

VOL. 1 No. 6

MARCH 1964/NISAN 5724

FIFTY CENTS

THE JEWISH OBSERVER



**THE LINES
ARE DRAWN**



**NEWS
MANAGEMENT
JEWISH STYLE**



**THE PRIMACY
OF TORAH STUDY**



**"INS" AND "OUTS"
IN ISRAELI
ORTHODOXY**

THE JEWISH OBSERVER

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the cover

A page from the first illustrated Hagadah with wood cuts, printed in Prague, circa 1527.

THE JEWISH OBSERVER

is published monthly, except July and August, by the Agudath Israel of America, 5 Beekman Street, New York 38, N. Y. Second Class postage paid at New York, N. Y. Subscription: \$5.00 per year; single copy: 50¢. Printed in the U.S.A.

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MARCH 1964 VOL. I No. 6

The Lines Are Drawn

The historic implications of the split in American Jewry

THE LINES ARE DRAWN. On one issue all of Torah-Jewry has at last acted in unison. On the same issue, the entire non-Orthodox camp has reacted in unison. The events which have brought about this development have filled the Torah camp with dismay and horror. The prospect of its immediate future results is for many of us a fearful one. But the lines are no longer blurred. Some day historians will note how unmistakable an act of Divine Providence it was, that it should have been the issue of *Shmad* which finally cleared the air; that it was the resounding insistence of the entire Torah world on safeguarding the lowest possible Jewish common denominator, which sparked the secularist camp to unite in blazing fury against us. On any other issue, many of our own would still remain confused enough to side with *them* on hearing the epithet "fanatic" hurled at us. But when we plead with one voice for curtailment of the diabolical snatching of innocent Jewish children from their people, and the secularist camp insists with one voice on whitewashing and legitimizing missionary efforts to convert our children, Orthodox Jews—and many others as well—know with the spontaneity of instinct, that those who call us "fanatic," who charge us with curtailing freedom of religion for others, are either dupes or liars.

Common Purpose

Two historic events have occurred in recent months which may decisively alter the course of Jewish life in our time.

On Wednesday, November 6 of last year, the entire Torah world—six of the greatest *Roshai Yeshivos* of our time, representatives of every Orthodox organization, rabbinic, congregational and lay, met in an atmosphere of unprecedented sense of common purpose. From that historic gathering a demand and an appeal came forth—subsequently signed by all the *Roshai Yeshivos* and organizations present, and sent to Prime Minister Levi Eshkol, demanding that missionary activities be prohibited in the Land of Israel. Not a single other issue of those which have been recent sources of contention between the two camps

was mentioned. This was the one single issue touched upon.

The anti-missionary declaration, initiated and written by the *Roshai Yeshivos*, was made available to the Yiddish press and was reported by the Israeli press. At the express instructions of the *Roshai Yeshivos* however, it was not released to the general daily press, so that the tragic rift within Jewry should not be dramatically exposed to the gaze of the non-Jewish world.

Jewry's Conscience Spoke

Can there be a shred of doubt in any Jewish mind that in this matter it was the very soul and conscience of Torah Jewry which spoke? Could *they*, who have so long posed as respectful of genuine Orthodox sensibilities, though they criticize our "fanatic wing"—

American Orthodoxy Speaks

To the Prime Minister of the Holy Land,

Mr. Levi Eshkol:

We, the undersigned, the representatives of Jewry faithful to the Almighty and His Torah, shuddered at reports of missionary activities in the Holy Land, which threaten our survival as one People, in the Land and in the Golah. We have reached the conclusion that we can no longer relate to this serious matter with placidity, and that we shall be guilty of sin, should we remain silent.

We have resolved not to rest nor to remain silent, until the Holy Land is cleansed of the abomination of the missions.

We turn to the Prime Minister with a fervent plea, to remove the shame of Shmad which is upon us, and to bring to an end by legislative means, the duplicity of the missions, which weans away Jews from their Faith.

(Signed) Thursday, the 5th day of Kislev, 5724

could they dare to stigmatize the entire Torah world as a band of "religious extremists" who wish to deprive others of religious freedom? Would they dare to risk alienating the affection of those Orthodox groups and individuals who had preferred organizational cooperation with them to unity with many of their own Orthodox brothers?

They could, and they did.

On Thursday March 5th the response of the non-Orthodox camp came. Its tone was savage. Its platform was the general non-Jewish press. It was signed by the Reform and Conservative ministerial and temple bodies; by the "aristocratic" American Jewish Committee; by the "democratic, religiously-neutral, community wide" American Jewish Congress; by the "religiously-neutral, community-wide" B'nai B'rith. It was written in the form of a cablegram to Prime Minister Eshkol. As if to say: The Orthodox sent you one cablegram, we'll send you an opposing one. We'll show you who is stronger!

One cablegram against another.

What was the content of the second cablegram? It charged that extremist religious groups sought by coercion to deprive Jews and *non-Jews* in Israel of full religious freedom. It recalled the earlier reluctance of its signators to enter the controversy over religious observance in Israel. "However," it continued, "our reluctance has been interpreted as either indifference to, or acquiescence in the position that a small but vocal minority of religious extremists, in Israel and in the United States, is taking with regard to the question of religious freedoms and practices in Israel."

"For many years," the message further stated, "these groups have succeeded in imposing upon all Israeli citizens certain observances which impair the exercise of religious practices different from their own. This trend has been growing, even to the point of direct coercion. It has culminated in riots and disturbances in both Israel and the United States. Recently religious extremist groups have urged that even non-Jewish groups in Israel be curtailed in the full exercise of their basic religious rights."

They have stopped at nothing. They have not flinched from inciting Gentile-hatred against the whole of Orthodox Jewry. They have told the world in the columns of *The New York Times* and the *New York Herald Tribune*, in the name of Jewish organizations whose aggregate memberships number in the millions, that the whole of Torah Jewry seeks to deny *religious freedom to non-Jews* in the State of Israel. Is the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith willing to utter a word of defense on behalf of the entire Orthodox

world, when we are the victims of Jewish anti-Semitism? Or do they need an extra allocation for this kind of activity?

"Religious Extremists"

Who are the "religious extremists" to whom they refer?

They are those who signed the telegram to Prime Minister Eshkol demanding cessation of missionary exploitation of underprivileged Jewish children in order to wean them into conversion to Christianity. That is to say, they are the whole of Orthodox Jewry. They include a group of the most revered *Roshai Yeshivos* in the world: Rabbi Moshe Feinstein, Rabbi Yitzchok Hutner, Rabbi Abraham Joffen, Rabbi Yaakov Kaminetsky, Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik and the late Mirer Rosh Yeshiva, Rabbi Abraham Kalmanowitz, z't'l. They include the *Agudas Harabbanim*, the Rabbinical Council of America, the *Hisachdus Harabbonim*; the Religious Zionists of America, the National Council of Young Israel and Agudath Israel.

What "religious coercion" has been imposed upon non-Jews in Israel?

Is it a denial of religious freedom to prohibit the unprincipled indoctrination towards conversion of Jewish children in the land of Israel, in the age of Dachau and Auschwitz? Are Christians or Mohammedans, or Druzes, or Hindus, in Israel denied religious freedom in the slightest degree, in their own lives?

What "religious coercion" has Orthodoxy imposed upon Jews in Israel?

If Orthodox Jewry, impelled by the dictates of Torah, and functioning through *democratic, legislative* procedures, has striven for the adoption of Torah law as the law of the land in the areas of marriage and divorce, Shabbos and Kashrus observance in public institutions; if, *till this day*, religious Jewry has had the support of non-religious Knesset majorities, *who alone were capable of making such legislation the law of the land*—does that make us guilty of religious coercion? Or, shouldn't it rather be acknowledged that Orthodoxy has been motivated only by the desire to keep the barest threads of the unity of our people intact? And *they* constantly prattle about *our* being guilty of divisiveness!

Who Wants Unity?

