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THE JEWISH OBSERVER



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**THE TEN
COMMANDMENTS
AND THE HEBREWS**

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**MY "FUTURE
MOTHER"**

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**ANTISEMITISM AND
THE JEWISH
RESPONSE**

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**AFTER THE
DISMISSAL BELL**

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THE JEWISH OBSERVER

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the cover

Bais Yaakov students in Jerusalem parading for religious observance in the Holy Land.

(See The Mother of Generations on page 14.)

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FEBRUARY 1964 VOL. I NO. 5

The Ten Commandments and the Hebrews

*The role of words
in the struggle for
Jewish souls*

by Yaakov Jacobs

CHRISTENDOM'S ATTEMPT TO subvert Jews and Judaism has taken varied shapes ever since the founding of Christianity. While the forced debates between Jewish and Christian representatives in the Middle Ages is a fascinating subject for study, pogroms, persecution and inquisitions were more often the response to Jewish rejection of Christianity's claim. However, the use of concepts, phrases and words, distorted and twisted to make the two opposing religions seem more compatible, has always been standard equipment in the ideological war. Since the destruction of European Jewry, in a climate generated by official Church-inspired anti-Semitism, the physical onslaught against Jews has become less popular, and the battle of words has come to the fore.

At the recent meeting of Roshei Yeshivos and leaders of all Orthodox groups in this country, called to discuss onslaughts against Torah in Israel from within and from without, it was the consensus that a world-wide offensive has been mounted to obliterate the differences between Judaism and Christianity and to accomplish with the pen what the sword has been unable to achieve. The Brother Daniel case was the signal for the opening of this offensive. It was an attempt by a Jew with Church support, who had converted to Catholicism, to have the State of Israel recognize his Jewishness by granting him automatic citizenship under Israel's Law of Return. With one infamous dissent, the Supreme Court of Israel rejected this claim, though not in the clearest terms.

Responsible Jewish leaders have noted that the gestures of friendship by the Roman Catholic Church and their desire (unfulfilled) to "absolve" the Jew of charges which have been at the root of anti-Semitism in the Western world, are motivated by a desire to step up the flow of Jews into conversion.

While it would be difficult to measure its precise effect, the debate in Israel on the question, "Who is a Jew?", one aspect of which was recently revived in Harper's magazine (*The Jewish Observer*, Jan. 1964), must have strengthened the hand of those forces of conversion. The admission by secularist and nationalist Jews, that being a Jew is not a function of belief in and adherence to Torah, lends substance to the position

that Judaism and Christianity are reconcilable, and even more so that one can be a Jew and a Christian at the very same time.

When in the past, the Church enlisted the aid of renegade Jews, these converts renounced their Jewishness, while today the converts loudly proclaim their "Jewishness," and receive the tacit approval of secular Jews who themselves frown upon conversion.

Word Manipulation: Hebrew, Jew

The modern science of Semantics has highlighted the common human error of confusing a word with the object for which the word is actually only a symbol. Abraham Lincoln, when he was practising law, once asked a witness, "If we were to call a jackal's tail a leg, how many legs would he have?" When the witness answered, "five," Lincoln shook his head and said, "No, calling a tail a leg doesn't make it one."

To understand better the basis of Christianity's distortion of Judaism (and the subsequent danger to us of such distortion), we might examine the designation of the Jew as a *Hebrew*. To the average Christian and to many Jews, the words *Jew* and *Hebrew* may be used interchangeably, and rarely do people distinguish between the two. Yet, serious students of the English language have noted a crucial differentiation which sheds light on our problem.

In Fowler's *A Dictionary of Modern English Usage*, the author, considered by many as the last word on the use of words, writes that if an English-speaking person uses a word other than *Jew* he may do so, "for the . . . reason that *Jew* has certain traditional implications (as usury, anti-Christianity) . . .". On the use of the word "*Hebrew*" Fowler writes, quoting from the Oxford English Dictionary on "*Hebrew*":

"Historically, the term is usually applied to the early Israelites; in modern use it avoids the religious and other associations often attaching to "*Jew*." (On "*Jew*") Applied comparatively rarely to the ancient nation before the Exile, but the commonest name for contemporary or modern representatives of the race (sic); almost always connoting their religion and other characteristics which distinguish them from the people among whom they live, and thus often opposed to Christianity and (esp. in early use) expressing a more or less opprobrious sense."

What the language scholars tell us is simply this. When a Christian speaks of the "Hebrews," he is talking about the fine gentlemen, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob,

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Rabbi Jacobs served in the rabbinate for twelve years and was editor of *Young Israel VIEWPOINT*.

MY "FUTURE MOTHER"

by Bernard Merling

NO, I AM NOT WRITING from some eerie limbo of outer or inner space, waiting to be born. I am very much in and of this world, and for that very reason I am gravely concerned about my "future mother"—and yours, too!

Readers may recall my musings about "My Son, the Yeshiva Bochur" (The Jewish Observer, September 1963). I have a daughter too, bless her, who has proved to be the "good sign" for the boys that came after her. Naturally, she attends a Bais Yaakov type school.

Because of my work in advertising, I am frequently called upon to assist my children's schools—and others as well in the preparation of their publicity and public relations materials. I am thus thoroughly familiar with the slogans and cliches that are used to pry loose contributions from prospective donors. I am ashamed to admit that I myself have resorted to many of these cliches in my time (although I consider this one of my minor sins).

At any rate, one of the favorite slogans bandied about by the girls' schools in their appeals for assistance is "Help us educate the future mothers of the Jewish people." Since it is a cliché, I never gave much thought to the significance of the words; it sounds meaningful and important and that was enough to recommend it. Then, just a few weeks ago, as I was polishing my latest "future mother" bit, it suddenly hit me! Could it be that herein lies a significant key to what is wrong with some of our Yeshivos and girls' schools? Is it possible that we are striving too hard to create the "future mother" while neglecting the "present child"?

Several Qualifications: At this point I want to make it absolutely clear that, whatever comments I make are not directed at *all* of our Yeshivos and girls' schools; many quite definitely do not suffer from the shortcomings I point to.

Secondly, if I seem to carp, it is only in a spirit of constructive criticism; I do not mean to tear down, but to build up, to improve. I like to think that I am as

devoted to traditional Jewish education as the next fellow, and do not mean to impugn motives or destroy reputations. Besides, I am willing to concede at the very outset that I may just possibly be wrong (though I doubt it). I am merely throwing out some ideas for consideration and *the final evaluation, as always will have to be made by our Torah authorities.*

Finally, though my trend of thought was set off by the phrase "future mothers," it applies equally to boys' Yeshivos as well as to girls' schools.

And now, with critics to the right of me and critics to the left of me, let me venture into the battle of words.

With an Eye to the Future

There is no doubt that the miracle of Jewish existence is due, primarily to *hashgochas Hashem*. "The Lord shall guard thy going out and thy coming in, from this time forth and for evermore." (*T'hilim* 121:8). And as one manifestation of this *hashgochah*, the Almighty has implanted in the Jewish people a genius for distilling the essence of those qualities which make for a people's preservation. In addition, He has given us the fortitude to adhere to these essential qualities and to ignore the inconsequential frivolities which distract and debilitate a people. In short, we are "a stiff-necked people," armed with spiritual strength.

What are these distilled essences of our self-preservation? One of them, and a basic one, of course, is a life-or-death belief in G-d, in His Sovereignty, in His Truth, in His Torah, in *His* moral code and not one of our own design. Another, is whole-hearted, and whole-bodied, dedication to Torah study (and not to ignorance or superstition). Still others are: an allegiance to *mitzvos ma'asios*—good "deeds" (and not only good "thoughts"); *emunas Chachomim*—faith in the wisdom of our Sages and a willingness to accept their guidance; a concern for the future, hopes and dreams for a better world to come, plus a readiness to do what is necessary to achieve it.

Fortunately, every generation has transmitted these essences to its children, in the realization that without them our identity as a people would be dissipated. Our traditional *Yeshivos* and girls' schools are transmitting them once again in our own day, seeing to it that these essentials of self-preservation are deeply imbedded in the souls and inner beings of our children, so that they may indeed be the future mothers—and fathers—of a loyal, G-d fearing, Torah-true Jewish people.

Is That All?

Important as the transmission of these essential Torah values may be, it cannot be denied that this alone does not assure the continued existence of the Jewish people, and hence of *Yiddishkeit* itself. Just as man cannot live by bread alone, neither can he live by "spirit" alone. "*Im ein Kemach, ein Torah*," said Rabbi Elazar ben Azariah (*Ovos* 3:21), where there is no sustenance there is no Torah. Where a child's present needs are not satisfied, it is to no avail to educate him for the future.

What is "*Kemach*"? Only sustenance? Only food? Obviously not. Just as a child who is hungry cannot be taught Torah, so a child who is not properly clothed or properly housed cannot be taught Torah. This, our *chazal*, in their wisdom, recognized and taught us.

But they also realized much more. They also realized that not only physical needs must be satisfied before one can be taught Torah, but also "psychological" needs. To those who might be skeptical, let me quote: (*Avodoh Zoroh* 19a) "Rebbi said 'A man does not learn Torah except in an area of his heart's desire,' for it is written (*T'hillim* 1:2) 'For in the Lord's Torah is his desire.' Apparently one's interest must be aroused before one can properly learn Torah; one must first desire to learn, or be made to desire ("motivated" in the modern jargon). Is this then not also one of the "*Kemach*" pre-requisites—an interested, willing mind?

Let me quote once again (*B'reishis Rabbah* 20:14) "Chiyoh bar Adoh was sitting (learning) before Rav, who would explain something to him, but he could not understand it. And Rav said to him "Why can't you grasp this?" and he answered, "Because my donkey is about to give birth and I am worried lest she catch cold and die!" What is this? A troubled, preoccupied mind can't learn Torah? Many of us today recognize this as a fact, but many others just blame it on the psychologists and leave it at that. It would seem, then, that *chazal* also realized that one's mind must be free from worries ("problems") before one can properly learn Torah.

And what about the manner of presentation? Let us turn to yet another *Midrash* (*Sh'mos Rabbah* 41:6) "Whoever utters words of Torah and they are not (presented) sweetly to their listeners, it is preferable that he had not uttered them. What is this? Modern pedagogy? Or the wisdom of *chazal*?"

We are led to believe, then, that "*Im ein Kemach ein Torah*" includes not only the fulfillment of physical needs but also of various psychological "needs" as well. In other words, a prerequisite of proper Torah learning is the satisfaction, *in one form or another*, of a child's (or even adult's) basic needs. And just as tastes in foods and fashions in clothing change from generation to generation, so do our "*Kemach* needs" take on different forms in different times.

What Are the "Kemach" Needs of Today?

Contemporary society is markedly different from that of several generations ago; for better or worse, whether we like it or not. Furthermore, our (and I include the traditional Orthodox Jew) relationship to contemporary society is also different from that of times gone by—we live in it, and with it, we earn our livelihoods within its structure, and, whether we like it or not, it impinges on our consciousness more than ever before. And because of this there have arisen certain "needs" which the Jewish parent of past ages did not have to consider—and which we can ignore only at our own peril.

Many of these new "needs" are legitimate even from a Jewish point of view; and even those which find expression in contemporary society in a form we cannot accept, we must nevertheless learn to satisfy them—in some acceptable form—as best we can.

For example, let us consider a child's need for "creative self-expression." No one can deny that, in today's society, it is a need, something a child wants and feels he must do. He is exposed to it wherever he looks—children drawing, children playing instruments, children making things. And even if the child were not to see it—among his friends and peers, in the papers and magazines and children's books, on TV—even if we were to shut off *completely* a child's contact with the outside world (Is such a solution possible, or wise?)—it is a natural human instinct to want to do things, to make things, and not to spend one's every waking hour reading or studying a book.

Is there something non-Jewish or non-Orthodox about it? The mere fact that it is an instinctive human drive suggests that there must be some legitimate form of expression for it. Furthermore, countless passages in *Tanach* can be cited to show that it is one of Man's functions to be "creative" and be a creator within G-d's world.

Is it proper to ignore or suppress this urge in a child, even in a *Yeshiva*, and hope that some day, when he is grown up and wants and needs some skills in creative self-expression, that these will miraculously blossom forth without any previous training and direction? This is both foolish and dangerous. Who knows what form this urge will take when the adolescent or young adult suddenly realizes that he has been missing something all these years? Is it not wiser for our *Yeshivos* not only to permit but also to provide opportunities for children

to express themselves in speaking and writing and music and art and handicraft—in ways and forms *we can shape to conform with Torah standards of acceptability?*

Where will we take the time to include these activities in an already overcrowded schedule? The answer to this is another question: Where will we take the time to woo back to *Yidishkeit* the many youngsters who are drawn away from us, who follow their “heart’s desire” and feel that they can never find what they want within the realm of *Yiddishkeit*? The rolls of “successful” artists and achievers in many fields are studded with “former” *Yeshiva* students, who have left us and left our faith. Why should they leave, why must they leave, if with a little imagination, we can give them their “heart’s desire,” *properly channeled*, within the walls of our own Torah world?

