impossible it

SECOND LOOKS

at the Jewish scene

would be to gather 2,500 such leaders, assuming there are that many. But . . . the magic of the mimeograph machine makes this possible by creating "Jewish leaders"; revealing the readiness of "Jewish leaders" to make capital of the plight of Soviet Jewry, to enhance their personal and organizational prestige.

Even more revealing of the motives of the "2500 Jewish Leaders" is the priority of their demands on behalf of Soviet Jews. They ask for: "Jewish cultural activities, an independent theater, book-publishing, concerts, and also, study of

Hebrew, training of rabbis and *chazonim*, printing of *sepharim*, contacts with other Jews in the world, and permitting other practices and traditions now banned in the Soviet Union."

We can understand the concern of secularist groups, who fight religion in this country and in Israel, for Jewish theater and concerts, which at best would have an atheistic orientation. However we fail to understand how our Orthodox brethren, associated with the protest, can subscribe to such shallow demands on behalf of our Russian brothers. Surely the greater availability of the works of *Sholom Aleichem* in books and on the stage can not play any role in the survival of Russian Jewry. □

One would have thought that Jewish organizations had exhausted all possible ridiculous reactions to the Vatican Council which met in Rome. As we write these words there lies on our desk another product of the mimeograph machine, this one from the American Council for Judaism. Here absurdity reaches the ultimate . . . we hope.

While the world was led to believe that the Vatican Council was the brain-child of the late Pope John XXIII, the Council for Judaism now tells us it was actually the idea of one, Chaplain David Goldberg, who in June 1930 wrote an article in the *B'nai Brith Magazine* which ". . . dealt directly with the problem of anti-Semitism and improved Jewish-Christian relations, a problem currently undergoing serious consideration at the Ecumenical Council in Rome" and "observed that rapprochement between the different religions is conditioned upon 'mutual concessions and upon the recognition of each other's integrity'."

This new development may prove to be embarrassing to Rome, which, as far as we know, did not give credit to Chaplain Goldberg for his brilliant idea. □

A Blow at the Rabbinate

Israel's Supreme Court has been taking a second look at the legal status of the Chief Rabbinate. It had until now been assumed that the Chief Rabbinate was supreme in areas of religious law and in matters of personal status, i.e., marriage and divorce.

This supremacy of the Rabbinate has been challenged in two recent cases. The *Marbek* case caused discussion and debate in Israel for months on end. Here, briefly is what happened.

A group of religious kibbutzim got together and set up a joint meat-packing operation, with a central slaughter-house which would supply kosher meat for the entire country. The Tel-Aviv rabbinate and the Chief Rabbinate saw the danger that such a central operation could threaten local *Shechita*, and create insurmountable and unforeseen problems in kashrus.

Rabbis have traditionally favored local *Shechita* because it is more easily supervised and kept under control. Taking *Shechita* out of the

local rabbinate's hands endangers the close supervision that is vital to the assurance of proper standards of kashrus. Weighing these factors the Rabbinate refused to grant a *Hechsher*. In so doing they exercised the traditional right of the rabbinate and its prerogatives under Israeli law.

While the kibbutzim involved were mainly from the National Religious Party, normally strong supporters of the Chief Rabbinate, they were not prepared to accept the Rabbinate's refusal to grant them a

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Hechsher. When behind-the-scenes negotiations failed to satisfy *Marbek*, even though the Rabbinate was prepared to make some concessions, *Marbek* summoned the Rabbinate into court by appealing their decision to the civil authorities. The court ordered the Rabbinate to "show cause" why they should not be enjoined to issue the *Hechsher*. The Rabbinate refused to appear in court taking the position that their decisions were not subject to review by the civil courts, since they are based on *halochah* and out of the competence of non-rabbinic courts. At this point a hasty settlement was arranged out of court.

In spite of the settlement, and the fact that the matter had already become academic, the Court saw fit to announce that since the Chief Rabbinate was a creation of the State, it was subject to judicial review by civil authorities like any

other agency of the State, since the Rabbinate's refusal to grant the *Hechsher* was not based on halachic considerations alone.

A most jarring fact emerges from this unfortunate incident. Those who have been most vocal in their defense of the Chief Rabbinate, and most violent in their reaction to criticism of the Rabbinate, saw fit, for business considerations, not only to publicly dispute the decision of the rabbis, but inflicted upon them the indignity of dragging them before a civil court. They then pressured the Rabbinate into submission in a manner which compromised the dignity and the authority of the Rabbinate. They further gave the courts the opportunity of reprimanding the Rabbinate and setting precedent for limiting its jurisdiction.