If the continued unity of our people is of any value to them, should they not recognize that the legalization of Reform or Conservative procedures in marriage and divorce would split us into two peoples, because those procedures violate Torah law in fundamentals? Are Reform and Conservative clergy denied the freedom to function as they please in *other areas* than marriage

and divorce? Haven't they been telling us all along that the unity of our people is their most sacred principle?

And what of their oft-expressed concern for the good name of the State of Israel? For fifteen years, the signators of the plea for "religious freedom" have been spouting the glories of Israel's democracy. *Israel is a bastion of democracy in the Middle East. Israel is the only democracy in the Middle East. Israel is a beacon of freedom and justice, a light to the world. Israel's treatment of religious minorities is a lesson to the nations of the world. It is unmatched by any other nation.* On a balmy March morning, the American Jewish Committee, American Jewish Congress, B'nai B'rith, and the Reform and Conservative bodies, unleashed on the world, with a mighty roar, the dreadful news that the bastion of democracy is in danger of collapse; the beacon light is on the verge of being extinguished. Should it not have occurred to these people that they were providing grist for Nasser's mills and for enemies of the State of Israel everywhere? Was the desire to flatter the sensibilities of the Christian world *that* important? After all, if their only purpose was to reach the ear of Prime Minister Eshkol and Israeli public opinion, the Israeli press could have served them as an adequate vehicle.

A Final Word

Is there a shred of justification now left for continued Orthodox participation in the mixed Rabbinic and Synagogue bodies after the non-Orthodox constituents of those bodies have acted with so much malice towards us, with such a wanton and contemptuous disregard for all that has been holy to us from our inception as a people to this day?

We say to our Orthodox brethren who have favored such participation in the past: We have wrestled and debated with you over this matter. But we do not feel joy over the vindication of our position. Rather do we feel an unutterable sadness over what has transpired. We implore you in the name of all that is holy to us all: Let us continue to stand together. Do not break ranks. Six of the greatest of our people have finally brought us together. If we continue to stand together, we are unconquerable.

Divine Providence has given us an historic opportunity to effect a great act of *Kiddush Hashem*. If we are found worthy of that opportunity we may also be found worthy of winning the hearts of our alienated brethren—in the great words of the *Chazon Ish z't'l*—"with bands of love," rather than arrows of strife so that we may together be worthy of returning to the G-d of Israel and to His Torah.

British Jewry Reacts in Unison

A call to Premier Levi Eshkol to bring about immediate legislation against missionary activities in the Holy Land was dispatched in the form of a letter signed by the entire British Rabbinate. This was made known by the Office of the Chief Rabbi this week when the full text of the letter was also disclosed.

The letter is unique and historic in itself because, for the first time, the Chief Rabbi and all Dayanim of the London Beth Din, as well as the Rabbinate of the Union of Orthodox Hebrew Congregations and the Rabbinate of the Federation of Synagogues have signed a joint document. By this action the Rabbis leave the Premier in no doubt as to the concern of British Jewry over the problem and the need for a national ban on all missionary activities.

"We the undersigned spiritual leaders of the British Jewish community," the letter states, "consider it our duty to bring to your attention as Prime Minister our deep concern and great anxiety over the uncontrolled situation caused through the spreading of the net of apostasy on the face of the Holy Land by the snarers of souls of the missionary institutions."

After referring to the efforts made in Britain and elsewhere throughout the generations against the loss of Jewish children in the Diaspora into the hands of missionaries, the Rabbis go on to warn the Premier that "British Jewry would not be able under any circumstances to make peace with the idea that *an Independent Jewish State*" should enable missionaries to engage in widespread soul-snatching of thousands of Jewish children, many of them remnants from the Nazi holocaust, into the arms of *Shmad*. The letter concludes:

"On behalf of Anglo-Jewry, we seek and request in every form of appeal an early and timely consideration of this painful and urgent problem, and the use of every means available to the Government of Israel in order to make an end in a legal manner of what must be considered a national calamity of fearful proportions, one fraught with peril to the existence of the Jewish nation as one people in the land."

—*Jewish Tribune, London*

News Management — Jewish Style

How and why the flow of news to American Jews is controlled

THE DAILY NEWSPAPER is serviced by several vast newsgathering agencies and each newspaper has its own staff of reporters, researchers and editors. The news which finds its way into the columns of the daily press is commented upon in weekly news magazines and monthly reviews. Every important news story (and some which are not important but develop on a slow news day) is presented to the American public through radio, TV and the press in an outpouring of millions of words. Should one newspaper fail to report a significant event, other newspapers will, perhaps, reports the facts. The competition between newspapers and the competition between the press and TV, serves as a check, working to keep the American public informed.

Nevertheless, when this vast apparatus has ground out the story, when it has been commented upon in the press and TV, serious students of the press tell us that the average American still has little notion of what really happened, or what the situation really is. Charges of news management by government agencies, and frequently by the White House, have become a common occurrence in American life. The people are told what government would like them to know, or think they know; the facts remain hidden.

Jews who rely on the daily press for news of Jewish interest are invariably disappointed by the meagerness of the coverage and by the almost criminal carelessness in the little news they find. The Anglo-Jewish and the Yiddish press is serviced by one agency, which exercises a monopoly in the field. There is no competing agency to speak of; hardly any Anglo-Jewish newspaper has any staff to ferret out news other than that which reaches the editor's desk in his daily JTA service or weekly round-up. Vast areas of Jewish life, religious life in particular, are almost totally ignored, and yet . . . *the average American Jew who reads one or even more Anglo-Jewish newspapers, thinks he is informed on Jewish life*, and is most sceptical when he is told that he does not know what is happening in Israel, in this country, and throughout the world. The sophisticated American Jew who distrusts the daily press, and pays a premium price for a small newsletter of magazine which he feels helps him to bypass government news management, and the deliberate distortion of the news; the reader who storms at the "controlled

press," is prepared to accept whatever is presented to him as the facts of Jewish life. In the absence of any checks on the one news agency, in the absence of any careful reporting of facts and the equally important background of the facts, our average, "enlightened" Jew accepts at face value the oft-repeated charges, for example that religious forces in Israel are attempting to dominate all areas of the life of the average Israeli citizen, whether he is observant or otherwise.

Climate of Hostility

The careful control of news concerning the aspirations of Orthodoxy in this country and in *Eretz Yisroel*, has created a climate of hostility and hate toward the Orthodox Jew. In such a climate, charges based on distortions of the Orthodox positions, are readily acceptable to the average, uninformed Jew. Lest one dismiss this as the petulant cry of a group that has not had a fair share of exposure of its ideology to American Jewry, we refer to the recently published work, "The Religious Press in America," edited by Professor Robert Lekachman of Barnard College. In the section of the book on the Jewish Press, Dr. David W. Silverman, a prominent Conservative ideologist writes:

It is almost impossible to secure a comprehensive account of newsworthy Jewish religious events. There is no English-Jewish daily newspaper, either secular or religious. The major Jewish news agency, the Jewish Telegraphic Agency, provides both the denominational and the a-denominational press with news and feature articles. Despite a career dating back to 1919, however, it is woefully inefficient with regard to news of Jewish religious institutions. Because of its financial dependence upon the Jewish Agency, American Section, items about Israel and Zionist affairs receive top priority in ordering the flow of available news. The raising of communal funds for relief and rehabilitation would seem to be the main business and spiritual armature of American Jews, if one is to take seriously the number of news items devoted to this matter by the Jewish Telegraphic Agency. A complete and comprehensive presentation of what is actually happening in the United States and abroad is still needed.

Dr. Silverman sums up the situation quite well, but

he fails to note an obvious extension of his argument. If, as he writes, "Israel and Zionist affairs receive top priority in ordering the flow of news," then it follows logically that beyond giving priority to Zionist affairs, such an agency will also suppress criticism of "Zionist affairs" and Zionist positions. It also follows that significant news concerning groups of Jews and Jewish organizations not always in agreement with Zionist thinking, will be suppressed and, by virtue of JTA's monopoly, this news will never reach the American Jewish public.