Concern for “Career”

Here is another “need” that some of our *Yeshivos* tend to ignore—a boy’s concern for a “career” or earning a livelihood “when he grows up.” At a certain age, this is a legitimate “need” for almost every child. Granted that it is proper to tell a boy of 13 or 14 not to worry about these matters, to concentrate on his learning, granted that we can say the same to even an older boy who has well-to-do parents and need not be concerned with his financial future, or to a boy who is content and willing and desirous to seek his life’s fulfillment in and around the study of Torah. But to ignore the concern of a boy of 16 or 17 or 18, *whose Rosh Yeshiva comes to the conclusion* that he is not “cut out” to be the great “*lamdon*,” etc., to insist that such a boy need not worry because the Almighty will provide, to try to emulate Rabbi Shimon ben Yochai (*B’rochos* 35b) who expected his “work” to be done by others—this is to fly in the face of reality. Did not Rabbi Yehudah (*Kiddushin* 30a) list, among the duties incumbent upon a father to do for his son, the obligation to teach him a trade or a skill?

How can we hope to teach Torah to a boy whose mind is preoccupied with preparing for adulthood in a very realistic, and very competitive, world? Are we not, indeed, running the risk of alienating many potential “future fathers” of our people who abandon their Jewish studies prematurely because they feel that their *Yeshiva* refuses to deal seriously with their legitimate concern for a career or trade or skill? Surely you know as many of these “preemies” as I do, and my heart bleeds at the wasted effort that went into their education but was not crowned with ultimate success because they left too soon, or were disillusioned.

I have not exhausted the list of needs that today’s child has. I have mentioned a few and these will no doubt suggest others. But in all of these areas we have

been ignoring them forgetting that each child is a unique individual, a person, a human being, with personal and particular needs, some similar to those of others, some peculiarly his own. It is not enough to be exclusively concerned with transmitting the great essential ideals of our faith, concentrating solely on creating “future mothers” and “future fathers” while forgetting the present child.

I am not an educator and I am not prepared to propose specific methods for handling this problem. It is mostly a question of paying more attention to certain aspects of a child’s upbringing and the solutions will suggest themselves. Perhaps trained educators and guidance counsellors, *working in concert with the Roshei Yeshivos*, could offer more specific suggestions.

But in any case, and again because of contemporary conditions, when the school *must take over so many of the functions previously the province of the parent*, our *Yeshivos* and girls’ schools cannot ignore the newer “Kemach” needs of the children entrusted to their tutelage: their individuality, their personal development, their psychological problems, their emotional stability. Only when these needs have been met and satisfied can we hope to teach our children Torah, and really assure a future generation of loyal, well-adjusted and truly religious Jewish fathers and mothers, a generation we will be proud of and which, we pray, will also be proud of us.

ED. NOTE—Since some aspects of Mr. Merling’s views have far reaching implications for the character of *Yeshiva* education, we think it proper to call to the attention of our readers the viewpoint on the matter, of an outstanding *Rosh Yeshiva* of our time who prefers to remain anonymous, but whose view reflects the thinking of most of the acknowledged contemporary *Roshei Yeshivos*. With reference to encouraging and cultivating the creative strivings of children, the Torah viewpoint certainly favors such cultivation on an individual basis, provided that the Halachah and the values of Torah are not violated or disregarded. But, both on the grounds of principle and past experience it is deemed necessary to consider the above concern as the province of the parent and community rather than of the *yeshiva*. The pressures of time and finances which result from the dual curricular program of *yeshivos* are so overwhelming at present as to endanger the quality of the substantive areas of instruction if the official *yeshiva* curricula were to be expanded still further. At the same time the individual *yeshiva* instructor and parent should most certainly be keenly sensitive to the creative inclinations of each individual child as an individual concern.

Similarly, with regard to the matter of vocational guidance, it is held that till the conclusion of the high school period, the inclinations and aptitudes of the student are still very much in flux. So that the official *yeshiva* approach till the end of this period should certainly be one of seeking to inspire in the student the desire to devote himself completely through the remainder of his student years to the study of Torah. The utilitarian pressures of our society will in any event exert powerful contrary influences on the thinking of most students. At the same time it certainly is the task and the desire of the *Roshei Yeshivos* to extend individual guidance in the matter to their students.

Antisemitism and the Jewish Response

Reflections on Purim

by Nathan Bulman

PURIM IS A HOLIDAY with a mask. Behind the mask, however, there lurks adult thoughtfulness and penetrating insight. And there are three things of importance to be learned from Purim; the causes of anti-semitism, the proper methods of defense against it, and how we ought to celebrate deliverance from its effects. Let us go step by step.

The Causes of Antisemitism

"And Haman said to King Achashverosh:

- a. "There is a certain people *scattered* and (yet) *separated* among the peoples in all the provinces of thy kingdom;
 - b. and their religious laws differ from those of *all* the other peoples;
 - c. neither do they keep the religious laws of the king;
 - d. nor would it *profit* the king to let them remain!"
- a. "*scattered and (yet) separated*"

These words are a concise and pungent statement of the dilemma which is at the heart of antisemitic sentiment. The antisemite sees Jews everywhere "scattered," i.e., nowhere seeming to strive too hard to retain a cohesive and differentiated pattern of Jewish identity. He sees at the same time, that as a group, Jews are characterized by a quality of "stubborn indissolubility."

He may be mistaken in attributing the paradox to insufficiently strong desire, on the part of the Jew, for complete self-effacement and assimilation. He may mistakenly attribute the paradox to a dark and ignoble hypocrisy on the part of the Jew. He may never begin to fathom the matter as testimony, that *collectively*, the Jews *cannot* escape their historic destiny. He may never begin to sense that the seemingly interminable capacity of the Jewish people to renew its life from ashes of destruction, with creative powers unimpaired, is perhaps the most eloquent testimony that there is Divine meaning in the historic process.

He certainly fails to see himself as a "rod of Divine anger," whose purpose it sometimes is to prevent the people of G-d from breaking down the Divinely established boundary "between Israel and the nations," to recall the Jew to an awareness of his Divinely ordained character and task, of his specific dependence for life and well being on Divine Providence, of his utter inability to find security through reliance on the good will of the nations.

All the same, he senses powerfully, often more so than individually "unconscious" Jews, the grip of the riddle of Jewish survival on the psyche of himself and

his world. And without understanding, he rages frenziedly at the Jew because of the existence of the riddle.

- b. "*their religious laws differ from those of All other peoples*"

Here again, the eyes of hate sometimes penetrate, despite their distorted line of vision, to a depth of insight which cold and objective analysis does not reach. Haman perceived rightly, together with antisemites of every age, that Judaism is different, not alone from any other religion, but also, from *all* other religions. He noted correctly that in human society religious denominational differences are usually harmonized under a broader common denominator of *fundamental substrata* of beliefs and values which give those societies inner character and impulse; that usually those "root" values motivate the economic, political, social, and recreational phases of life, and even the inner state of the religious phase, rather than the doctrinal particularities debated in the official religious institutions.

But, he noted also, with sharp perceptiveness that there are elements in Judaism which make impossible for its adherents, genuine absorption in the total configuration of life's activities, with the peoples among whom they live.

An elusive and indefinable *otherness* remains. Some Jews seek to talk it out of existence by refusing to recognize the chosenness of Israel as a *historic* fact and referring to it as a "mere dogma"—which they can then contemptuously dismiss, as a vestige of "chauvinistic tribal thinking," and which therefore can hardly have meaning for people who live in the 20th century, and have made the spirit of its culture and science their own.

But it is not a "mere dogma." It is a fundamental principle of Judaism to whose truth all history bears witness. Jews may sometimes not find that fact a personally pleasant one to perceive, but antisemites oft-times do perceive it, as did Haman, without acknowledging it as creditable to us, when he railed at our being inseparably bound to a religion generically different from *all* other religions.

- c. "*neither do they keep the king's religious laws*"

There have been times when the pressure exerted upon the Jew to conform to the dominant religious pattern, at least *in addition* to his own, has been direct and open. But even in democratic countries, where freedom of religion is legally guaranteed to the Jew, *the same pressure, though concealed, still remains.*

The social exclusions, the occasional political and

economic disabilities, the discriminatory practices even in education, from which the Jew suffers, act upon his consciousness as a very real pressure to melt and reduce his own spiritual stature towards conformity with that of his surroundings.

Religious persecution may be replaced in such a setting, by Jewish self-effacement as a means of finding favor in the eyes of the Gentile world (upon Gentile goodwill, the Jew finds himself dependent even in democratic countries). The net result is the same. There, destruction inflicted by outside hate; here, spiritual suicide, indirectly stimulated from without. (Let it be noted that these indirect pressures *need not* be decisive. In democratic societies they are not imposed upon as through the total assent of the general community. In our own beloved America, for instance, there are powerful currents which strive for the final removal of all inequity from American life; and for untrammelled liberty of body and soul for all Americans. The point made here, is that uncritical surrender on our part to pressures for conformity to the mores and standards of our environment is by no means an indication of loyalty to America. Such surrender destroys the American dream. Our insistence on the right to be what we are through Jewish history, experience and destiny, is precisely in line with the aspiration of the best of America. What is criticized here is the widely held fallacious notion, that in order to be good Americans, we must make common cause with those elements in American society who strive to mold America in a monolithic cast in every area of life other than the political.)

d. *"therefore it profiteth not the king to let them remain"*

This is the final hammer blow.

Substitute the idiom of the 20th century for these words, and you will hear in them a most familiar note.

"Do you perchance, little Jew, live under the illusion that your genius and your efforts have contributed something of abiding value to our country? Are you fool enough to imagine yourself indispensable to us, on the basis of your record of achievement? How pitifully mistaken you are. We do not at all consider our future welfare as dependent on whether you stay or go. Your Einsteins, and Felix Frankfurters, we hate. Your Rickovers we know how to snub. You are in some places, dirty communists, and in others, dirty capitalists. Some of you are too grasping in business. Others among you preach too loudly and too passionately against social injustice. Your children fill our academies of higher learning out of all due proportion to your numbers, and many of them are much too brilliant. Too many of you are physicians and attorneys. You are almost a controlling force in our entertainment industry. And of late you have even invaded engineering in force."

As of today, these sentiments are shared consciously by what is probably a small minority of the American people. Let us hope and pray that the numbers of that

minority may change only by diminution. On too many occasions, however, in our past history, have such minorities turned into majorities. It would therefore hardly be the best part of wisdom for us to seek *security* in the knowledge of our great contributions to the well being of our land. Too often have we learned that the antisemitic cry "it profiteth not the king to let them remain," is not stilled by reference to charts of Jewish achievement.

A Proper Jewish Response Pattern to the Threat of Antisemitism

Let us re-read the elements of the response pattern of the Persian Jewish community to the menace of Hamanism. Those elements were:

- a. the ingathering of the Jewish community for common effort;
- b. fasting and repentance;
- c. Esther's intercession with the king.
- a. *"ingathering of the Jewish community"*

The first step in planning a Jewish defense effort against antisemitism is necessarily the cultivation of a sense of common Jewish destiny. It may often be true that "where there are nine Jews there are ten opinions," and that, in the formulation of our own views and opinions on Judaism and the problems of Jewish life, we have often been a very fragmented people. It is however, equally true that the threat of physical injury or annihilation directed from without has always served us as a unifying agent of uncommon effectiveness. We may often ardently and zealously differ in defining the *character of Judaism*. We have always, however, known, with the spontaneity of instinct, that antisemitic blows aimed at the body of any single Jew, are equally aimed at the collective body of all Jews—whether of low or high station, whether materially poor or wealthy, whether religiously devout or not. An alarm of physical danger has always, therefore, instantly transformed our inner divisiveness and our jealous insistence on unregimented individualism, into absolute unity of purpose and self-regimented collective discipline.

If in our time and place the cry of Jews, let us say, behind the iron curtain, faced by a threat to their very existence, fails to elicit from us a sense of spontaneous solidarity with their cause, we ought to know that we have lost an irreplaceable element of Jewish strength for life.

b. *"fasting and repentance"*

A sense of Jewish solidarity alone, however, for all its importance, will not suffice. There is vitally necessary also, a collective effort to retrieve the lost sense of Jewish spiritual unity, and to bring about a reunion between the people of Israel and its G-d and Torah. A central pillar in the structure of Jewish resistance against antisemitism, has always been the unclouded

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Telzville, U.S.A.

by Joseph Kaminetsky

SOME SEGMENTS OF AMERICAN ISRAEL have already begun to boast of the "*Torah Shtetel*." We have, *b'siyata d'shmayyah*, been able to achieve a genuine "spiritual revolution" in many a town and hamlet in this country, mostly through the magic and mystique of the Hebrew Day School. We have already reached the happy circumstance when the size of the Jewish community does *not* determine the founding of a Day School, but rather the measure of conviction and commitment of the "Torah pioneers" which inhabit it.