The Histadrut daily, *Davar*, together with other newspapers hostile to Orthodoxy crowed over the importance of the Court's ruling restricting the jurisdiction of the Rabbinate. (The London Jewish Chronicle observed that the Rabbinate should be grateful to the Court, for in limiting its jurisdiction it had reaffirmed its authority!) *Davar* added however that, "This does not mean that the Court wants to reserve the right to interfere in matters of religious law . . . (but) it is unavoidable that the Rabbinate, in

the exertion of the authority conferred upon it by the State law, should be subject to the High Court of Justice (Supreme Court) just like every other institution."

But, blood had been drawn, and *Davar's* disclaimer of dishonorable intentions by the Court, was soon proven to be transparent.

In a subsequent case, the Court again moved into the area of rabbinic jurisdiction, even more gingerly than the first time. A woman had applied to the rabbinate for conversion to Judaism, telling the court that her mother was a Catholic. Without completing the conversion proceedings, the woman was married by a rabbi, concealing from him her true status. The rabbinate ruled that she was not Jewish and directed her to accept a divorce from her husband. She appealed her case to the civil court.

The civil court waved its thumb and reasoned: *Since the rabbis have admitted that the woman is not Jewish, they had consequently ruled themselves out of jurisdiction in the case.* On this basis they reversed the rabbinical decision and upheld a marriage which the rabbinate had ordered should be dissolved.

The result of all of this judicial intervention is that the Court is whittling away at the area of jurisdiction of the Rabbinate in a manner that

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could not be achieved through legislation. While the N.R.P. would no doubt resist any attempts by the Knesset to revise the structure of Israeli law on personal status, by their actions in some instances, and failure to act in others, they are abetting the attack on the Rabbinate.

One can imagine the Rabbinate wondering: With such friends, who needs enemies?

A Second Front

The libel of religious coercion in Israel has been so well sold in the United States, that a counterpart of Israel's "League for Religious Freedom" has been organized in this country. The group, according to the *National Jewish Post and Opinion* (October 30, 1964) has organized under the name, "American Friends of Religious Freedom in Israel."

Among the members of the board of directors are several Reform and secularist leaders who have been identified with the fight against religion in the Holy Land. Also a board member is B. Z. Goldberg, columnist of the *Jewish Day-Morning Journal* who writes often on religious issues.

What is the religious freedom these people seek? The facts must be repeated as often as the lies. There is no law in the State of Israel which regulates the personal behaviour of any citizen in the area of religious life. The term "religious coercion," wisely dropped from its name by the "League" and its American friends, is nevertheless constantly heard in the propagandistic style of using a slogan as a substitute for the facts.

While Israeli law does rule out marriage to a non-Jew and also upholds halachic procedures in regard to marriage and divorce, this is a situation supported by the government and based on the original "status-quo" agreement entered into years ago to preserve the oneness of the Jewish people. This could

hardly be called religious coercion. Abolition of this arrangement would split Israeli Jewry into two camps. Orthodoxy would suffer only the inconvenience of setting up its own registry of marriage; the non-Orthodox would have severed perhaps their last remaining tie to the body of the Jewish people.

Yet, in spite of these facts, the banner of "religious freedom" is cynically waved by those who seek to free Jewry of its religion rather than achieving the freedom which they already enjoy.

The formation of the "American Friends" is simply a declaration that a second-front against Torah is being opened on American soil. It comes as a logical step forward following the infamous statement of the seven American Jewish organizations which criticized Orthodox resistance to missionary efforts in Israel, and libelously suggested that Christians were being persecuted in Israel.

Following that statement, an outraged Orthodoxy threatened to withdraw from all areas of cooperation with non-Orthodox religious bodies. An agonizing reappraisal was called for and there was even talk of setting up an Orthodox body to deal with matters now handled by such groups as the Synagogue Council of America.

No doubt the utter failure of Orthodoxy to react to the severe insult inflicted to its pride by its non-Orthodox friends, gave impetus

to the formation of the American anti-religious group.

Whatever might have been done, the need of today is clear. So long as attacks on Orthodoxy are met by a divided Orthodoxy, the attacks will grow in frequency and intensity. So long as the enemies of Torah carry the endorsement of their Orthodox co-religionists, their anti-Torah influence will spread, to the detriment of all of Orthodoxy, intransigent and otherwise.