This is more than logical speculation, based on the axiom that the forces which control a newspaper or a news service may color and manage the news to suit their own needs. One has only to read the daily reports and the weekly round-up to become immediately aware that Orthodox Jewry gets a bad shake in the reporting of news by JTA. To follow Silverman's reasoning (quoted above) reading the JTA service and the newspapers which rely on JTA for their news coverage, one could hardly be aware of the growing strength of Orthodox life in this country. One would have little knowledge and understanding of the phenomenal growth of yeshivos and day schools in this country, and conversely, one would not be aware of the bankruptcy of the non-Orthodox groups in the vital area of Jewish education.

It is difficult to document the failure of a news agency or a newspaper to cover a specific area of legitimate news. Among the mainstays of the JTA bulletins are convention stories, reports of meetings of national Jewish organizations and public statements by Jewish leaders. For close to three years I have read carefully the daily and weekly reports of the JTA. In many cases, the reports will ignore significant news emanating from Orthodox groups, or simply report that resolutions were passed opposing hatred and lauding the State of Israel.

A Typical Anglo-Jewish Newspaper

At this point, a look at the typical Anglo-Jewish newspaper, and how it operates, is in order. Most such publications, particularly in smaller communities, are one-man operations. The editor must spread himself over many areas which, on a larger newspaper would be handled by one or more specialists. He must prepare the copy, read the proofs, lay out the pages and solicit advertising. He must also contend with the local Jewish leaders and organizations who constantly harass him with pleas for coverage of their activities and the gnawing demand, "And put it on the front page!" When he opens his mail on Monday morning, and finds the JTA round-up of the week's

news, he breathes a sigh of relief. He has only to cull out the material he thinks his readers would find most interesting and write headlines for them. He will usually accept the judgment of JTA as to which news item should be the lead story, and places it in an appropriate place on the front page. Even if the staff numbers more than one, the additional personnel would be involved with advertising or technical aspects of the production of the newspapers. If there is someone who passes for a reporter, it may be the editor himself—the biggest story he is likely to cover is a local fund-raising dinner or a luncheon fashion-show of one of the women's groups in town.

All Alike

In reading thirty or forty Anglo-Jewish newspapers for any given week, it is unlikely that one would find a single story of more than local interest, that the newspaper had developed on its own. The Jewish Telegraphic Agency material appears verbatim in every paper, and there is serious doubt as to whether the editor reads more than the head of the lead paragraph. The only difference between these papers then, would be the listing of the week's Bar Mitzvahs, weddings and deaths, and the pictures of the local dignitaries, "pictured from right to left." (Strangely, even these pictures look a great deal alike, and the names often sound familiar.)

Put the case then, that a news story develops in Israel or in one of the larger centers of Jewish population—the local editor has no knowledge of what happened or what was said. If he gets some inkling of a "news break" he has no star reporter to bark at, "Take a plane to New York or Chicago or Jerusalem, and get me the facts." He must patiently wait until JTA grinds out the "facts" on a mimeographed sheet of paper, which then goes directly to the linotype machine to be set in type. Several days later, Jews in Oshkosh, Fall River and Three Corners, U.S.A. read the same story and assume that they are thereby informed of the facts. There will be no commentators who will analyze the news . . . other than those distributed by JTA. His local radio or TV station will be of no help to him, unless it is one of the rare Jewish stories that are covered by the Associated Press and the United Press.

Should some local representative of Orthodoxy, for example, protest the inaccuracy or distortion of the facts, which was called to his attention by his national organization which has direct access to the facts, he will be called a 'crackpot' or a 'fanatic' or any one of an assortment of such epithets with which one dismisses a dissenter.

(Continued on page 20)

The "Ins" and "Outs" of Israeli Orthodoxy

THE ISRAELI PRESS recently reported that Minister Moshe Shapiro had declared, in the midst of a heated cabinet discussion, that the time might perhaps be coming when it would be necessary to end the unrelenting attacks levelled against Torah-true Jewry by the secularist camp, by separating religion and state in Israel. Whereupon it was quickly noted by various press commentators that Mr. Shapiro's remarks were not uttered with any degree of finality, that they were to be understood as conditional or even tactical. Be that as it may, Mr. Shapiro's remarks impel a number of observations.

Ever since the emergence of the Zionist movement, the Torah-true community has been split on one basic issue. Should Orthodox Jewry have entered the World Zionist Organization and worked for the rebuilding of *Eretz Yisroel* as part of the latter, while striving from within to place the imprint of Torah on the emergent *Yishuv*? Or, should Orthodox Jewry have refused to grant legitimacy to the basic principle of the world Zionist movement: that the primary content of Jewish life was the national will and the national consensus, while the Jewish religion was to be subject to the acceptance or rejection of the individual? The Mizrahi chose the former course. Agudath Israel followed the latter one.

By historic circumstance, the leadership of the world Zionist movement was located in London when the British government—for its own political reasons—issued the Balfour Declaration. They succeeded thereby in becoming the address to which Great Britain delivered its gift of an opportunity to build a "Jewish National homeland in Palestine" and there was an obvious immediate practical advantage to be gained by functioning as a component part of the world Zionist movement. Certainly Mizrahi, which chose this course, could expect favored treatment at the hands of the world Zionist movement. It could expect preferred treatment for its projects, its kibbutzim, its institutions, its schools. It could expect to control the emergent *Kehilah* life and the Rabbinate. In the face of the disadvantage to the life interests of Agudath Israel, should all the above come about—and it did come about exactly as foreseen—the Agudah nonetheless chose to remain outside the world Zionist movement.

Influence From Without

Said Agudath Israel to Mizrahi: "The secularist majority of the world Zionist movement will forever make certain through its control of the key power positions of the emergent *Yishuv*, that you will remain a minority. In the end you will not influence them. It is your Orthodoxy which will become weakened. In the end you will compromise your principles to maintain your institutional advantages. If *they* have granted your Chief Rabbinate jurisdiction in certain areas over the entire *Yishuv*, then a time will come when *they* will find the Rabbinate's restrictions sufficiently troublesome, for them to either throw off its yoke, or to force it to compromise the *Halachah* in order to conciliate them"

Influence From Within

Said Mizrahi to Agudath Israel: "If we remain *inside* we will be able to exert the influence of Torah on the non-religious. In time our positive approach will win their sympathy and respect and we will thereby draw them nearer to Torah, step-by-step. But you will have no influence over them, since you choose to remain outside their camp. In fact your constant rejection of them will make you resented and hated. And since you are a minority in the new *Yishuv*, what chance do you have to extend the influence of Torah so long as you follow your separatist cause?"

The debate raged for eighteen years and then the terrible tragedy of the war came. The five hundred thousand members of pre-war Agudath Israel in Europe were no more. If the entire house of Israel suffered terrible destruction and decimation as a result of the war, Agudath Israel suffered the *almost* total destruction of its European movement. And then the State of Israel was established. Mizrahi emerged as the quantitatively larger of the two movements. It seemed as if the way of Mizrahi had been vindicated.

The last sixteen years tell however, a different story—a story in which Mr. Shapiro's above-mentioned remarks will one day be known to have signalled a decisive turning in the history of the relations between the religion of Israel and the State of Israel.

First came the concessions of the world Zionist movement. In the official organs of the State, in publicly-sponsored activities, Shabbos and Kashrus were to be observed. In matters of personal status (marriage, divorce, inheritance) the Rabbinate was to have sole

jurisdiction. Religious education was to receive government support.

Next came efforts to contain the growth of the Orthodox camp. Some thousands of Jewish orphan children who had survived the war came to the State of Israel via Teheran. Horrible reports began to circulate, that their non-religious *madrichim* had used every device—including force—to wean the children away from the observance of *mitzvos*. A government commission authenticated the reports. When Chief Rabbi Herzog z't'l threatened to inform World Jewry of what was happening, he was threatened with the loss of his post. Those who tried to protest the happenings were vilified and scorchingly denounced as “haters of Israel.” The damage was done. The facts were effectively suppressed by a kept Jewish press which prevented it from reaching the ears of World Jewry. Wave after wave of oriental Jews—more than a million in all—came to Israel.