Some of us have even projected the story of the American Jewish *Shtetel* before the general public. We have described the "*Shabbos Houses*" in Memphis Tennessee; the impressive number of *succos* built in the 600-Jewish-family "hamlet" of Newport News, Virginia; the almost 100% registration of Jewish children in the Day School of Augusta, Georgia; and the "afternoon Yeshiva for teen-agers" of the vibrant Jewish community of Seattle, Washington—just to mention some of the outstanding examples which come to mind. These are truly "fires to warm ourselves by," and we are grateful to the Almighty Who helped us achieve all this.

Yet, with all due respect to all that has been realized in these and other Jewish communities, the objective observer of the American Jewish scene must confess that all of these marvelous achievements pale into almost complete insignificance in the light of what one experiences after a few days' stay in the "*Shtetel of all Shtetlach*" on the American Jewish continent—Wickliffe, Ohio, which we should like to designate as "Telzville, U.S.A."

Unlike our other *Shtetlach*—where, for all that has been achieved in Torah learning, the building of an impressive Yeshiva Ketanah installation, the addition of a new *Mikveh*, and the increase of Kashrut and Sabbath observance apparent in *one* segment of the community—Telzville is *all Kodesh*, all Jewish and all *Torahdig*. Here, there is no *Chilul Shabbos* apparent anywhere. Here one feels himself truly in a "*Yerushalayim d'matah*."

The Entire Community Is A Yeshiva

ONE MIGHT, INDEED, SAY that Telzville is even more than a "Torah-true" community, it is a *Torah com-*

munity. A "Torah-true" community reflects—in every aspect of its existence—fulfillment of the precepts of Torah and identification with the values of Torah. A Torah community on the other hand, is one in which the whole life of the community revolves around the study of Torah and the ordered striving towards ever higher standards in *Avodas Hashem* (the service of G-d) and in *Midos*.

The entire community of Telzville is, in fact, a Yeshiva. Not only its *Roshei Yeshiva* and its students live only by and for Torah; but even its women-folk—the "dynamic Rebbetzins"—are concerned with intensive Jewish education. It is they who form the backbone of the rich educational endeavors of the local Hebrew Academy and the Yavneh High School and Teachers Training School for Girls. Torah is the *elan vital* of Telzville.

In its relationship to the "outside" world, Telzville is both restrictive and outgoing. It refuses, on the one hand, to allow the "outside" world to flood its consciousness with the values of the American entertainment industry, for instance. It will not allow its senses, and subsequently its feeling and thinking, to be polluted by a world intoxicated with materialistic striving and sensuality. There are no television sets in Telzville!

On the other hand, Telzville is intensely concerned with the outside world. Its aim is decidedly not to create for itself a self-contained ghetto-like existence. Its aspiration is to cultivate the highest possible Torah standards precisely so that it might serve as a catalyst in a regenerative process of drawing the "outside" world closer to the values and aims of Torah. Indeed, Telzville is vitally interested—from the very perspective of Torah—not only in the Torah world, but in the fortunes of all mankind, for all of humanity is the ultimate province of the Torah's concern. Telzville is a Torah community which zealously guards its spiritual identity and autonomy against encroachment and dilution, in order to help draw the "outside" world closer to the fulfillment of a Divinely appointed destiny.

Yet, for its singular earnestness, Telzville is far from a dull place in which to be. It has its own social life, its own pulsating events and its own inspiring scenes to witness. The *Roshei Yeshiva*—both of the upper and lower echelons—live in beautiful, modern homes set in picturesque style amidst a peaceful countryside. The Rebbitzens exchange recipes like all neighbors;

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After the Dismissal Bell

On the Split between
Home and School

by Nosson Scherman

SOME YEARS AGO, there was a case in New Jersey which stirred the public conscience and titillated the tabloid headline writers. A homeless infant was placed with a working class family on a temporary, foster-home basis. He remained with them throughout the pre-school years, being treated as a member of the family and becoming accepted by the other children as another brother. Soon after he began attending school, his foster parents applied to the state agency responsible for the little boy for permission to adopt him legally. Then, the trouble began. Not only was the request refused, but steps were taken to remove the child from his home and place him elsewhere.

The reason given by the professionals was that the child was of above average intelligence while his foster-parents and their children were average. In addition, the outraged applicants had a typical television home with no good books, no stimulating periodicals — a home where entree was reserved to the products of the cultivated pens of Madison Avenue, and the low brow wit of high priced gag writers. It was felt that the father, a factory worker with a limited income, would never be able to afford a college education for his young charge. In the judgment of the social workers, they had in their hands the future of a youngster of intellectual brilliance with a bright promise. They therefore had a responsibility to place him with a family possessing the talent, culture and resources to develop his rich potential.

Obviously, a cause celebre was in the making. The well-intentioned social workers were not long in discovering they had taken hold of a hand grenade. Legal appeals were made by the parents and massive public opinion soon sided with them against the “fuzzy-minded do-gooders” who operated in an “inhuman, intellectual ivory tower,” ignoring the dictates of decency, love and happiness. How dare they wrench an innocent child from a family which had grown up with him in mutual love! Did thirty I.Q. points and a few thousand dollars mean more than the psychological wounds the separation would cause the child, and the children who would lose their “brother?”

The egg-heads lost, but not completely. As could have been expected, enough private scholarship offers came in to put an entire family through college, the sincere parents readily agreed to purchase a library

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of good books and make a continuing attempt to upgrade the cultural level of their household. And they lived happily ever after.

For thoughtful people, an often ignored lesson was brought home. The education of the *complete* child cannot be accomplished by the school if the family atmosphere does not complement that of the classroom. As true as this is of the secular world, it is infinitely more the case with the goals and successes of the Yeshiva.

Public prejudice and ignorance force us to proclaim continuously that a Yeshiva education and Torah outlook bar no one from financial success and good citizenship. Of course, this is true (though the dictum of “good American and good Jew” has become platitudinous enough to make one wince). However we must concede —and do so proudly—that the Torah way of life is sharply at variance with many aspects of its American counterpart. *Chinuch* as we know and practice it, entails instilling a set of moral and religious values which cannot end when the dismissal bell rings signalling the students’ trek to the TV set. The effective *mechanech* —(he must be more than a “teacher”)—imparts his lesson to his children so that they will see every verse and mitzvah with the fresh eyes of an adventurer, so that each line of Torah generates heat and light to dwarf the Consolidated Edison Company. It is a dismal letdown to see the same eyes return the next morning glazed from viewing mankind’s latest achievements in combatting stomach upset, deep-down grime, comical mothers-in-law and the machinations of the third corner of the triangle. *Chinuch*, however, like almost all pursuits, is an art of the possible. Its success can never be absolute. We may long for homes whose atmosphere and outlook duplicate those of the Yeshiva but we must simultaneously recognize the impossibility of even asking it in many cases.

Yeshiva Children from Non-Observant Homes

The growth of the Yeshiva movement since the War has been immensely encouraging and has created a future for American Jewry which, three decades ago, was not even dreamt of. Large numbers of irreligious and semi-observant families have enrolled their children in Yeshivos despite the financial burdens this has caused them. The reasons are varied. Working parents often see the Yeshiva as a convenient day center which will keep their children occupied until evening. They are confident that they can hold the inroads of religion to a minimum. Others are driven to such an enrollment

by the entreaties (often sweetened with financial assistance) of grandparents. Population shifts have played a prominent part as well.

We may deplore the motives of these new-found devotees of Yeshiva education. But the resultant mass of students who would otherwise never have been subject to our influence is a great boon to Judaism not to be neglected. Many of the proudest products of our great Yeshivos found their way to a Yeshiva for just such considerations. There are thousands of families who have drawn close to Torah because of a son or daughter who received a Torah education. When we speak of the vitality of Torah-true Judaism and the effect it can have on American youth, we have a wealth of living proof. We are fortunate that circumstances have pushed hundreds of families in the direction of our educational system despite the fact that it embodies a tradition from which they have been alienated.

But there is no denying the fact that these children are handicapped by the dichotomy of their daily existence. They are drawn during the day to the belief, creed and divine wisdom transmitted by their *mechanchim* and accepted by the bulk of their classmates, only to come home to parents, and often brothers and sisters, who are indifferent or antagonistic to them. They are academically handicapped as well for they cannot obtain the help they need with their lessons and which is often available to their more fortunate classmates. This is a facet of Yeshiva life, and the teacher given the opportunity to work with these children faces these problems with a sense of gratitude and mission. Thirty years ago we had few such problems and we were the poorer for it.

It is not from families such as these that we can demand that the tenor of the home follow the mode of life espoused by the Yeshiva. To make such demands would not win the parent but could well lose the child to us. These young treasures are too precious to risk losing to the everpresent public schools. The best we can do in such cases is to embark on a patient, long range effort to re-educate that segment of our parent community.

Observant Families and Yeshiva Values

It is our own camp which too often fails us. Too many of our observant homes are built on the modes but not the mood of observance. The child returning home from school will wash for his meal and "*bentch*," if he's old enough he will dawdle through "*maariv*," *yarmulkas* will everywhere be in evidence—but Torah will not. In the sloth into which our religious life has fallen, there are few homes where the family evening has a place for learning. The evening hours are whiled away with the newspaper, conversation, dozing and staring at the ubiquitous lowest common denominator, the TV. The child fortunate enough to have a "tough"

rebbe will have his homework to do, the one who has absorbed the fervor of his lessons will feel a duty to learn and will enjoy doing it. But he can't help feeling a bit lonely.

"When the children play with blocks, all the others make houses and cars and things like that. But your son says he has to build a bookcase for his chumashim."

So said a kindergarten teacher to a proud father. That little boy has a head start on the others which can't be measured by any intelligence or achievement test. He comes from a home where the bookcase is the focal point, where he sees his father spending his evenings over a *sefer* and where Torah means much more than a subject or a set of religious obligations. The child from such a home will feel no embarrassment or confusion when his *rebbe* seeks to inspire a class with tales of how our great men loved learning and sacrificed their all for the opportunity to study Torah. For him, the lessons laboriously expounded during the day will be reinforced at home not by talk but by example.

"The people of the book" have become the people of the breakfront. The very fact that a home contains a basic library of *seforim*—*shas*, *mishnayos*, a few sets of *chumashim* and *nach*—means a great deal to a child's outlook. If the main furniture piece contains a few shelves of *seforim*, a student can relate what he learns in class to what he has at home and it becomes more meaningful. If those shelves are occupied by crystal, china and silver, the family values they express are eloquently brought home to the child with a subtle impact as powerful as any of the commercial hidden persuaders to which he is daily exposed. People aspire to own what they hold dear.

"My father promised to learn the gemara with me but he had to watch a television show and when it was over it was too late."

This was the lament of a nine year old asking his *rebbe* to review a lesson with him privately. What a shocking lesson his father taught him that night! Who can say what damage is done to a little boy whose father promises to teach him a few lines of *gemara*—after the play is over?

The bulk of our parents are genuinely sincere when they send their children to Yeshivos. It is a step they take with heartfelt hopes that their children will become better people than they, that their children will become complete Jews in the best sense. And it is a step they take with great personal sacrifice, for the cost of a Yeshiva education is a great hardship for all but a few of those desiring it. But it is a step they take. Can't they take the next one too? Someone once wrote:

"How can we teach
A child to reach
Above himself and touch the stars,
We who no longer reach?"

Two Lecterns

by Elkanah Schwartz

THE RISE OF the Yeshiva world, is accompanied by a growing sense of estrangement and misunderstanding between the students and their own former colleagues who have entered the rabbinate. On the one hand, our yeshiva students, the lifeblood of a Torah society, tend more and more to look upon the rabbinate with utter disregard. The yeshiva student, looking down from his lectern, pictures the rabbi as given excessively to material pursuits, as a hearse-chasing hand shaker, and as an inveterate publicity seeker.

The practising rabbi, at the same time, tends to look down from his lectern at the yeshiva student, and considers him unsophisticated, unworldly, given to conceit, sadly lacking in social grace. The yeshiva student knows that the rabbi occupied his place in the yeshiva not long ago. Yet, he reasons, if that's what happens to one on becoming a rabbi, then obviously it isn't the vocation for him. So he enters the ranks of insurance agents or real estate brokers. Meanwhile, the "ambitious" habitués of the yeshiva, as there always are a few, recognize their chances, and choose the rabbinate. The cycle becomes only more confirmed. The case becomes constantly stronger for succeeding classes of yeshiva students. Meanwhile, the sincere rabbis find the current they set themselves against to be ever more menacing. The rabbi views with apprehension the prospect of another yeshiva student entering his synagogue. He fears that the student will adopt a know-it-all attitude, and will refuse to recognize his authority as a rabbi. And the student? He considers the rabbi as lacking in sufficient Torah scholarship, and looks upon him with disregard. When did the rabbi last open a *sefer*, except to prepare a sermon? Therefore, the student reasons, the rabbi's presumption of authority in no way binds him. Instead, he would rather put himself under the authority of his *Rosh Yeshiva*.