Orthodoxy must unite, stiffen its back and meet the enemy.

Preventing ? Intermarriage

The Commission on Synagogue Relations of the Federation of Jewish Philanthropies of New York is sponsoring a special conference on "Intermarriage and the Future of the Jewish Community." Invitations have gone to "a select group of rabbis, social workers and laymen who," as the invitation reads, "we feel, will be able to add to the proceedings." A number of Orthodox rabbis and laymen will be on the program.

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Dr. Mordecai Kaplan, Founder of the Reconstructionist Movement and Professor Emeritus of the Philosophies of Religion, Jewish Theological Seminary of America. A prominent Orthodox rabbi, who is a high official in an Orthodox organization, will serve as discussant.

For several decades Dr. Kaplan has waged war against the fundamentals of Torah and *Yiddishkeit*, the only proven weapons against intermarriage and assimilation. In a recent issue of *The Reconstructionist* (April 3, 1964) in the department, "More Questions Jews Ask," the results of Kaplan's teachings clearly emerge. The question is put: "What kind of relationships . . . would Rabbi Kaplan regard as desirable between Reconstructionist Jews and Liberal Protestants . . . who are as "naturalistic" in outlook as Reconstructionists?" After an elaboration of Kaplan's teachings which in essence deny the *Ribono Shel Olom*, the Editor states:

"It is quite possible, therefore, for a Jewish naturalist to see eye to eye, as it were, with regard to a conception of God—expressed in philosophical terms. In fact, it is not inconceivable for a Jewish Reconstructionist to agree, philosophically, more with a non-Jewish naturalist than with a fellow Jew who is a supernaturalist."

On this basis, it would be quite tortuous to make a case against intermarriage, particularly if both parties to a marriage share a "naturalistic" belief. We caution the participants of the conference to bear in mind Dr. Kaplan's credentials as he expounds on means of combatting intermarriage.

We think also, that the planners of the conference would be remiss if they did not enlist the services of another "expert" on intermarriage whose competence was reported in the daily press, after the conference was planned. We refer to the Jewish clergyman who came to the rescue of romance by heroically saving the

day for a young Israeli student in this country who was having difficulty in marrying his non-Jewish girl-friend. This gentleman administered the vows of "marriage" to the couple after the non-Jewish partner agreed "to become Jewish and raise their children as Jews."

Perhaps the Orthodox participants would have some interesting questions to ask this expert. Then again, he might embarrass them.

The Statute of Limitations

The statute of limitations is an accepted legal safeguard in a democracy. It dictates that one can not be placed on trial for a given act after the lapse of a prescribed number of years. The rationale is quite simple; the accused would have difficulty in bringing forth witnesses and evidence years after the alleged crime took place.

While this procedure is clearly valid in the case of conventional crimes, no matter how monstrous, the thought that Nazi war criminals would walk the streets without fear of prosecution is a frightening one. Yet this is the prospect in Western Germany after May 9, 1965. On that day, unless legal steps are taken, the statute of limitations will free all Nazi criminals from the prospect of prosecution. It is expected that thousands of them now in hiding in other countries would flock back to Germany and strengthen the Neo-Nazi movement there. It is estimated that some 10,000 such criminals are still at large.

Several European states, including East Germany, have already abolished the statute as far as Nazis are concerned.

We appreciate the validity of the legal concept involved in the statute of limitations, but to think of Nazi crimes—the world is too weak—in the same category as isolated cases of looting, assault and murder, is itself criminal.

West Germany has not endeared itself to world Jewry, in spite of

the reparations agreement and other overtures of "friendship." The continued presence of German scientists in Egypt speaks louder than the saccharin statements aimed at conciliating world Jewry. Failure of West Germany to abolish the statute of limitations for Nazi criminals would be yet another blow against the pride of the Jew.

Predicting Delinquency

"A method of determining the probability of future delinquency among 6-year-old boys has been tried in New York City and found after 10 years to have been surprisingly accurate." (The New York Times, 11/10/64)

We applaud the success of the sociologists in perfecting this technique, though we wonder how happy this makes the parents of the "guinea-pigs," or perhaps, their victims. Undoubtedly this information will play some role in the prevention of delinquency.

The matter points up however the different categories which frame the thinking of our society and those of Torah society. Our technique for preventing—not predicting—delinquency was made available to us centuries ago at Sinai, when the Torah commanded: ". . . and you shall teach them (words of Torah) to your children."