At countless UJA parlor meetings and Hadassah luncheons, touching stories were told about how those poor primitive people had been taught the use of soap, how they were being taught the basic principles of modern hygiene, how they were being taught to trust doctors and nurses. Other stories were not told; stories of how unknown tens of thousands of them were weaned away from the faith of their fathers which they had upheld against endless privation, century after century of persecution, an endless array of vile and brutal Turkish Pashas, Arab Effendis, Yemenite Immams, vindictive Kadis and Muftis. The stories were not told of how they were “persuaded” to send their children to non-religious schools, of how secularist party functionaries drilled it into them that the “Moshiach had already come; it is no longer necessary to observe the *mitzvos* in the State of Israel.”

In this area the policy of working from within has been to no avail. *They* have contained us with a brutal vengeance. Lest anybody need outside witnesses, he can be referred to David Ben Gurion's recent public statement that the overwhelming majority of the oriental Aliyah had been religious upon arrival in the land. Why then do we continue to have less than 15% of the total vote in Knesset elections? We have indeed been contained. But it seems we were not contained enough.

“How Cruel Those Rabbis Are!”

A mounting chorus of vilification has blackened our name. The Yossele episode “proved” that Orthodoxy countenanced and condoned kidnapping of children. In accord with the *Halachah*, a rabbi decides that the deceased child of a non-Jewish mother is to be interred in a place other than a Jewish burial ground. “See how cruel those rabbis are!” Non-Jewesses arrive in Israel with their common-law Jewish husbands. There are instances in which they refuse to be converted to Judaism, which is their undeniable right. But when the Rabbinate exercises its undeniable right and duty and refuses to preside at such mixed marriages, the cry goes up: “See how fanatic those rabbis

are.” And then there are some, who have been raised and poisoned with such hatred of the tradition of their people that *Chupah-and-Kidushin* violates their conscience. They are impatient, with all this talk about having to yield “something” to the religious for the sake of maintaining the unity of the nation. A way is found for them too. They can go to Cyprus, and be married in a civil ceremony. Upon return to the State of Israel they will find that Israeli law acknowledges a woman who is *yeduah b'tzibbur* (known in the community) as the wife of a particular person, to be the legal wife of that person.

And then it happens that a Conservative “rabbi” in Boston issues a *get*. Little does it matter that the Conservative Rabbinate publicly and officially violates Torah law in the areas of marriage and divorce, in addition to its rejection of the fundamentals of Torah-true Judaism. If the *Rav* of Tel Aviv refuses to recognize that *get*, the Rabbinate cannot take refuge in the fact that its *exclusive jurisdiction* in the area of marriage and divorce was to be the major compensation extended to Mizrahi for working within. The Rabbinate is wildly denounced for its stand. Golda Meir takes up the cudgels in the Knesset. Gideon Hausner is engaged to try the case up to the Israeli Supreme Court. What is this? The Rabbinate, is not free to function in accordance with the *Halachah*? It is to be judged by an avowedly secular court? Is this the result of 60 years of working within?

Planned “Chilul Shabbos”

What of Shabbos? What happens when it becomes “too burdensome?” Here too there is a way out of the dilemma. The government has the right to determine that a given activity is vitally necessary for the State without reference to the judgment of the *Halachah* in the given instance. When the government so decides, it may grant—and it does so promiscuously—a special permit to a given factory to operate on Shabbos. Let the religious protest that the granting of such permission has been done in utterly arbitrary fashion. Who listens? Any number of religious workers apply for jobs in these factories and are turned down because they observe Shabbos. The matter is by now a public scandal of constantly increasing extent

What of Kashrus? Sooner or later a *Shalom* episode erupts. And again the name of the Rabbinate is dragged through the mud. It happens at this point that the entire world Rabbinate stands clearly and firmly in opposition. The secularists are stopped. But they surrender with a notable lack of grace. They adamantly refuse to inform Chief Rabbi Nissim that the *Shalom* will have *only* a kosher kitchen. They insist on writing that *in the Shalom a kosher kitchen will be activated*—which obviously leaves room for a future reversal. In any event the Rabbinate is again branded as fanatic, obstructionist, power hungry.

And then it happens that the Pope visits Israel. He pointedly refuses to do or say anything which might be construed as recognition of the State of Israel. He refuses to enter the country via Jerusalem. On leaving he sends a telegram to President Shazar, *Tel Aviv*, thereby refusing to recognize Jerusalem as rightly belonging to the Jewish people, or as the capital of the State of Israel. But when Chief Rabbi Nissim refuses to greet him as a government functionary, while indicating his readiness to meet the Pope under conditions reflecting adequate respect for the Jewish religion, he is violently denounced and insultingly informed that he is a functionary of the government and must do its bidding.

When Mapam truncheons invade *Meah Shearim*, the Jewish and the non-Jewish worlds are told in thunderous crescendoes about Orthodox Jews who throw stones, but not even in a whisper about the Mapam truncheons. When Yeshiva *bachurim* demonstrate peacefully—much more peacefully than CORE does in America, and not one bit more illegally—against Christian mission thievery of the souls of Jewish children, the Jewish and the non-Jewish worlds are again told in thunderous crescendoes about the fanatics and the zealots who staged savage riots in an attempt to curtail freedom of religion for Christians. But the activities of the Missionaries are repeatedly and persistently whitewashed and even justified.

It finally becomes apparent that the secularists are bent on the very liquidation of the Chief Rabbinate as the government-recognized Rabbinate of Israel. Ever since the death of Rav Herzog z't'l, Mapai has successfully stymied all efforts to hold elections for a new Ashkenazic Chief Rabbi, except on its terms, which would assure Mapai-secularist control of the outcome of the elections. To date Mizrahi has resisted those efforts, for which reason the elections have been repeatedly postponed. During these past five interim-years, the prestige of the Chief Rabbinate has however suffered a sad decline, to a point where a reversal of its fortunes could only be achieved in the face of staggering difficulties.

It is against the above background that Mr. Shapiro's despairing remarks were made. Only time can tell whether or not their implementation is unavoidable. Neither is it our present intention to explore the possible future effect on the State of Israel and the people of Israel of the separation of religion and state. In both instances, however, the possible course of events will depend very much on whether Torah-true Jewry will have learned to appreciate the wisdom of so many *Geonim* and *Tzadikim* who foresaw a generation ago, that a Jewish society whose central and cohesive principle is a secularist one, not only will not be transformed by an Orthodox "conciliatory" minority, but will do its utmost to curtail the growth of that

minority and force it to compromise the basic principles of Torah as the price of peaceful co-existence.

We hope and pray that no segment of Torah-true Jewry will seek to safeguard its institutional interests through compromising its principles. Whatever view we espouse on the essential character and significance of the Medina, if we are true to the Torah, the preservation of the integrity of the Torah is our first concern. With the Torah intact in our lives, all our other defeats can be turned into victories. When we falsify or compromise the integrity of Torah, Heaven Forbid, we are as naught. We can draw strength, in the present test to which we are put by Divine Providence, from the constantly rising courage despite all obstacles, of the uncompromising camp of Torah in the land of Israel. To the voice of that camp, the eternal holiness of the Jewish soul will cause our alienated brethren to respond.

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The American Rabbinate

Is being a rabbi really "no job for a Jewish boy"?

THE ATTITUDE of the average Orthodox Jew in America to the rabbinate is best summed up in a popular story about being a rabbi, which has many beginnings, but always ends with a deep sigh and the words: *that's no job for a Jewish boy*. The Orthodox young man who should be in the American rabbinate is instead in other fields of endeavor, while the rabbinate is infested with mediocrity. It has often been said that the Achilles' Heel of the American Orthodox rabbinate is that "the rabbis are not scholars." The crux of the matter is that the scholars do not enter the rabbinate.