The rabbi knows the student will come to him for various favors, such as making a personal phone call, sending a letter of recommendation, or helping someone in his family. His discourse on Shabbos afternoon, will not be deemed worthy of attention by the student—who will often not hesitate to reveal his attitude even in the presence of the *baale-batim*.

Where did it all start? Historians may track down the source and record it for the edification of posterity. However, although the *Mishna* states that one must first know from whence he came before he knows where

he is heading, we need not, in this instance, project our inquiry too far into the past, in order to accomplish the present purpose of these lines.

Our primary objective is to sharpen the awareness of the aforementioned situation, within a frame of sympathetic desire for mutual understanding. We are at the same time not so naive as to assume that the task can be easily accomplished. The author did not become keenly aware of the matter until he himself entered the rabbinate, while at the same time remaining in close communication with yeshiva students as one of them. Even then, it was only the continuous distressing stream of criticism heard from colleagues from behind each lectern that helped crystalize the problem for him to some extent. Undoubtedly too, others are more qualified to discuss the matter. But the aim of these words is a modest one. They are written in the minimal hope of getting "the two sides to talk to each other" in quest of mutual understanding.

The World of the Yeshiva Student

This observer believes that each lectern speaks truthfully, while both share the blame of not heeding the *Mishnaitic* dictum to refrain from judging your fellow "until you reach his situation."

First, let us attempt to understand the student in the yeshiva. He is in a blessed position. He is akin to the Jews during the forty years in the desert. He does not toil through physical labor for his bread. He is not involved in communal affairs, no organization presses him, and he is not hounded by an artificial schedule. Similarly, as did the Jews at Sinai, he feels that Torah, and nothing else, is his whole reason for existence. The Jews in the desert spent forty years studying what they learned at Sinai, not in happenstance lectures and classes, but in continual diligence. That was what they rose in the morning for—study. And Moshe was their leader; Moshe, the peak of Torah learning—saintliness personified. The yeshiva student looks upon his rebbe as his *Moshe Rabbenu*; as one given over body and soul to the Torah, so that he is not a mere "teacher of Torah," but becomes the very embodiment of the ideals and spirit of Torah.

But while he lives in this real heaven on earth, he is hounded by a dread anticipation which constantly gnaws away at him; namely, the fear of the imposition of the "outside world." He looks through the window, and sees people hurrying helter skelter through the streets. He sits on the bus, and notices the aimless expressions of the passengers. He enters the synagogue, and observes the faceless masses filling the benches. In each case, he says to himself: "I'll be different." And the

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rabbi? He too is part of this "outside world." "He has to do what the people want him to," the student reasons, "otherwise he's out of a job." When the rabbi stands behind his lectern, it seems, he is only trying to project the image his congregation wants him to. "I cannot do that," the student reasons. He knows that a rabbi in America has ample opportunity for personal gain, and it seems to him that many in the ranks do just that. So the rabbi is branded as a member of this "outside world," and is denied the right to represent the Torah point of view.

The Test of the Rabbi's Integrity

And the rabbi? How is he affected? He knows that he, too, was just recently a yeshiva student himself. He too once shared this attitude. But now he has been "burnt" by his initiation into this "outside world." Let us imagine that he is one of those who made the transition without surrendering his integrity. Some of his friends have "capitulated" and serve synagogues without *mechitzos*, earning larger salaries for less effort, while hiding behind a front of "I'll change them." But not he. This rabbi is criticized by his members for refusing to participate in a wedding ceremony, just because he must share the *chupa* with a conservative rabbi. This rabbi incurs the wrath of his sisterhood when he refuses to allow a Bar Mitzvah service for a child of a non-Jewish mother, who grew up thinking he was Jewish because he had a Jewish name. This rabbi is called a crank by people living in the community, because he insists that they rend their garments at a funeral, and makes them remove the black ribbon. This rabbi is looked upon quizzically by his constituents because he refuses to eat at a Bar Mitzvah affair of his vice-president. This rabbi must fight against using a book by a conservative writer in his Talmud Torah, must fight for a sick person getting into a Jewish hospital, must talk a fellow out of marrying a non-Jewess, must fight against late Friday night services—against and for anything and everything he didn't learn about in yeshiva. Does he criticize the yeshiva for not briefing him? No, because a yeshiva is not meant to be a "rabbi factory." But at least, the rabbi feels, at least a little understanding is forthcoming from yeshiva students. Aren't their yeshivos supported by appeals made in the rabbi's synagogue? Then let them show their appreciation or at least consideration. Let them find out what a rabbi must face up to.

What may very well be a salient point in the discussion is the understanding of the proper role of a rabbi. Traditionally, it has been one of spiritual leadership, based upon profound knowledge and practice of Torah and mitzvos. The ministerial and pastoral aspects were not detached. True, a rabbi qualified on the basis of scholarship. But because he was the community's leader, problems were brought to him. In dealing with those problems he tried to emulate the

intent and approach of the rabbi of all Israel—*Moshe Rabbenu*. Moshe's life was not by any means "strictly a classroom situation." The problems of the Jews were *his* problems.

Ideally, the rabbi in every age—ours as well—should view his function in that perspective. But the contemporary rabbi, as do his congregants, lives in an affluent society. In such a society, the need for the "protectiveness" of religion is little felt. People are often too busy acquiring wealth and enjoying it, to concern themselves deeply with spiritual development. So they often employ a rabbi, on the unwritten condition that "he should not bother them." The less he has to do, the prouder they are of their communal affluence. The status symbol on Miami Beach is how much your rabbi makes, and how little you make him work for it.

As a result two things may happen. A sincere individual in the rabbinate often finds himself embroiled in a situation he did not create and in no way relishes. If he should seek people to "work with," he'd have better luck "looking for chometz on Pesach." So, since the devil finds work for idle hands, the rabbi is strongly tempted to occupy himself with other matters.

Secondly, since this is the sad state of communal affairs, the rabbinate attracts others who find it lucrative, and they are not disappointed. However, though these two types are in the minority, they are present in sufficient numbers, for an unknowledgeable yeshiva student to erroneously assume that they typify the rabbinate. Unfortunately he does not know that there is, thank Heavens, a growing corps of responsible and learned spiritual leaders on the American scene. In fact, for one who seeks a life of dedicated service to Torah and *K'lal Yisroel*, the rabbinate may offer a splendid opportunity, despite the acknowledged pitfalls to be avoided, and the obstacles to be overcome.

A Suggestion

At this point a minor suggestion is offered. Yeshiva students should learn what a rabbi goes through by asking the latter to offer an opportunity for discussion, which he will all too eagerly do. If possible, individual students should spend Shabbos with a rabbi, and observe, ask and listen, but above all listen.

The rabbi too should "recapture" his own possibly lost empathy with the inner world of the student, by spending a two-hour session at periodic intervals with yeshiva students, sitting with them in their study hall, away from telephones and visitors, and *learning*, not for the discharge of some rabbinic task, but—as he himself did in Yeshiva days—*lishmah*, without any "practical" aims.

Through the efforts of each to understand the other by "reaching his situation," both might develop an appreciation for the position of the other's lectern, perhaps even to discover that they are not two lecterns, but rather one and the same.

Sarah Shenirer

THE MOTHER OF GENERATIONS

by Joseph Friedenson

on the occasion of her 29th Yahrzeit

SHE WAS NOT BLESSED with children of her own. And yet she was a mother. In fact, one could rightly say that no mother in our generation, had as many children as she did.

When she departed this life twenty nine years ago, hundreds of Jewish girls walked behind her *aron*, towards the Cracow cemetery, and wept with heartening outcries, as one does for one's own lost mother. And when news of her *petira* became known throughout the cities and towns of Jewish Poland, thousands of Jewish girls tore *k'ria* and sat *shiv'a* as if for a mother. The very same year hundreds of young Jewish mothers named their new-born daughters Sarah, after a woman, who—two decades earlier—was still an unknown Jewish seamstress, but who had since become: Sarah Shenirer, the legendary mother of a new Torah-true generation of Jewish women in pre-war Eastern Europe.

The Jewish Home In Danger

It was during the years following the First World War. "New winds began to blow" in many homes throughout Chassidic Poland. New ideas—charged with magnetic promise—reverberated in the Jewish street. Youth clubs and organizations sprouted like mushrooms after rain and beckoned enchantingly to Jewish youth to enter their doors.

The first victim of the new "light" they brought to Polish Jewry was the Jewish girl. The treasures of our *seforim* were not accessible to her. She received no systematic Jewish schooling and was therefore most vulnerable to the empty but ensnaringly attractive slogans of the carriers of the new "light." She unresistently accepted the thought, that "darkness" ruled in the "old" Jewish home; that there was "light" outside; that it was necessary to emerge from the darkness, to enjoy the outer light, or at least to bring some of the outer light within.

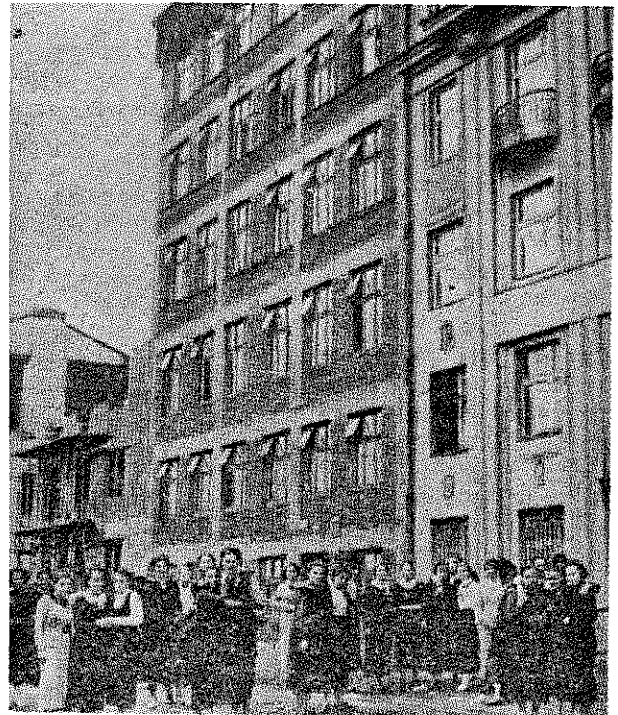
In previously idyllic Jewish homes, strife suddenly erupted. Mother and daughter ceased to understand each other. Brother and sister no longer seemed to have a common language. A "modern" daughter who had learned how to recite a few of Mitzkiewicz's and Slowacki's Polish poems, began to feel ashamed of her "backward" mother. She began to look with disdain upon her "fanatic" father, and had nothing but ridicule for her brother, the *batlan* (the unworldly one, who

wastes away his time and leads an unproductive existence). She began to feel embarrassed over her parents' "broken jargon," and finally began to hate everything Jewish. Jewish fathers and mothers, frightened and powerless, could not understand what was happening around them. They all sensed clearly however, that the Jewish home—that enduring Jewish fortress and consolation for every affliction—was faced by the direct threat of collapse.

At that dark hour a saving angel appeared, in the form of a Jewish seamstress—Sarah Shenirer.

The Cracow Seamstress

In her memoirs, Sarah Shenirer modestly and unaffectedly recounts the first steps of her great achievement. She was a simple and withdrawn daughter of Chassidic parents. She was a diligent pupil, but never dreamed of assuming leadership of any kind.



Building of the first Beth Jacob Teachers Seminary in Cracow where Sarah Shenirer founded what was to become a world-wide network of schools.

At the age of thirteen she completed school. She wanted to continue with her studies, but her parents' material poverty prevented her from doing so, and she became a seamstress. Her thirst for knowledge, however, remained undiminished. She continued to study and to read. In truth, such was the case with many of her friends at the time. But there was one difference. Her friends were "immersed" in Polish novels; she was drawn to her father's *seforim*. And she began to swallow every *sefer* which contained a Yiddish translation or commentary. The more deeply she probed her "new treasure," the further removed she became from her friends. A new world opened for her.

Meanwhile, the war broke out, and Sarah Shenirer—together with a stream of refugees—left for Vienna. Day and night she sat and sowed "clothing for bodies" to earn her livelihood. All she then wanted was a little bit of rest. But a visit in a Synagogue on the Viennese Shtumper Street, summoned her to a larger task than that of a seamstress.

It was Shabbos Chanukah and Rabbi Dr. Plesh spoke of *Matisyahu* and the *Chashmonaim*; of Channah and her seven sons; of Yehudis. Sarah Shenirer felt a new inspiration and enthusiasm. In her inspired and exalted state she began to think of the Jewish girls in Cracow, for whom everything Jewish seemed alien and everything Gentile seemed so alluring and enchanting. "If only I could speak in such a way to my Cracow girl friends," she thought, "how differently they would understand the preciousness of being a daughter of Israel. If I could only describe for them, the prophetess Deborah, Yehudis, Channah, in Dr. Plesh's language, how differently they would understand their *shtreimel*-wearing fathers, their mothers with heads covered, their brothers, the Yeshiva bachurim?"