Let Jewish parents of six-year-old boys who sadly contemplate the prospect of delinquency, take their boys by the hand and enroll them in the nearest yeshivoh-day school.

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Letters to the Editor

Says We Are Vigorous

To the Editor:

Please accept my congratulations for the very high quality of THE JEWISH OBSERVER. You are producing a vigorous and highly literate magazine that is a credit to your editorial skill and brings honor to Orthodox Jewry.

DR. MARVIN FOX
Professor of Philosophy
The Ohio State University
Columbus, Ohio

Our First Anniversary

To the Editor:

Allow me first of all to express to you my congratulations on your first anniversary celebrated with the publication of your last edition. Being a charter subscriber, I assure you that I have been enjoying and looking forward to each issue.

The physical format, the literary

style, and the variety of subjects discussed, all add up to making this publication probably the most outstanding literary contribution made to the cause of advancing the Orthodox Torah-true viewpoint in many years. May you go from strength to strength.

By way of observation, allow me to note that in Rabbi Bulman's excellent article on integration in Israel, he mentions that the Sephardic world contributed certain outstanding scholars to the mainstream of Jewish life. He mentions the name of *Ari*. Without in any way minimizing the fantastic literary contributions made by the Sephardic scholars to Jewish learning, it is well known that *Rabbeinu HoAri* was one of the most outstanding Ashkenazi rabbis that ever lived.

May I also bring to your attention the fact that the U.J.A. has presently embarked on a hundred-million-dollar project of fund raising to provide much needed educational facilities for secondary education in Israel. However, there does not seem to be any provision to provide religious education in these schools.

I believe that it would be advisable and necessary for your publication to launch a campaign amongst your many readers to arouse them to demand of the U.J.A. administration, serious consideration of the spiritual and religious needs of the immigrant children for whom these schools are really intended. It is well known that the vast majority

of Sephardic Jews coming to Israel are of religious temperament and background. They observe and must receive adequate religious training. I would think that your worthy publication should devote itself assiduously to the achievement of this end.

At the same time, it would be advisable to acquaint your large public with the tragic misuse of funds by the J.D.C. in Europe where, instead of supporting and fostering religious institutions of learning for Jewish youth on the European continent, a concerted effort is being made by the anti-religious elements in charge, to uproot and destroy any vestige of religiosity and tradition from the education program.

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A loud shout of protest must be heard from the masses against this atrocious disrespect to the memory of martyred millions who offered their lives to *Kiddush Hashem* under the Nazi beasts, only to have their offspring alienated from the eternal wellspring of faith and Jewish tradition by these foreign influences opposed to Judaism.

RABBI ABRAHAM B. HECHT
President
Rabbinical Alliance of America

To the Editor:

Both the "soul" and the "body" of your publication meet the highest standards of those discriminating readers who have been eagerly awaiting this highly desirable "amalgam" in a magazine. Best wishes for continued and even greater success.

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What Did You Expect?

To the Editor:

Your reviewer showed in detail the errors in Dr. Steiman's book on the *Maharil*. However, what kind of rabbinic scholarship can you expect from a non-Orthodox writer? I assume that this book would never have been reviewed if your book editor had known Dr. Steiman's identity.

Name withheld on request.

We did not know of Dr. Steiman's affiliations, though the book editor did raise the suspicion that its author, in the words of our review, wanted "to find a respectable ancestry for modern efforts to assure Jewish survival by innovation or adaption." However, there is a definite value in taking books from such sources under critical consideration. The American Jew who is looking for books on Jewish history, philosophy, and literature, is exposed to a veritable flood of writings. Most of them are the work of men alienated from Torah Judaism; yet they are accepted as authoritative and scholarly guides. We can-

not, therefore, evade our duty of examining these books and pointing out the fallacies of interpretation and shortcomings of knowledge that are being popularized to a point where even Orthodox readers become confused.

—The Editor

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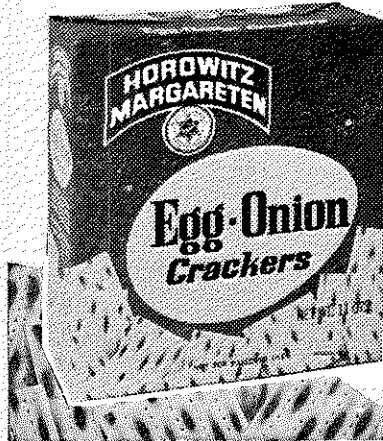
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