THE PROBLEM The history of the Orthodox American rabbinate is still too current to allow one to view it with clarity and objectivity. However, certain basic patterns can be traced. As Eastern European Jewry, the great mass of whom were Orthodox, flooded the gates of America, they brought along with them among their spiritual possessions from the Old World, the synagogue and the rabbi. Our fathers established their synagogues on these shores with their old customs and *nusach* and imported their rabbis from overseas to serve them.

MUCH HAS BEEN written concerning this first generation of American Orthodox rabbis. They have often been maligned, and blamed by their younger and more modern colleagues, who with the benefit of hindsight have been quick to document their errors of omission and commission. Nevertheless, these "old" rabbis, foreign to the new country, the new language and the new times, made a valiant attempt to stem the tide of material and social assimilation that engulfed the Jewish community. Great Talmudic scholars, bearing the tradition and heritage of Jewish leadership from *Moshe Rabbenu* onward, they were nevertheless defeated by their inability to maintain contact with their people. The children of the immigrants, the new generation of American-born Jews, were looking for a rabbi who could speak their own language. The day-school system was not even a dream on the horizon of Jewish thought, and the American Yeshivos of that time were fledglings, not approaching in quality the Yeshivos of today. The educated laity, was rapidly succumbing to the attrition of

time and the blandishments of other more attractive brands of "Judaism." Cut off from his main source of strength—educated Torah Jews—the "old" Orthodox rabbi was rapidly losing his position in the community. To be sure, Kashrus, *Gittin*, and some other areas of communal life were still in his exclusive domain, but he had lost hold of his status as a Jewish leader. New leaders were arising, men who knew the language and the morés of the new Jews born in this country. Thus the "old" rabbi (with a few brilliant exceptions in certain fortunate Jewish communities) began to pass from the American Jewish scene having apparently lost the battle. As the Jews moved up in social strata, advancing from the old neighborhood to more exclusive neighborhoods, they took their synagogues with them, but more often than not, the "old" rabbi was either retired, or callously discarded. This type of rabbi in American Jewish life, is a vanishing breed, a species on the verge of extinction.

There arose new men in the American Orthodox rabbinate, young men (mainly American-born) who had received their Torah training in the Yeshivos of America. The great majority of them were steeped in Western culture and American ideas and ideals. Most of them were college graduates. Their functions in the rabbinate were more attuned to the thoughts of their people and their lines of communication to their members were open and vibrant. They were, with few exceptions, not as well versed in Torah knowledge as the term "rabbi" had connoted in previous times, but they were, on the whole, sincere, dedicated, G-d fearing men. They attempted to achieve the golden mean in American Jewish life—a synthesis of the positive aspects of traditional Judaism with the forces and ideas of American life and thought. They attempted to Americanize Judaism. Being in competition with their Conservative and Reform counterparts for the mind, heart and ear of the American Jew, they aped the methods of other groups, while maintaining the integrity of their own Orthodox philosophy. Inevitably, this policy led to disaster. Instead of Americanizing Judaism they should have Judaized America. The *mechitza* was the first defensive position destroyed, followed by the loss of the *bimah*, and finally the whole tenor of the worship service in the synagogue was adulterated. Harried and badgered from the left and the right, these well-intentioned men invented the freak known as "Traditional" Judaism. With this device, it could still be maintained officially that Orthodox Jewry

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possessed many synagogues and members, and a substantial number of rabbis.

It is upon this scene of Jewish communal and rabbinic life that the revolution of the Yeshivos broke out. After the European holocaust, a small number of *Roshai Yeshiva*, having miraculously escaped the Hun's barbarous claws, established centers of Torah study here in the United States. With unbelievable rapidity the number of Yeshivos grew. Not only were the Yeshivos impregnated with that timeless love of the Torah brought with them by the newly-arrived *Roshai Yeshiva*, but this magnetic spirit infiltrated the older, established American Yeshivos as well.

New words were introduced into the vocabulary of American Orthodoxy—*ko'el*, *knowing Shas*, and above all the word *learning*. American Yeshiva students began to emigrate to Israel to further their Torah studies. American Yeshiva students became *Roshei Yeshiva* in American and Israeli Yeshivos. They began to dream of Torah greatness, dreams that were unheard of on this continent. They dreamed of publishing their own Torah works and journals, of founding new Yeshivos, of restoring the level of scholarship in Jewish life to its old and properly exalted stature. But in all their thoughts, the natural vehicle, the age-old means towards their ends, the rabbinate, was rarely considered by the vast majority of capable Torah scholars now coming out of our American Yeshivos.

There was a time when the more serious students attending a Yeshiva chose the rabbinate as their career, while the less scholarly inclined entered other professions. Today we are witnessing the reverse situation. The better students, the scholars, the men with sincerity and ingenuity are not now entering the rabbinate, while the less scholarly students will become the rabbis of tomorrow.

The reasons for this situation are obvious and yet subtle. The near-destruction of the Orthodox synagogue in America has left many with an aversion towards entering into the battle. The low state of respect to which the Orthodox rabbi has fallen, creates little appetite for entering the field. The "Traditional" synagogue is completely unacceptable—halachically and morally—to the Yeshiva student and the Orthodox synagogues that would be acceptable to many of these scholars are rare. Rather than hope for what he believes cannot be, the present day Yeshiva graduate seeks a teaching position in a Yeshiva or day-school, and of necessity must often settle for positions and levels which are not suited for him or for which he himself, by reasons of talent or temperament, is not suited. The other popular choice is that the young man enter into the business or professional world, there to seek his destiny. Potential leaders in Jewish life, generals in the Torah army, are thus removed from the actual scene of battle and, at best,

serve only in the rear echelon. (I do not deny the need for scholarly teachers in day-schools, nor for a vibrant, intelligent and dedicated Orthodox laity. It is a matter of numbers; in comparison to the current paucity of talent and scholarship in the Orthodox rabbinate, there is a surfeit of *Bnei Torah* who are lawyers, doctors, scientists, teachers, industrialists and businessmen. We are in a war, and the battle has been going badly. We must send some men up to the front lines who have the desire, the knowledge, and the capacity to turn the tide of battle.

SOME POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS The solutions to this problem are as varied and complex as the problem itself. I offer no pat answers to this dilemma. However, a beginning must be made somewhere and soon—the tide must be reversed before the last position has been breached. The first steps must be taken in two areas; first in the Yeshiva itself. We must learn to differentiate between *rabbis* and the *rabbinate*. A respect for the office of the rabbi must be created, even if in many cases respect for the person holding that office cannot be engendered. A positive attitude towards the manifold accomplishments possible in the rabbinate today must be nurtured. A rabbi is in the strategic position of being able to bring a Yeshiva into his community and gaining support for Torah institutions outside his community. It is true that there have been, to our sorrow, many failures in the American rabbinate, but there also have been singular, spectacular, heart-warming successes. The Yeshiva student is well aware of the failures; many times he is totally unaware of the triumphs. If there are fifty (and there are more) American Orthodox rabbis who have achieved success (Torah success, not necessarily personal success) in the rabbinate, who are scholars, who study and disseminate Torah every day, who have aided and established day-schools and Yeshivos in their communities, then why are their names not known to the Yeshiva scholars? Where is their recognition from the Yeshivos and the Yeshiva students? If enough Yeshiva students realized that even in the blackness of American rabbinical life there shine many lights, then perhaps, more would aspire to the rabbinate. If our Jewish press (such as it is) would devote at least the same amount of space to the positive aspects and accomplishments of the Orthodox rabbinate, as it does to the iniquities of Conservatism and Reform, the purpose of Torah Judaism would be greatly advanced. A positive campaign of honor and respect on our part for those rabbis who are fulfilling their age-old responsibilities would entice other capable, scholarly, Torah-true young men to enter the rabbinate. If the faithful rabbis were shown the respect due them by *Bnei Torah*, then we could reasonably expect that more *Bnei Torah* would become faithful rabbis.

* * *

THE SECOND AREA where this problem must be solved is in the synagogue itself. Approaching it

realistically, one must admit that the scarcity of Orthodox pulpits is appalling. If we were able to bring more capable young scholars into the rabbinate, where would they serve? There are certain possibilities which should be fully explored.