"Clothes for Souls"

Sarah Shenirer returned to Cracow enthused. She called together a gathering of Jewish girls one Shabbos afternoon and delivered an address on *Perek*. At first, everything seemed to be going smoothly. A large group of girls—thirsty for knowledge—had come to hear her. But when she reached the passage, "and you shall build a fence around the Torah," and began to explain the prohibition of *muktzah*, the room was suddenly filled with loud ridicule, and was soon empty. "Is this what you brought home from Cosmopolitan Vienna?" they laughed. "Is this what you called us to hear?"

Sarah Shenirer felt hopeless—but only for a brief while. A new thought came to her as if in a flash of lightning. She could do nothing with those whom the false shining veneer of Europe had intoxicated and blinded. She would begin with little girls, whose Jewish souls were still pure. She rented two rooms; one served as a "tailor shop," where she "sewed clothes for the body," but in the other she set up a new kind of

"shop," where she began to sew "clothes for young souls." She began to teach the daughters of Israel their duties as children of G-d's People.

The Beth Jacob Movement

She began with twenty five children, whom she had prevailed upon her customers to entrust to her. People at first shook their heads in contemptuous dismissal when talking about the "undertaking of the seamstress." But the educational results of her new school quickly yielded fruit. The parents who entrusted their children to Sarah Shenirer, saw a new spirit in the hearts of her pupils. Sarah Shenirer's pupils somehow talked differently than the pupils of the Polish schools. They didn't answer in Polish when spoken to in Yiddish. They didn't answer with arrogant, upturned noses. They showed respect to their parents. They wanted so much to go to shul with their parents. They asked what *beracha* to recite for this or that. They wanted to hear stories about the *Tzadikim* and the pious. They listened to their grandmothers reading *Tz'edah U'r-edah*.

The twenty five became fifty and seventy five and one hundred. Till . . .

That was the beginning. The continuation of the story, comprises the history of a great Torah-true and "people-true" movement of Jewish girls which carries the sacred name "Beth Jacob;" of a marvelous renaissance and a great healing process in the life of religious Jewry in Poland; of a new generation of Jewish daughters and mothers, who restored the wholeness of the Jewish family in tens of thousands of Jewish homes.

The New Type of Jewish Daughter

When Sarah Shenirer departed this life in 1935, there were close to 300 Beth Jacob schools in Poland alone. And Beth Jacob schools had also risen in many other countries. Agudas Israel assumed responsibility for the direction and maintenance of the movement, thus enabling its extra-ordinary expansion. From those schools there emerged a new generation of women who upheld their Judaism with pride, who often evoked unbelieving amazement amongst their surroundings. Jewish girls who had been "running," as if magnetized, to the outside world, began to feel fortunate and happy in their Jewishness. They began to discard their novels, and to joyously "imbibe" a *posuk* in *Yeshayahu* and *Mishlei*, a passage in a *Mussar sefer*. Everything Jewish became precious to them again. They ceased being ashamed of their parents' Yiddish, and began to speak it again at home and in the streets, without fear of being called "old fashioned" or "backward." They began again to take pride in their father's *shtreimel* and mother's *sheitel*. The old Jewish Torah-centered home again became their ideal.

That was the achievement of Sarah Shenirer. She was the spiritual mother of them all. She loved them all as only a mother can, and they responded with child-like love. She knew all the schools, and maintained contact

with all the Beth Jacob teachers. She wrote for them and to them. She wrote hundreds of essays on a wide variety of themes. She had a share in almost every single school, because she personally visited almost every city and town. She herself never attended a teachers seminary, but never the less became the "life spirit," of one of the finest teachers seminaries in the world—the Beth Jacob Seminary in Cracow.

During the Years of the Holocaust

The Second World War broke out and plunged the Jewish world into unutterable darkness. But in all that enveloping darkness, the pure light which Sarah Shenirer kindled in the hearts of Jewish girls, never ceased to flicker and shine.

The *Kiddush Hashem* story of Sarah Shenirer's Beth Jacob pupils during those tragic *churban* years, has not yet been told. But that story is more than a chronicle. It is a heroic saga, which waits for a Divinely blessed poet to preserve for later generations the account of its pathos, tragedy and exalted song.

How different they were, those pupils of Sarah Shenirer's Beth Jacob schools. I saw them in the ghettos of Lodz and Warsaw. I saw how they secretly maintained schools, kitchens for children and youth groups. I saw how they starved and carried food to Jews who were ill and to lonely *Talmidei Chachomim*. I saw them studying *Mishlei* and *Chovas Halevovos*, in times when others could no longer think about anything other than bread. I saw how they felt the sorrow of the community, when others proved incapable of seeing more than their own "I" . . .

Shabbos Candles in Auschwitz

I saw a group of them in the Birkenau women's camp in Auschwitz. They were the only ones who remembered when it was Shabbos and Yom Tov, when others forgot the sequence of days. Several candles were somehow lit every Friday evening in Auschwitz. Young women placed kerchiefs upon their heads and whispered a *Tefillah*. Some no longer had for whom to pray. They no longer had their husbands or parents, and they wept in prayer for their tortured people.

Somewhere in the Auschwitz women's camp—on a Chanukah evening in a dark horse stable which the Germans called a barrack—several Chanukah candles were lit. At first a mere handful of girls gathered around the candles. But soon the group grew in size, and the light spread over the entire barrack. And in a few minutes several hundred Jewish women were singing a deathless song of contempt for their tyrants: "Maaz Tzur Yeshuasi," and listening to addresses filled with trust in the ultimate vindication of G-d's purpose. Who were the girls who thought of the sacred, heroic deed? They were several pupils of Sarah Shenirer's school in Tarnow.

How Different They Were

They were easily recognizable in Auschwitz. They talked differently. They never became accustomed to the vulgar language of the camps. They dressed differently. When they worked in the bakery or in the kitchen, they deprived themselves of that beckoning extra bit of bread, and smuggled it out—not to exchange it for cigarettes or other objects, as so many others did, but to sustain a weak camp *chavera*, at the end of her strength. They stuck together, and helped each other, but their hearts were also filled with readiness to extend succor to total strangers. They never sought privileges or the easing of their burdens at the expense of another, while others trod upon the dead and the living in an effort to lighten their sufferings.

What *mesiras nefesh* they had for Judaism—for the observance of a *mitzvah*! I remember one episode in Birkenau. A young woman stood near an old Jew who had arrived in the camp only two days earlier. He was deathly hungry, and she stood near him with a bowl of soup, which she begged him to eat. He would not touch the soup because it was *treif*. But she proved to him with *pesukim* and citations from *Chazal*, that it was permissible for him to have the soup, that he *had* to partake of the soup, that it was a *Mitzvah* for him to eat whatever he was given. She was a former instructor of Sarah Shenirer's Beth Jacob Seminary in Cracow. And it later became known to me, that for so long as that young woman was in Auschwitz—she spent *four years* there—she herself never ate *treife* food.

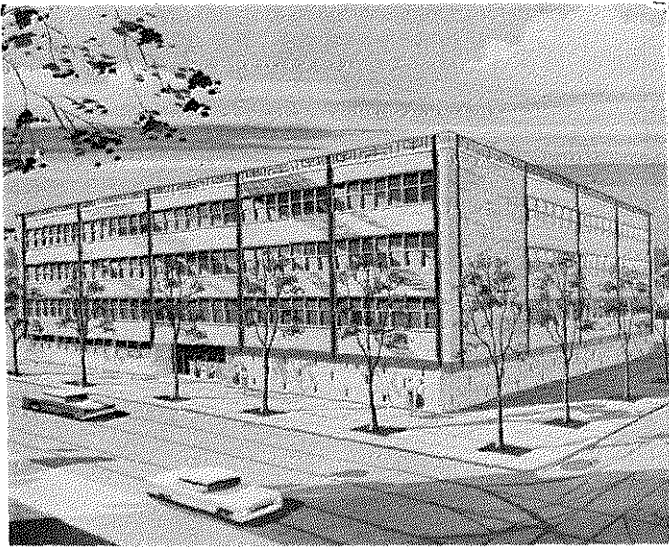
Now certainly no one would dare to criticize or condemn others who did not have their *mesiras nefesh* in the midst of those terrible circumstances. All the more then does one realize how inadequate *human* language is for conveying the *superhuman* exaltation of those pupils and teachers of Beth Jacob.

Her Life Work Endures

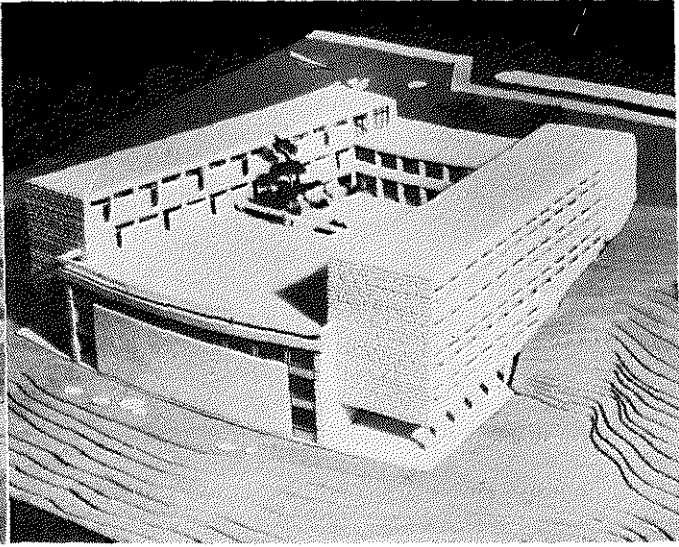
In Poland, in the land where Sarah Shenirer planted her kernels for a new generation of Jewish women, there are no Beth Jacob schools left today. There are no Beth Jacob schools in Lithuania or Latvia, in Pressburg or Bucharest.

But Sarah Shenirer's life's work, a branch of the eternal Jewish tree of life, has been transplanted, wherever the surviving remnant of the holocaust has been transplanted. Her Beth Jacob movement lives wherever Jews evince the desire to continue their existence as a "Kingdom of Kohanim and a Holy People."

More than fifteen thousand Jewish girls are enrolled in over a hundred Beth Jacob schools within the frame of Chinuch Atzmai in Eretz Yisroel. The Central Beth Jacob Seminary in Jerusalem—Katamon, sustains the living heritage of the Cracow Seminary. Today it can be told. The students of the Jerusalem Seminary made possible—at a crucial moment—the organization of



Beth Jacob of Boro Park in Brooklyn, New York, the most recent addition to the network. The building houses 1,200 girls and is one of the most modern school structures in New York City.



Architect's rendering of the new Beth Jacob Teachers Seminary in Jerusalem. Construction has begun and completion is scheduled for next year. The building will have a 1,100 capacity.

Chinuch Atzmai. They were the first *Chalutzot* to respond to the call of the *Gedolei Hatorah* not to permit integration of the religious schools into the frame of the government-sponsored educational system. They expressed readiness to work for half salaries in order to keep alive the spirit of Sarah Shenirer in the education of Jewish girls.

In America there are approximately twenty five thriving Beth Jacob schools. And here too, there has not yet been an adequate evaluation of the contribution made by these schools to the rise of orthodox life in America.

We take so much pride in the new Yeshivos and centers of Torah which have been erected in America in the last two decades, but we tend to forget, that without the Beth Jacob schools many of the yeshivos would very likely not have been found on the Torah map. And as for the future—what future could we envisage for the Yeshivos, without the achievement of Beth Jacob!

She Lives In Their Hearts

They are an indomitable legion in the battle for a "whole" Judaism, which must fill the heart of every Torah-true Jew with hope and pride. They are now to be found in the tens of thousands of Eretz Yisroel, in America, in England, in Switzerland, in Belgium, and even in Argentina and Uruguay. And everywhere they are characterized by profound love of Torah and of all that is holy to the Jewish people; by wholehearted

piety and pride in their being Torah-true daughters of their people.

They are all children of Sarah Shenirer. For she lives in the hearts of them all.

The Jewish Observer wishes to express its sincere appreciation and thanks to the Spero Foundation for its gracious permission to print excerpts from Henry Biberfeld's work, "David, King of Israel," in a recent issue of The Jewish Observer. The Spero Foundation will very shortly announce the publication of this work and we hereby extend our good wishes.

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The Ten Commandments (from page 3)

et. al., who are the heroes he first heard of in his Sunday School classes, who were the forerunners of Christianity. *Jew*, on the other hand, conjures up in his mind the image of the nasty, incorrigible rascal who for centuries has been thumbing his nose at attempts to convert him and persists in living his own peculiar, "pagan" sort of life.

More important than the "image" of the Jew (Hebrew), which is fostered by word manipulation, is the undercutting of the essence of Torah by the use of an innocent sounding phrase, all too frequently used by Jews as well, which negates the essence of Judaism.

It would be enlightening and productive to determine the origin of the phrase, *The Ten Commandments*, which, on consideration, is not an accurate translation of the Hebrew text, *Aseres Hadibros*. The Torah does not speak of *Aseres Hamitzvohs*, which might be translated, ten commandments, but rather of ten utterances. The Torah did not single out ten particular *mitzvohs* which stand out as being uniquely significant; in fact there are more than ten *mitzvohs* in the *Aseres Hadibros*. (It is fascinating to note that the Greek word *Decalogue*, *deca*—ten, *logos*—words, ten words, is closer to the original text.) The Torah refers to ten basic propositions which as scholars have told us, are the basis for the six hundred and thirteen *mitzvohs* of the Torah. Each of the *mitzvohs* derive from one of the *Aseres Hadibros*, and in turn flows back to the core, as the heart pumps blood to each limb and organism of the body and then receives the return flow.

Christian theology would have us believe that *The Ten Commandments*, anticipated the founding of a new "faith" which would negate the minutia of *mitzvohs*, and yet maintain the "spirit" in the exalted terms of *The Ten Commandments*. In truth, however, just as the body is a single unit, nurtured by the heart, so too is the Torah a single essence, nurtured by the basic principles enunciated in the *Aseres Hadibros*.

The massive offensive to capture Jewish souls in Israel and throughout the world is a threat, not less so, but more so, because it is clothed in a layer of love and brotherliness. In this battle, which will be fought with greater intensity through the written and spoken word, it is most important that we define our terms and not be victimized by fuzzy thinking which invariably is followed by fuzzy behavior and reaction.

It is highly significant that while the Second Session of the Ecumenical Council did not find the time to act upon the schema relating to *non-Christians* (Jews), one of the major pronouncements of the Council was the schema on mass communication. In this schema, calling upon the Church to use with greater acumen, skill and intensity, all of the means of mass communication which modern science has made available, we have the most obvious clue to the techniques which will be used to obliterate Judaism by conversion of Jews.

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Further Acts in the "Shalom" Drama

Developments in recent weeks in the controversy over the issue whether the new flag-ship of Zim Lines, the "S. S. Shalom," will have a second kitchen which will be non-kosher, have been so confusing, that one reads the conflicting reports with bewilderment. In the third issue of "The Jewish Observer," we depicted the first four acts of this drama, from the united stand by the Rabbinate in every part of the world against a *trefe* kitchen on the "Shalom," to the decision of the Zim Lines to withdraw its hechsher agreement with an unknown "rabbinic group." We concluded this story with a question: "Where do we go from here?"

The following are the latest "acts" in this unfolding "drama:"

Act Five: January 15, "The Jewish Day"—A temporary agreement has been reached between Premier Eshkol and Minister Shapiro, according to which the "Shalom" will have only a kosher kitchen on its trips on the Mediterranean between France and Israel, and will activate its non-kosher kitchen on its Trans-Atlantic trips between Europe and the United States.

Act Six: January 16, "The Jewish Day"—The Mizrachi office denied the January 15th report, and declared that the following temporary agreement is possible: only the kosher kitchen will be used on all trips between Israel and the United States, but when the "Shalom" will decide to travel on other routes, then the question of two kitchens will be reviewed anew.

Act Seven: January 24, Israeli Press—The administration of the Zim Lines declared today that the "Shalom" will have two kitchens in accordance with its original decisions, "unless the government decides otherwise."

Act Eight: February 6, Israeli Press—Premier Eshkol emphatically stated that the original government decision to have two kitchens on the "Shalom" remains in full force.

SECOND LOOKS

at the Jewish scene

by Ben-Meir

Act Nine: February 7, "The Jewish Day"—The tensions between the Mapai and the National Religious Party over the ship "Shalom" have been heightened, and the latter informed Premier Eshkol that unless the Cabinet resolves that the ship should have only one kitchen, Mizrachi will leave the coalition cabinet. So far, both parties have found agreement that only the first voyage of the "Shalom" should have a kosher kitchen, but the Trans-Atlantic trip should have two kitchens—kosher and not kosher.

Act Ten: February 7, "Panim el Panim"—The new arrangement regarding the "Shalom" is: only the kosher kitchen will be active on short trips, but on excursion trips the non-kosher kitchen will be activated, and the kosher kitchen will then be closed.

Act Eleven: February 10, Israeli Press—Premier Eshkol stated that on the maiden voyage of the "Shalom" only the kosher kitchen will be open, and the question of two kitchens will first be taken up after Passover.

Again we ask: *Where do we go from here?*

Obviously, the threat of the Mizrachi to resign from the government coalition cabinet did not frighten the Mapai leaders (See Panim el Panim Feb. 14). It seems abundantly evident to Mapai that if Mizrachi had any intention of leaving the

coalition over religious issues, there were many more severe infractions of the so-called "religious status quo" agreement that had been breached, without Mizrachi leaving the cabinet. Minister Shapiro publicly stated this in a circular letter on November 26th, 1963, in which he declared: "We have reached a situation today when secular groups including some within the government, have shaken to the foundations the status-quo confirmed by the 1955 agreement."

The present impasse of Mizrachi policy comes in the wake of a long history of vacillation, which in turn can be attributed to a situation where policy decisions were made on principle by political leaders of the movement instead of its spiritual leaders. Perhaps if the non-religious government leaders would have been faced all these years with an uncompromising stand on the part of its religious coalition partners, the situation surrounding the ship "Shalom" would not be confusing today.

The United Demand to Ban Missionary Activity in Israel

The united declaration sent last month to Premier Levi Eshkol by all the Orthodox organizations in the United States, co-signed by the six distinguished Roshei Yeshivos who initiated the project, marks an important forward step in an attempt to correct a major evil. This unprecedented harmony amongst the Orthodox groups, who differ in their approaches to many other issues, should have a strong effect on the thinking of Israel's government leaders. We hear that the Rabbinate in other parts of the world have united in similar declarations, which should only add to the effectiveness of this demand.

Regrettably, as clear cut as this issue is, there still are elements amongst us who distort the true nature of the justified demand to put a halt to the sordid missionary efforts to convert Jewish children. A blatant example of this lack of understanding of the issues involved is an editorial in the *National Jewish Post*

(February 7, 1964), in which the editor writes: "We wonder how wise is the Orthodox Rabbinate of the United States in requesting the Israel Government to ban missionary activity in Israel. Were Israel to heed the request, the situation would be analogous to conditions in Spain, where Protestants were forbidden to hold public worship for reasons not dissimilar to those held by the Orthodox groups now petitioning Eshkol . . . We even doubt that the Orthodox laity in the United States will support its Rabbinate in this demand."

What a gross distortion of the Orthodox position! No one has requested the Israel government to ban freedom of public worship, and the responsible editor of an Anglo-Jewish newspaper should be familiar with this simple fact.

All that the Orthodox groups request is that the government put a halt to the missionaries exploiting the poverty of immigrant children, by enticing them into the missions with a pair of shoes and other attractions, for the purpose of ultimate conversion from the faith of their fathers. This activity of the missionaries amongst children should be reprehensible to every human being with a conscience, and especially to Jews, who through all previous generations rejected "shmad" even when put to the torch of inquisitions.

Nor is it correct to state that this request stems only from the "rabbinate," as every Orthodox lay organization in the United States co-signed the declaration sent to Premier Eshkol. One does not have to be a rabbi to detest weaning innocent underprivileged immigrant children from the Jewish faith by determined missionaries, who have millions of dollars for their nefarious purpose.

Only this past month, the Moetzes Gedolei Hatorah found it necessary to issue a public proclamation, which was circulated in all immigrant settlements in Israel, warning parents not to permit their children to be lost to their faith by unwittingly falling into the traps of the

missionaries. In this call of the Torah authorities, they also asked the public not to be deceived by the new Bibles that the missionaries are distributing, in which they have bound the New Testament together with, *l'havdil*, the Torah.

Efforts in behalf of a law to ban missionary activity in Israel should be given top priority by Jewish leaders throughout the world, and should gain the support of every Jew, regardless of the degree of his personal religious observance.

A Round Table Discussion In Tel Mond Prison

Eight of the yeshiva students who participated in the anti-mission demonstrations were given the choice of paying a fine to "expiate their guilt" or of serving a prison term. They chose the latter. We think that some of the events which accompanied their stay in the Israeli jail at Tel Mond will be of profound interest to our readers.

First, who were the eight yeshiva students?

Eliezer Dynner, aged 25, from London, England (he has been in Israel three years); Yaakov Weintraub, aged 18, from Haifa; Shmuel Lopian, aged 20, from Chicago, Illinois (three years in Israel); Simcha Morgenstern, aged 20, from Tel Aviv; Yitzchok Markowitz, aged 18, from Ramat Gan; Yehuda Silver, aged 19, from Chicago, Illinois (two years in the land); Menasha Korman, aged 25, from Haifa; Mayer She'ar-Yashuv, aged 20, from Tel Aviv.

How did they spend their time in prison?

They transformed Tel Mond into a yeshiva. The aged and infirm Rosh Yeshiva of Hevron—the Gaon, Rabbi Yechezkel Sarna, journeyed to the prison to give *shiurim* to the boys. The venerable Rabbi Eliyahu Lopian came to the prison to give the boys discourses in Mussar. The entire Torah world both in Israel and in America made known to the "prisoners," its absolute solidarity with them. If the secularist camp thought that it was heaping dis-

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honor upon the cause of Torah in the missionary matter, by imprisoning those boys, it knows now that it has erred severely. Their "dishonor" has become a badge of honor not only for themselves, who have worn it so proudly, but also for the entire Torah world which is now resolutely determined, as never before, not to relent a hairsbreadth in its struggle to rid the land of Israel from the missionary plague.

It will surely be a measure of gratification for us to know that the tide of public opinion is beginning to turn in our favor even in the secularist camp. In the place of the earlier total condemnation and vilification, the course of the anti-mission demonstrators is beginning to receive approval from the most unexpected sources. In the January 31st issue of the non-religious Israeli newspaper *Yediyot Achronot* a round table discussion whose participants were the Tel Mond prisoners, was introduced with the following words:

"Approximately 3,000 Jewish children are found today in the net of the Christian missions which are active in the State of Israel—this is the estimate of persons knowledgeable in the field, even though it isn't an official estimate.

"Recently there is much conversation about the "dialogue" which Christianity wishes to renew between itself and Judaism. Meanwhile it conducts the dialogue with little children. This is the easier way, even though it isn't a particularly honorable one.

"The Christian Mission does this, understandably, for the sake of heaven. It wants to save Jewish children at every price. When?—Today. From whom? — From the hands of the State of Israel and from the hands of its Jewish governmental educational system.

"Where was the Mission yesterday when Jewish children were thrown live into the flames? Why did it not save them then? Why did it not save them from the hands of the German Christians?

"Yesterday they were not there. Today they come to save. And they come to Israel. Those children it wasn't necessary to save. They were in the hands of Christians. Not so children who are found in the hands of Jews.

"The answer to our questions we have already received from the pastor who wanted to serve as a confessor to Eichman and to enable him to settle in heaven. . . . Said the pastor: "If Eichman had accepted J— before his death, he would have inherited the world to come, he would have ascended to the Christian Garden of Eden. But as for those children and infants who were cast into the burning furnace—for them there were no hopes. They fell from Auchwitz directly into hell, because they had not accepted J----."

"This is the teaching of Christianity. And out of this Christian love the Missionaries worry, that if something similar happens again, those children will at least be assured of a journey to the Christian Garden of Eden, where they will perhaps meet with the Nazis who have already accepted J----."

Reform and Intermarriage

In the early days of Reform, its protagonists claimed widely that one of its prime motivations was to hold Jews within the fold who would otherwise depart from the Jewish people completely, by offering them "a modern Judaism." Those who know German Jewish history of the last century, as well as the contemporary American Jewish scene know how untrue that claim was and is. Quite the contrary. They know that Reform Judaism has always been a one way bridge into assimilation, intermarriage, and finally total departure from Judaism via conversion to another faith. But of course this was vehemently denied by the protagonists of Reform. Recently, however the "cat has been let out of the bag."

The Anglo-Jewish press has recently widely reported on a "debate" between two leading Reform

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Rabbis on the subject, which appeared in the winter edition of the CCAR Journal, a quarterly publication of the Central Conference of American Rabbis, the national association of Reform Rabbis. One of the participants in the discussion, Rabbi Charles E. Shulman of the Riverdale Temple, Riverdale, N. Y. writes: "If the Conference is going to discourage mixed marriages without meeting the issues raised by it solely on the ground that it is contrary to the tradition of the Jewish Religion, it is possible that social conditions may by-pass the Conference position and leave the Reform Rabbinate without influence or capacity either in retaining Jews for the Jewish people or winning adherents to the Jewish cause in days to come."

Please note that little innocent phrase about winning adherents to the Jewish cause in days to come. How deeply alienated one must be from even the most elementary Jewish sensibilities to imagine for a moment that "adherents" won through making intermarriage easier can genuinely become part of the people of Torah? How blind are those in our own camp who believe that a policy of co-existence is possible with such "Rabbis."