The position of assistant or associate rabbi has never been brought to maximum effectiveness in the Orthodox rabbinate. The problems of such a dichotomy of leadership are well-known. Nevertheless, there are Orthodox synagogues who would certainly be willing to add a dedicated, sincere, scholarly young rabbi to their staff. If only ten or fifteen such positions could be created and capably filled, the impact on the general community and the Yeshivos would not be lost. New Orthodox rabbis, injected into the mainstream of Jewish communal life, guided by older, successful and experienced rabbis, backed by established Orthodox synagogues, would be an inestimable boon to Orthodox Jewish life in these communities. New classes could be organized; rabbis themselves would have more time for Torah scholarship, for dissemination of Torah ideology in journals and books; more support for Torah institutions of learning could be marshalled; and, most important of all, a large measure of rapport between the Yeshivos, the rabbis and their synagogues could be created almost immediately. I am aware of the personal, political and financial problems that this program involves. However, they are not insoluble. If such a program is desirable, then it can be feasible as well.

A second possible avenue of activity in this area has already been attempted on a small scale by some Jewish institutions in this country. The plan is basically a simple one. The Yeshivos themselves should subsidize the new rabbi for a given period of time. In many communities there are small Orthodox *minyanim* that are in dire need of a rabbi (though they don't know it) who, because of financial reasons do not even dare to consider engaging one. If the Yeshivos would subsidize partially, or where necessary, even wholly, the salary of the rabbi for the responsibility, they will have made an extremely wise investment of time until the synagogue will be to assume the vestment in terms of their own institutions as well as in terms of the Orthodox Jewish community. Though the Yeshivos are not especially noted for their affluence, they all subscribe to that great adage of American business life: "you've got to spend money to make money." No money that the Yeshivos spend could be more wisely spent, than in a program of this type. Not only would it be a source of attractive, honorable positions for its graduates (no small matter), it would also build a nucleus of synagogues and lay-people loyal to the sponsoring institutions. There will be undoubtedly be many frustrations and failures, but one success easily equals fifty failures.

There are many "marginal" synagogues; that is, synagogues which are Orthodox in physical appearance and

format but the majority of whose members are not observant Jews. I have seen that where the rabbi is strong, learned, capable spiritual leader, then even such a synagogue can become a bastion of Torah defense and support. The members of such a synagogue, even though perhaps not improving their personal religious lives measurably, will nevertheless loudly and sincerely proclaim their unswerving loyalty to the faith of their fathers. I have also seen the same type of synagogue where, due to ignorance, mediocrity and lack of fundamental principal, the rabbi allows such a synagogue to inexorably slip over the cliff and into the abyss of non-Orthodox Judaism. I am an incurable optimist regarding the Children of Israel. *"Let them be, for if they themselves are not prophets, they are the sons of prophets."*

Jews in America, as never before, are looking for the truth, the light—for the Torah itself. Its custodians in this land, will be held accountable for not providing it to those who seek it. The Orthodox rabbinate need no longer be a "no-man's land." It must be peopled by heroes and fighters, dreamers and scholars.

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The Primacy of Torah Study

The following is a translation of the major portion of a statement by Reb Ahron Kotler, z't'l, which he made public at the outset of his effort to build a new structure for his yeshiva, Beth Medrash Govoha. It was translated by Joshua Leiman, a student at the Beth Medrash Govoha, on the occasion of the forthcoming dedication of the Bais Medrash in Lakewood, New Jersey.

I wish to clarify briefly, the goals and aspirations of our house of study as well as Jewry's life-need for the maintenance of institutions for Torah study on the highest level, with singular devotion to Torah.

1. Jewry Depends on Torah

Torah is the actual life-breath of the Jewish people, and alone is the goal of Jewry's existence, its purpose, and its destiny. Plainly then, Jewry's existence depends on its attachment to the Torah and its study.

It is common knowledge that with the weakening of Torah-study in many countries, the buttresses of Jewry at large weakened; for little by little, the spring that had given life to the fulfillment of Torah and to the observance of G-d's commandments began to dry up, the ties to the source of life were loosened until they arrived at intermarriage and assimilation, G-d forbid. (It should be noted that some individuals or groups who do not observe the Torah still preserve some tie to the Jewish nation. This is due only to the fact that there is still Torah among Jews, that there are those who toil in Torah, and this provides lifeblood even to the limbs far from the heart. Sometimes the heritage of personality refinement and purity of deed prevails, due to the attachment to Torah by previous generations.) All this is manifest: verified by the history of the Jewish people throughout the generations.

Just as all the happenings of our history were

foretold by our sacred Torah and were explained to us by the Sages, this subject too is elucidated in countless sections of the Torah and in the writings of our Sages, z'l'. One of these is in *Toras Kohanim* on *Vayikra* 26:3:

If you will observe my edicts: to toil in Torah . . .

On the other hand (verse 14), *If you will not listen to me:* to toil in Torah, seven levels of degeneration are listed, down to denial of G-d. This stems from a lack of toil in Torah. (See *Rashi* on the above chapter.)

2. Scholars Assure Tradition

The maintenance of Torah in Jewry depends on the existence of genuine Torah scholars. They hand it from generation to generation, and assure its authenticity and uncounterfeited form. In the absence of Torah sages, people begin to interpret the Torah on their own, falsifying its spirit as well as its essence—at first unwittingly, afterwards intentionally. Laxity in study of Torah and the lack of a proper approach to its understanding, lead to uprooting the fundamentals of the Torah and of the faith.

3. Students Assure Scholars

In the absence of true scholars, Jewry lacks the great teachers of Torah who are the links in the chain of tradition reaching from generation to generation, and it also lacks educators to instruct the next generation in the spirit of Torah—in all its purity and perfection.

This applies to all levels of Torah-education: Without fundamental *lomdus* coupled with the spirit of Torah, it is impossible to implant Torah in the hearts of future generations. Furthermore, toil and perseverance in Torah are together the condition for and the guarantee of wholeness of faith and full appreciation of responsibility to G-d. This will be further clarified.

4. Perseverance Produces Scholars

The only way to produce Torah-leaders and genuine Torah scholars is through full devotion to Torah, focusing on Torah all the powers of one's will and talent. This is apparent, for we saw with our own eyes how in the last generation this alone was the way all the Jewish leaders progressed and developed. Even the early sages—people likened to angels, whose understanding was beyond our ken—needed constant effort of a magnitude greater than one might deem necessary. So too, countless citations from the Talmud attest to the great perseverance and toil in Torah of those Sages—to the exclusion of all that is mundane.

Our sacred Torah is “longer than the measure of the earth and broader than the seas” not only in general but also in every division and subdivision. It is known that the aspects of Torah illuminate and complement one another, that they are “poor here and richer elsewhere.” And our Sages z'l said, “when does it illuminate? When it is complete.” And, “Who is a *talmid chacham*? One who is asked any halacha, and will state it.”

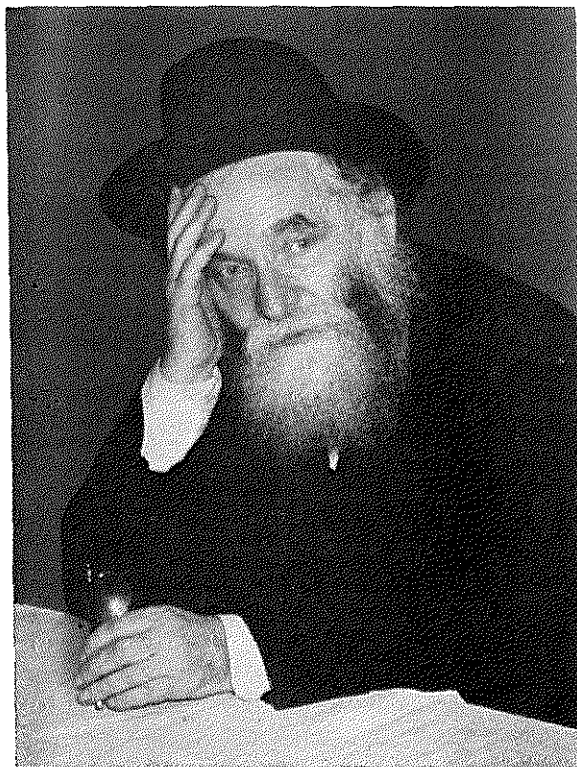
Furthermore, perseverance and toil are two basic means for acquisition and possession of Torah. Without them it cannot take root in the individual's soul, cannot change his being and become a part of his essence—for this is the form and the being of the true *talmid chacham*.