Women in the Rabbinate

Lest our readers think that Reform is only concerned with "destructive matters," here is a "constructive" one. The New York Times of November 19th reports the following: "a resolution asking for a solution to the problem (of the right of women to serve as rabbis in American Reform Judaism) will be submitted to the convention of the National Federation of Temple Sisterhoods. This is an affiliate of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, ----" Speaking in support of ordaining women as reform rabbis Mrs. Jean Wise May, daughter of the late Isaac Mayer Wise, the founder of American Reform stated: "Reform Judaism is not

afraid of change." To which we can only say—It sure isn't. It has never been. Why should it begin to be afraid now? One only wonders how many hundreds of times the phrase has been used to break down the sanctities of Judaism step by step until now there is almost nothing left for them to discard. Mrs. May continued, "we are certain that women can qualify as rabbis." To which may we be permitted to add—"as reform rabbis, certainly." In *that* "rabbinate" their qualifications are certainly no less than those which have been required to date. Of course Dr. Maurice N. Eisendrath, President of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations had an "interesting" point to make in support of the above contention, which was perhaps bolstered by his own recent "ecumenical" experience. Let Dr. Eisendrath speak for himself. He found it paradoxical that "the liberal revolutionary movement of reform Judaism should, in this regard, lag behind several of the forward looking Protestant denominations which have ordained women as ministers to the enrichment of the church and the Christian fellowship."

Enough? Almost, except for one little item. Apparently, the problem of "feminine equality" is an urgent one in Conservative Judaism also. Needless to say though, as in many other matters, Conservatism "lags behind" Reform, just as the latter "lags behind the forward looking Protestant denominations." A JCNS News release of January 24th states: "Although Conservative synagogues have abjured "discrimination" against women they have less than a fair share of Torah honors in the congregations of the United Synagogue. . . . Some of Rabbi Blumenthal's colleagues complained that women 'are often reluctant to accept an aliyah.' All of which is perhaps an indication of the quality of "fermentation" and "inner creativity," in the ranks of Reform and Conservatism.

BOOK REVIEW

ETHICS FROM SINAI (Vol. I), by Irving M. Bunim

(P. Feldheim, New York, 1964).

Ignorance has always been a danger to the Jew; the ignoramus cannot be a truly pious man, as we have been warned by our sages. In our days, however, this danger is more serious than at any previous time in our history. In former generations when Jews lived in close-knit communities, the unlearned were able to follow the lead given by the community as a whole. Today, on the other hand, communal unity under Torah auspices no longer exists. We find the majority of our young men and women growing up in complete isolation from the wellsprings of our Torah heritage or exposed to synagogues and Hebrew schools that dilute or misinterpret this heritage, and with no direct access at all to our great spiritual treasures. How can we bridge this tragic gap? How can we reach them? One of the most important means to this end is excellently exemplified by the work before us.

The author calls it "an eclectic, wide-ranging commentary on *Pirke Avoth*." He has not aspired to producing another dissertation for the scholar. Instead, he has set out to interpret to American Jewry at large—and in particular to the Jew in search of his heritage—the wisdom of our fathers. In a masterful manner he discusses the teachings contained in *Pirke Avoth*, in the light of Talmudic and Rabbinic interpretations, always with an eye to their applicability to present—day issues. The immutability of Torah, the significance of *Mitzvos* the sterility of Conservatism and Reform, the true task of the rabbi, the Jewish concept of charity—these are just some of the great themes which are discussed. There is a welcome reminder that Yeshivos are not merely for the select few, and that there is no place in Jewish education for teachers who do not practice what they preach. The place of physical and material pleasures in Torah thought, the dignity of man, his weakness and his great potential, are all reflected in the pages of this work.

But what deserves to be stressed in particular is the manner of presentation. This is not a collection of sermons, or of dry and pedantic dissertations. "Ethics from Sinai," is eminently readable; its style captures the reader's interest; and well-chosen parable, anecdote, or Rabbinic epigram, ever so often throws a brilliant light on the subject discussed. Actually this should not surprise us. Irving Bunim has gained the recognition and respect of the community as a man of action—a man who has carried the message of Torah loyalty into the world of business and social endeavor, philanthropy and communal organization. He knows American Jewry and he is able to speak to it in the language which it under-

stands. His points are made clearly; his examples—drawn from life—speak for themselves; and his conclusions hit home. Thus, ideas of the *Rambam*, observations of the *Gaon* of Vilna or the *Baal Shom Tov*, interpretations given by Rabbi Israel Salanter or the *Chofetz Chayim*, come to life, opening up to the reader a world which otherwise he would never have come to know.

Needless to say, concerning a work such as this, there may be some differences of opinion about which interpretations to choose and which approaches to make use of. This reviewer, for instance, would have dispensed with the particular explanation of the "three pillars of Simeon the Just" given on pages 43-44; and he feels that the problem of our relationship to false leaders of our people (p. 85) deserves a more adequate treatment (in line with the remarks of our sages in *Pesochim* 113 B and elsewhere). Yet these are very minor points in a most excellent work. There can also be some disagreement with the author over his use of quotations from general literature; but there is no doubt that many among the wide public that will be reached by this volume will find these quotations helpful in their initiation into a world of thought that so far has been unfamiliar to them.

There is, however, one aspect of this work that raises a question. On page 188 the author, very urgently warns against those who seek to "explain, supposedly, how these spiritual giants (the Rabbis of the *Mishnah*) were merely responding to economic influences. . . or were using arbitrary interpretations of Scriptural tests for reasons and purposes of their own," and castigates attempts "gratuitously to make arbitrary, unfounded assumptions about their intentions, historic needs, personal circumstances . . ." Yet the biographical vignettes attached to each of the three *perokim* discussed in this volume sometimes fall into this very error by relating supposed personal temperament to the teachings of particular sages. For example, they state of Shammai, "in temperament he was the very opposite of Hillel, given to impatience, he lacked the sweet forbearance. . . . Shammai and his followers adopted stringent viewpoints in Jewish law" (p. 113). On the other hand, they say of Rabbi Gamliel the Elder: "A true descendant of Hillel, he was compassionate and lenient in questions of law. . . ." (p. 113).

Rabbi Israel Salanter ("*Ohr Yisroel*," Ch. 28) discusses this matter at length, pointing out how impossible it is to impute to Shammai, one of the greatest men in Jewish history, character traits that vastly lesser men would disdain to exhibit, and he concludes that "just as Shammai and Hillel disagreed on matter of Torah law, so they also disagreed on the proper form of serving G-d—whether to conduct oneself humbly or whether, for the honor of the Torah it is necessary to conduct oneself with severity . . . Each one conducted himself according

(page 27, please)

Antisemitism and the Jewish Response

(continued from page 8)

awareness, that our own mental and emotional alienation from Torah is one of the most potent unseen allies of our enemies. Such alienation, through weakening our Jewish pride, makes us receptive to the unspeakable suspicion that perhaps our enemies are at least a little right. It sometimes even reduces us to the degradation of "embracing the soul of our enemies," (through blind aping of their way of life) at the very moment that they are physically seeking to destroy us.

On the other hand, rootedness in the knowledge and love of Torah, gives us an inner strength and dignity which physical persecution can never take from us. It spares us the humiliation which is the cruelest torture our enemies can inflict upon us. It safeguards us against the emotional collapse which is inevitably the lot of victims of physical persecution who are, in addition, made to feel the senselessness of their own existence. In one of the Jewish schools of Nazi-occupied Vilna, a Jewish child was asked: "If you could go to a non-Jewish school outside the ghetto, in which you could enjoy the warmth of sunshine and the pleasures of going to parks and playing with toys, wouldn't you rather go there, even if you had to become a Nazi to do so?" The child answered: "No, I would not. I would rather stay here." The choice of that child is the secret of Jewish eternity. In a lightning flash, anguished as we are by the *hastoras panim* (hiding of the Divine countenance) which attends Jewish suffering at antisemitic hands, we all the same learn once again, that unless the soul takes precedence over the body, humanity must return to the jungle. We also learn, from that child's answer, that the only hope for a humanized humanity lies in the assertion of that supremacy.

c. "Esther's intercession with the king"

The utilization of the services of brethren of ours in high station, who have free access to persons or agencies of high governmental authority, would perhaps in our day, be one of the most popular aspects of Jewish defense activities. Indeed, the method could be a proper one, given certain conditions, and has often been of great value in the alleviation of Jewish suffering.

Its limitations, however, ought also to be known, and they are the following:

1. The Achashveroshs of history are often erratic, vain, and stupid individuals. They cannot always be relied upon. If their momentary moods and their caprices, happen to be fortunate ones for us, then "the evil decree" will be averted. Should our "Achashverosh" happen not to take favorable notice of our "Esther," then woe to us and woe to her. Sustained and exclusive reliance on the Achashveroshs of history has availed us little in time of need.

2. In approaching our "Esthers" and pleading with

them to come to the assistance of their people, we would do well not to be fawning and excessively flattering. There are well springs of Jewish loyalty in the hearts of Jews "who live in palaces" too, but the wisest way to awaken that loyalty is to speak to them in the accents of Mordecai's admonition, "Think not to yourself that you will escape in the king's house, more than all the Jews. For if you altogether hold your peace at this time, then will relief and deliverance arise to the Jews from another place, but you and your father's house will perish."

To set up our "Esthers" as arbiters of Jewish destiny by making them authoritative Jewish communal figures, in payment for their assistance towards the alleviation of Jewish suffering, is to commit a grievous error. It will not inspire them with greater dedication in the discharge of their task, then can, the claim of unavoidable Jewish obligation. But it may, and often does infect us with their alienation from Judaism, when we allow our "Esthers" to arbitrate for us in our religious and educational affairs, on the basis of their "defense" activities.

The Adopted form of Purim Observance

In the traditional observance of Purim, the following aspects are included: (a) historic recollection; (b) clev-

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er pedagogy; (c) Jewish brotherhood; (d) concern for the poor and needy; and, (e) merriment that is not escapist.

a. sober historic recollection

There is a striking introduction to the "carnival" spirit of Purim. Each year, on the day before Purim, the Fast of Esther and the Jews of Shushan is observed. A spirit of gaiety is soon to be felt, but not one of senseless abandonment, for we may not forget the travail and the terrible fear of impending doom which precede the joy of deliverance, and the experience of Divine Providence accompanying that deliverance. Both must be reexperienced, else, the true meaning of joy, would soon be forgotten. The festival would soon cease to be a source of strength and *Jewish* renewal for us, and would therefore cease to be a *Jewish* festival. When night falls we read the *Megilla* containing the story of Purim. And the *Halachic* obligation to listen attentively to every word of the *Megilla* underscores the primary importance of "sober" historic recollection in the whole pattern of Purim gaiety.


b. clever pedagogy

Modern Jews are often much concerned with the problem of how to steel their children against the effects of some cruel antisemitic remark or incident. In other times and places the wider prevalence of antisemitism may have been ground for much greater preoccupation on the part of Jewish parents with this matter. But even in our time and place, all of us are occasionally made aware that unless our children are mentally and emotionally strengthened against the after effects of exposure to antisemitism, then resultant feelings of insecurity, inferiority and fear can greatly damage their proper Jewish and human development. What rare pedagogical cleverness there is therefore, in giving to our children a weapon of such devastating ridicule as the repeated sounding of the *greggar* upon mention of Haman's name.

And as the same sounding of the *greggar* gives voice, with triumphant derision, to our deep seated conviction that the end of the enemies of the Jew can never be different than Haman's was, do we not find ourselves in possession of a subtle pedagogic device of rarest effectiveness, for imparting to our children an abiding faith in the eternity of Israel; a faith whose strength will make them immune to the psychological hurt of antisemitism? (Let it be noted at this point that the *greggar* element of Purim when exaggerated, as we often allow it to be exaggerated, will lose its effectiveness. Here as in all things, a sense of proper balance is vital.)

c. Jewish Brotherhood

In our contemporary frame of Jewish reference, the emphasis on the importance of brotherhood activities is often "restricted" to inter-religious or inter-denominational brotherhood. We somehow forget that the



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cultivation of human love in a universal sense, needs for its native soil a sense of love for one's own. Where love of one's own is absent, the seeds of universal love can find no place in which to take root and grow. For the area in which the soul of a person is formed and molded, is first and foremost the limited orbit of childhood relations. A person must first learn the meaning of love within his family before he can learn to love his community. Likewise, chronologically, love of people is preceded by love of community. Neither can one ever learn to love the whole wide world without first having learned to love one's people. What a terribly twisted logic it is, which seeks to invert the chronological order of these various radii in the cultivation of the capacity of the individual Jewish human soul for love of others than itself. Oftimes in fact, the impression is inescapable that some of our brotherhood programs are a "cover-up" for the lack of these same qualities among our own.