5. Perseverance Yields Faith

This is also true for the spirit of Torah and for faith in its fundamentals. Immersion in Torah illuminates the mind with clarity of faith in the Written and Oral Torah, and with faith in our sages—the Sages of the Talmud and the early sages. A window is thus opened for us to regard world events in the light of the sacred Torah.

Many evil winds and currents struggle in our times, to diminish and to destroy the foundations of the faith. Primarily: materialism of outlook and uncontrolled materialistic drive. Some are linked, in error, to the development of human knowledge. Mostly they present a perverted perspective of the events concerning Jewry in the present era.

Only in the light of Torah do one's eyes open



Reb Ahron Kotler

up to perceive matters in their true light. More: One sees how it was revealed to us beforehand, all that would happen to Jewry throughout the generations, and that everything took place with wondrous precision, exactly in the sequence the Torah predicted and our Sages z'l elucidated. (See *Rambam* at the end of *Ha'azinu*, *D'vorim* 32:40). All doubt and vacillation shatters on the anvil of lucid perception of the Torah and the words of our Sages. And all the questions and paradoxes become potent proofs of the truth of the G-d-given origin of the Torah.

6. Building Torah Our Duty

In this generation, after the holocaust in Europe in which the Torah centers were destroyed and the world thus laid waste, the lofty task of building up the destroyed and replanting the wasteland has been placed upon the Jewries of America and *Eretz Yisroel*: to establish fortresses of Torah and fear of G-d, and to create an atmosphere of devotion to Torah and to faith in its sanctity and eternity, without participation in any peripheral or external activities. For only in such an atmosphere is it possible to raise a generation of *talmidai chachamim* whole in Torah and in spirit.

BOOK REVIEWS

THE INVISIBLE ISAIAH, by *Rachel Margolioth*. New York, 1964; obtainable through the author, 500 West End Avenue, New York City.

NO theory of the Bible critics is as universally accepted by the scholars as the theory that there were two (or maybe even three) authors of the book of Isaiah. To the uninitiated this would therefore appear a solidly established thesis, presumably founded upon the best objective proofs that science could muster.

In reality, nothing could be further from the truth. Many years ago, in an article that was recently reprinted in "Fundamentals of Judaism," Rabbi Dr. Joseph Carlebach pointed out that what really prompted the critics to speak of a Deutero-Isaiah was a frightful dilemma: "If it is true that . . . one Isaiah is responsible for the authorship of the entire work, all attempts to explain the nature of Prophecy from the viewpoint of rationalism must come to a sudden end. For it is evident that Prophecy transcends the capacities of human knowledge and calculation. A spiritual miracle has become a reality which defies all rational explanations."

In other words, unless the critics, by hook or by crook, explain the prophecies in the second half of Isaiah as a later work, they must accept Prophecy as a fact. Since they are unwilling to do that, they stubbornly cling to the idea of a second, later Isaiah—in the face of all the evidence, as Dr. Carlebach pointed out. Just how definite the evidence against "the untenable theory of a Deutero Isaiah" is, is shown in the work before us, the result of a most exhaustive research effort by Rachel Margolioth.

"The Indivisible Isaiah" (which appeared originally in Hebrew) ably summarizes the arguments against the critical theories; it points out their literary and historical weaknesses and contradictions; and it shows how they were inspired by rationalist and, in some cases, Christological and anti-Semitic bias. Beyond all this, however, the author has undertaken to demonstrate the unity of the entire book by a painstaking scientific analysis of its literary construction.

In fifteen chapters she traces, one by one, expressions and constructions occurring throughout the *entire* book of Isaiah and peculiar to this prophet only, such as ". . . eleven specific epithets referring to the Jewish people, alike in the two sections, . . . twenty-three expressions of encouragement common to both parts, . . .

thirty-four characteristic phrases and synonyms alike in both sections." She concludes that "after classifying the entire book of Isaiah by subject, we have shown that in regard to each subject both parts employ innumerable like expressions which are peculiar only to this book. . . . Even common expressions are distinguished by a particular use identical in both (parts)."

For us, to whom Torah in its totality is the foundation of our thought and life, such proofs are obviously not necessary. To us, the *Tanach* as passed down by the *Massorah* has a validity which can neither be put in question nor strengthened by the transitory views of bible critics or archaeologists. Even so, "The Indivisible Isaiah" is of great interest to us for the light it throws on the methods of biblical criticism. For those, however, who are impressed by the pretensions of so-called biblical scholarship, this book is absolutely required reading. In pointing out the essential weakness of such a generally accepted theory as that of two Isaiahs, and in clarifying the ideological prejudices which gave birth to it, this book poses questions which bible critics should not be permitted to evade. Their failure to answer them will speak louder than all the critical volumes that have been published.

THE SONG OF SONGS, AND SELECTED ESSAYS, by *Rabbi W. Wolf* (obtainable through the author, c/o H. Adler, Blauvelt Road, Monsey, N.Y., \$2.75).

ONE of the most difficult books of the *Tanach* is the *Song of Songs*. Rabbi Akiba called it the holiest of the holy, and indeed we perceive readily that behind its words there lie profound meanings that far transcend the simple understanding of the text. But how can we find the key to this deeper message? In the volume before us, slight in size but comprehensive in scope, the author provides a translation and commentary demonstrating that the *Song of Songs* is "a dialogue between G-d, Israel, and mankind, about their relationship to one another." Drawing upon his great erudition, Rabbi Wolf succeeds in tracing this theme throughout the eight chapters of the *Song of Songs*, in the spirit of the teachings of our Sages, thereby opening to the reader a richly rewarding pathway through the book. The interest of the volume is heightened by a series of perceptive essays on the holidays that make up the Jewish year, and upon several related topics. Originally written in German, the entire book was competently translated into English by Joseph Leftwich.

The Exodus From Egypt

Jewry's Unique Historical Destiny

How We Became A People

Whoever deeply reflects on the course of Jewish history can discern through all its stages and developments, how the Divine Will is operative in history.

The very emergence of the Jewish People represents a wondrous event without peer in the history of other peoples. A lone family arrives—as a group of immigrants—in a mighty country possessing an old, developed civilization. The results should definitively have been one of total assimilation within the Egyptian people. Such a lot would have befallen not only a small group, but even a large People, who, for whatever reason, would have migrated to so mighty a society. But this Hebrew family itself walked round sphinklike among the physical Egyptian sphinxes. This family increased numerically, and utterly refused to be swallowed up in the melting pot of the ruling society.

No People in the world was even born under such conditions; neither till then, nor in subsequent times. It is therefore to be understood that so unique a People necessarily elicited for itself not only amazement but also resentment and hate.

The ruling People mobilized all its government resources in order to liquidate part of this strange People, and to enslave the others in behalf of the country's development; which development was based on the exploitation of tens of thousands of slave laborers. Under such conditions, no people could survive with a separate national identity.

The terrible persecutions transformed the grandchildren of the immigrant-family from Canaan into broken and tortured fragments. The slave-system was so well organized that, it made impossible any consolidation of the slaves. Nevertheless, the slaves did

not cease to exist as a unique People with an abiding hope for miraculous liberation.