How much more is this true in times such as our own, when the non-Jewish world has not only not been affected in the least by our "protestations of brotherhood," but has evinced for us only hate or, at best, cold disregard for our suffering? And it is as if the beautiful Purim *minhag* of *mishloach monos* were to say to us: "When the hatred of Hamanism surrounds you, doubly reinforce amongst yourselves, love and concern of one Jew for another."

d. *Concern for the Poor and Needy*

As is the case with all Jewish holidays, we are enjoined by our tradition on Purim also, and with even greater emphasis, to make certain that no Jew or Jewess be deprived of the joy of the festival because of material poverty. And this we are bidden to do personally, not organizationally. Our own Purim Seudah, would be incomplete were we not to enable other, needy Jews to have a Purim Seudah as well. And this direct personal mode in Jewish charity is the one most distinguishing and necessary features of Jewish giving for the alleviation of need. Where Jewish charity ceases to be personal, it ceases after a while to be Jewish.

e. *Restrained Gaiety*

The things that usually accompany a carnival—masquerading, drinking intoxicating beverages, etc., are foreign to the Jewish mood of life on all other days of the year. Purim, however, is an exception. Normally, it would be considered a strange thing for the Rabbis to approve or condone, not to speak of fostering, forms of enjoyment and relaxation which seek to give pleasure through stimulation of the senses and the imagination, strong enough to temporarily "block" out of consciousness, the sense of reality and of rational and moral experience which roots in reason and conscience. Of Purim, by contrast, the Rabbis say: "A person is enjoined to drink on Purim till he no longer knows the difference between the words 'cursed be Haman' and

'blessed be Mordecai'." Masquerading has also been proverbially popular on Purim. Frivolous impersonation of even the most respected leaders and members of the community, rabbinic as well as lay, has always been encouraged on Purim.

Despite all this, however, even at this point, there is a distinctively Jewish note to be discerned. For one thing, devout and pious Jews to whom the fulfillment of any Mitzvah, whatever the cost, and whatever the inconvenience, is a felt necessity, somehow never manage to fulfill "the Mitzvah" of inebriation on Purim quite completely. They become a little high perhaps but never do they lose sufficient clarity of consciousness and conscience to be properly classified as drunkards. In fact, it is precisely at this point, when the elements of sub-conscious motivation often break the bonds of our normally clever ability to conceal them, that the true nobility of the *Torah-formed personality* shines through. For in those moments, there becomes apparent how deeply the study and life of Torah affects the sub-structure of personality.

There is still another "inversion" of a deeply rooted Jewish attitude, which reflects rich symbolism—the recitation of *grammen* (rhymes). B'nei Torah fortify themselves sufficiently but not excessively with spirits,

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cast away their deeply ingrained reverence for each word and phrase of the Torah and the writings of the Rabbis, and utilize Torah and Rabbinic texts torn out of contexts, for rhymed perorations which frivolously satirize the failings of the community and even of its outstanding personalities. Aside from serving as a valve for the release of popular grievances, and imposing upon the community's leadership the awareness that their behavior is periodically subject to public critical review, the recitation of "grammen" is perhaps an indirect expression of an abiding Jewish conviction; the understanding that the hand of Providence allows anti-Semitism to do us harm only after we become *Jewishly weakened* by our own failings and shortcomings. And it is as if we were saying through the mask of merriment: "We have not forgotten that our own striving for Jewish self-improvement, is the strongest and truest safeguard against the menace of anti-Semitism—for, has not King David taught us, that 'the heart of kings and princes is in the hands of Hashem'? And, therefore, can any enemy prevail against us unless our own shortcomings have made us vulnerable in taking from us the shield of Divine Protection?"

ETHICS FROM SINAI

(continued from page 23)

to his own principle, but if they had each held the opposite viewpoint they would each have acted in the opposite manner." This is not merely a matter of historical interest, but of very practical concern; if lenient or severe decisions of law are the result of rational deliberation—as they in truth are—they possess a universal validity that would not be theirs if they were the outcome of personal circumstances or imperfections.

It is therefore to be hoped that the biographical sketches in the second volume of this work will be formulated with particular attention to this point, and that a second edition of the present volume will bring a revision of several of the vignettes.

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THE MOST ELABORATE BUILDINGS, however, are the Yeshiva buildings—housing the Yeshiva Beis Medrash and the Mechinah. These are well-ventilated, roomy and impressive structures, with the *shtenders* lined up in "military precision"—*a la* the Telzer emphasis on *seder* (order). The dining-room, too, is vast and equipped with the most modern of accessories. These are the type of Yeshiva buildings my friends, the protagonists of the *Shtetel*, can well boast of and take pride in.

During the week-end, even over Shabbos, the "learning-sedorim" go on as usual, except—of course—for the time taken out to *daven*. We held the sessions of the Mid-Western Region of Yeshiva Principals, on the weekend I spent in Telzville, during the *seedorim*—but we did *daven* together with the Yeshiva in the morning; and in the Mechinah in the afternoon. And I must say that the Telzer *davening* has a character all its own. I must confess, too, that hardly have I ever *davened* at so slow and deliberate a pace, and with so much *de-vaikus*—no doubt generated by the *Litvischer* "sing-song" so characteristic of Telz. Yet the greatest "surprise" awaited me at the end of the *davening*, when all of the *bochrim* lined up, in single file, to greet the *Roshei Yeshiva* at the "*Mizrach vant*."

To me, especially and perhaps particularly, the scene dramatized the "success-story" of the Day School movement. Here was a young lad from the Toras Emes Yeshiva in Los Angeles whom I had rewarded nine years ago with a year's subscription to "Olomeinu" for knowing his *Chumash* so well; there was one of the boys from Detroit with whom I had participated in a unique "Gomel" Assembly; and so on, and on. The friendship between *Roshei Yeshiva* and *talmidim* was warm and contagious and I revelled in it.

Yet, the most dramatic scene I saw in Telzville was the unfinished dormitory—now nearing completion—at the far end of the campus. To me it epitomized the entire history of Telz, so far as I know it. It was a "shrine" to the indomitable courage of the Telzer *Roshei Yeshiva* who brought Telz from the ruins of the Hitler debacle to America. It was a testimonial to the "family tradition," the "brotherly-love" of the Telzer *Roshei Yeshiva*—most of them young, quick of mind and fast of action, truly dynamic—who combed this country to gather the funds, like the most intrepid of fundraisers, to erect this building upon the ashes of a tragic fire which left the Yeshiva's future in jeopardy. It was, to me, a "statue" to the age-old, belief of the Jew—which runs like a thread through our history—in *churban u'vinyan*, that out of the crucible of destruction there will come rebirth and revitaliation. To me it was a symbol of the hope and the promise of Telzville.

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Letters to the Editor

Seeks Yeshiva Course on Holocaust

Dear Editor:

To the question raised by Rabbi Sherer in your January issue "Shall We Tell Our Children?", there can be only one answer: "Yes!" My own children hardly relate to the terrible tragedy that took away six million of our people in a few years, and this despite the fact that my husband and I lost our parents, uncles, and almost every other member of our family in Poland.

I suggest that the principals of all the Yeshiva Day Schools convene a special conference to plan the best method of providing our children with a real knowledge, with none of the gruesome facts left out, of what the Nazis did to our people. A special subject should be instituted in all the Yeshivos, which should include films and slides from that period. In this course, it would be good if our children were also to learn specifically what Orthodoxy lost when the Nazis invaded the dynamic Torah fortress of pre-war Europe.

(Mrs.) Miriam A. Bloom
Forest Hills, N. Y.

Seeks Recognition for Immigrant Generation

Dear Editor:

I read the article on Yeshivah Graduates by Rabbi Marvin Schick (January 1964) with great interest, but I must disagree with some of his observations. He compares the entire generation of European immigrants to the relatively small group of the graduates of American Yeshivos and concludes that, with a few individual exceptions, the former are inferior in their Torah-oriented actions. The generation of immigrants are, by his words, motivated by a "philanthropic obligation" to the "Judaism of their fathers," while, in contrast, our generation of Yeshiva graduates have a "commitment to the future of Orthodoxy

rather than its past; who wish to build for themselves and their children. . . ."

Such generalizations are totally unfair. Those people whom Rabbi Schick uses to classify the entire past generation of European immigrants are those with no Yeshiva education or those whose weakness in "emunah" allowed them to become disillusioned by the tragedies of their time. However, regardless of the shallowness of their motivations, they still actively support the cause of Torah. Equivalent to them in our newer generation are the public school graduates. The fact that they, the "Am Ho'oratzim" of today, do not even have such a shallow, past-oriented link with the cause of Torah, is one of the tragedies of modern Orthodox Judaism.

To be fair, the Yeshiva graduates of today should be compared to their counterparts, the graduates of the many fine European Yeshivos. They are the ones who cultivated **Yiddishkeit** in America, who built our Yeshivos, who taught and still teach in them and who paid the tuition for us. Nor must we forget the thousands of dedicated "Am Ho'oratzim" who were determined that their children should not be deprived of the Torah so

dear yet so strange to them. If Rabbi Schick is able to stand up and glance up on our generation of Yeshiva graduates, he must not forget that he is standing on a foundation cast with the sweat of self-deprivation of the very generation he accuses of living in the past. I would not have the heart to tell a generation of parents who have gladly accepted a life of hardships, joyful in the knowledge that their children are raised in accordance with the "Judaism of their fathers," that their sole commitment was to the past.

Yoseph Herman

Kew Gardens, New York

Some More "Bouquets" . . .

Dear Editor:

Enclosed please find my subscription for your very fine publication. Although it is sponsored by Agudath Israel, I find its contents, save for some uncharacteristic exceptions, largely devoid of narrow party partisanship . . .

Rabbi Zevulun Charlop

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One of the world's foremost Torah authorities, Harav Chaim Mordecai Katz, Rosh Yeshiva of the Telshe Yeshiva in Wickliffe, will be the guest of honor at the 42nd Anniversary Dinner of Agudath Israel of America, Sunday evening, March 15th, at the Hotel New Yorker, New York City.

The news that Harav Katz will be honored at this event has aroused intense interest in the Dinner, which is traditionally attended by the elite of American Orthodoxy.

A report will be rendered to the dinner of the past four decades of worldwide activities of the organization. Dinner reservations and journal ads are now being accepted at Agudath Israel's national office.

Radio Series to Begin February 22

A series of five weekly radio programs sponsored by Agudath Israel will begin Saturday night, February 22, at 9:30 P.M. on Radio Station WEVD. This radio series is part of the expanded program of Agudath Israel to communicate its Torah ideas to the broad masses.

Registration for Camp Agudah, Camp Bnos Begins

Registration is already in full swing for Camp Agudah for boys and Camp Bnos for girls. The Camps Committee has planned many new features in both camps this summer, to provide better service than ever for the large number of campers hailing from every part of the United States and Canada. Camp Agudah, located in Ferndale, New York, and Camp Bnos, located in Liberty, New York, are operated as a non-profit public service by Agudath Israel of America. The city office is located at 5 Beekman Street, New York City.

Knesiah Gedolah Registration Underway

The Central Knesiah Gedolah Commission has already begun compiling a list of individuals interested in participating in the fifth world congress of Agudath Israel, which will open on Wednesday, July 22 (Av 13) in Jerusalem. This important gathering has aroused keen interest and special provisions are being made to absorb the large number of delegates and guests who are expected to attend from every part of North Amer-

ica and South America. Persons registering with the Central Knesiah Gedolah Commission will enjoy special benefits in obtaining admission tickets for the historic international conclave, and will be able to participate in the official travel arrangements made for the registered Knesiah Gedolah guests.

Rabbi Menachem Porush Here on Mission

The well-known Agudist leader Rabbi Menachem Porush, member of Knesset, just arrived from Eretz Israel on a special mission in behalf of the Torah authorities in the Holy Land. As a founder and director of the Chinuch Atzmai network of Torah schools, Rabbi Porush will meet with community leaders throughout the United States on the latest developments in the educational field in Israel. He will also address a series of mass-meetings and open forums throughout the country. His first public appearances in New York will be at a forum sponsored on February 21 by Agudath Israel of Crown Heights, and on March 6th, sponsored by Agudath Israel of Boro Park.

Chinuch Atzmai Visitors

Two distinguished representatives of the Chinuch Atzmai school system in Eretz Israel arrived this month, to further the interests of this vast network of Torah schools, which educates over 40,000 children.

Rabbi Nathan Greenberg, one of the most dynamic young religious workers in the Holy Land, arrived in connection with the expansion program of Chinuch Atzmai. He has an excellent record of accomplishment amongst the new settlements in Israel, as the former head of the Absorption Department of Agudath Israel. He is now director of the development program of Torah Schools for Israel.

Mrs. Channa Ordentlich, a prominent religious women's leader from Bnei Brak, arrived to interest women's groups throughout the country in the program of Chinuch Atzmai, which also comprises the large number of Beth Jacob schools for girls in Israel. For many years she was instrumental in establishing kindergartens and children's homes in Israel, and she is now the head of the Women's Division of Torah Schools for Israel.

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