The Exodus Could Only Come About Miraculously

When *Moshe Rabbenu* appeared in Egypt on *Hashem's* command to redeem his enslaved brothers, he struck two serious obstacles, which there was no possibility to overcome naturally. A Great Power, such as Egypt then was certainly not ready to oblige the demands of some visionary, not backed by any strength other than the authority invested in him by G-d—whom the Egyptians did not acknowledge. Aside from this, Pharaoh could not afford to free the masses of slaves whom he needed for the development of his country. Hundreds of thousands of slave laborers were engaged in the erection of pyramids and fortresses, around which entire industries must have functioned, and which must have been guarded by entire legions of supervisors. The freeing of masses of forced laborers was bound to shake to its foundations the entire structure and the state of the economy of the country. That, Pharaoh and his advisors could certainly not permit.

The only way to free the Jews was through supernatural, miraculous intervention because under natural circumstance the Egyptians themselves would never have freed their Jewish slaves. As our Sages have said: "Why was G-d revealed from the Heavens above, and spoke with Moshe from the thornbush?—Just as the thornbush is more 'difficult' than all the trees in the world and any bird which enters cannot emerge uninjured, but is severed limb after limb, similarly was Egyptian bondage more difficult before G-d than any bondage in the world. Never did a slave or maidservant leave Egypt free. . . ." (*Mechilta D'Rashbi*). Indeed, no other instance is known, in which a group of slaves proved capable of breaking the chains of enslavement imposed by a ruling People, after the fashion of the People of Israel in Egypt.

Yehuda Leib Gersht was an educator, thinker and writer of great distinction, in pre-war Poland. He continued his work in Eretz Yisroel where he recently died.

Not only the deliverance of the Jews from Egypt was effected by supernatural means. Their endurance and consolidation after their liberation were similarly not possible through circumstance. All the borders of Egypt were sealed. In the eastern and western parts of Canaan there lived entrenched peoples who were under no circumstances willing to grant entry to the wave of liberated slaves planning to erect a state of their own. The Philistines concentrated in the west on the shores of the Mediterranean; the Emorim in the central and eastern parts of the land; the Edomim, Moabim and Amorim in the south, all stood as an iron wall before the emigres from Egypt. What purpose did the entire liberation have in humanly understood, naturalistic terms?

The historical facts are that previous efforts to pierce those boundaries by force, ended in failure (as was the case with the *B'nai Ephraim* at *Gas* and the battle at *Charmah*). Only one way remained: supernatural help from above. All other political or military plans to achieve the goal of conquering the promised land were hopeless.

The life-conditions of the departed from Egypt in their struggle for survival, were thus given to be radically different than that of all other neighboring Peoples. And the high point of this uniqueness and wondrous differentness was certainly *ma'amed Har Sinai* (the stand at Mt. Sinai); and no less the implanting of the Torah given at Sinai.

The entire Torah stands in total contradiction to the Egyptian way of life, in the midst of which the Jews had lived till now. Egyptian culture was based on fetishistic idolatry. The worship of animals with its attendant abominations was the foundation of the religious views of the Egyptians.

And suddenly the recently liberated slaves received a Torah which—in total contradiction to Egyptian religion—emphasized the exalted concept of a “G-d, Most High, Possessor of Heaven and Earth,” Who could not be grasped by the senses, and Who prohibited the make or use of any physical representation in His worship. The Torah proclaimed the idolatrous symbols of the Egyptians and of other Peoples as the most terrible of abominations to be fought without compromise. Even more—not only did the Torah prohibit and hold in abhorance idolatry itself, but also every aspect of the way of life of idolatrous societies which rooted in idolatry. “Do not turn to the idols . . . like the practices of the land of Egypt where you dwelt you shall not do . . . and like the deeds of the

land of Canaan that I bring you there, you shall not do and in their statutes you shall not go.”

Likewise was the institution of slavery—the separation of the people into masters and slaves, the exploitation of foreigners and recent settlers—an integral part of Egyptian civilization. The Torah forbade such practices: “And if a stranger will sojourn in your land you shall not oppress him . . . and you shall love him like yourself because you were sojourners in the land of Egypt, I am *Hashem* your G-d.” Still more—it is in the nature of liberated slaves to carry bitter enmity to their erstwhile oppressors. The Torah however, taught an opposite and original principle: “You shall not hold an Egyptian in abhorance, because you were a sojourner in his land.”

We see here that the Torah which was given to the Jews was a total revolution against the entire way of life which the Jews witnessed in Egypt. And though some of the traditions which Jacob and his children brought to Egypt still survived in the memory of their grandchildren, nevertheless, life for so long a time in the surroundings of Egyptian defilement, certainly failed to exert good influences for safeguarding the purity of those traditions of the Fathers.

It is therefore easy to understand how difficult a transformation it was to implant in those who had left Egypt, the concepts and the way of life of the Torah from Sinai. It was therefore not possible to implant in them the world of the Torah through a natural process of cultural development. It required the supernatural act of the giving of the Torah; the commandment of *Hashem*, which gave the Jews the strength to lift themselves out of the Hedonistic Egyptian swamp, and to transform them into a unique People without any similarity to the spiritual conditions of contemporary Peoples.

From this it is also possible to understand why the Torah itself relates the act of the giving of the Torah with the exodus from Egypt. “You have seen what I have done to Egypt, and how I lifted you upon the wings of eagles, and I brought you to Me . . . and you shall be to Me a treasure from amongst all the Peoples, for Mine is all the land” (*Shemos* 10). The uniqueness and the supernatural character of Jewish destiny was revealed at the giving of the Torah exactly as at the exodus from Egypt. Therefore, for example Rabbi Yehuda HaLevi too, underscores this relation and says: “Thus did *Hashem* begin his words to the masses of Israel: ‘I am *Hashem* your G-d who brought you out from the land of Egypt . . .,’ that stand was clear to them from what they had seen with their eyes, and afterwards there came the continuation of tra-

dition, which is therefore also like direct vision" (Kuzari 1:25).

Egyptian Decline And Jewish Eternity

After the event of the exodus, the Egyptian kingdom gradually recovered from the blows it received while its slaves were being liberated. The Egyptian kingdom still existed for approximately a thousand years till the invasion of the Greeks. But with the loss of its political independence, there followed a construction and decline of the national culture, till Egypt ceased to play any significant role in world history.

All that remains of the mighty Egyptian kingdom are the ruins of the pyramids, and the mummies. Egyptian civilization believed that it could make its power eternal with the help of mighty material achievements, but from all that nothing more remains than blocks of stone monuments and hills of sand.

The liberated slaves however came to a humble mountain in the wilderness of Sinai. There they received—as the foundation of their existence as a People—the two stone tablets, on which there were engraved the Ten Words; the essence of its Torah which was to stand in sharpest contradiction to Egyptian culture. And it was precisely the content of *these* two *stone* tablets which sufficed to breathe a spirit of eternal life into the People of the freed slaves can today proudly lift up their eyes in the direction of the pyramids and proclaim—on the basis of their experience—where the secret lies hidden of eternal existence for Peoples and States.

The teaching of the event of the exodus from Egypt and everything which emerges from that teaching is capable of shedding a clear light of understanding on the ways of human history and the unique destiny of the Jewish people.

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NEWS MANAGEMENT

(continued from p. 7)

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In an Orthodox congregation in Metropolitan New York, the rabbi informed the Shabbos morning worshippers, that—contrary to the reports of "The New York Times," the "New York Herald-Tribune," the press services . . . and the Jewish Telegraphic Agency—the demonstrations by Israeli and American yeshiva students at several missions in Israel were most peaceful, a tremendous furor broke loose. So closed were the minds of the congregants as a result of news management and wilful distortion of the facts, that for a period of time afterwards, the rabbi's tenure with his congregation was endangered by his insistence on speaking the truth.

In such a controlled climate, it becomes increasingly difficult for Orthodoxy in America to state its positions on matters of vital concern to all of Jewry, and hope that their message will reach the American Jew intact, if at all. The most recent example of news management by JTA, concerns the statement of the seven Jewish groups on charges of "religious coercion" in Israel. (See *The Lines are Drawn* on page 3.) While this is a reverse example, it thereby demonstrates even more forcefully, that the JTA has set itself up as the arbiter of what American Jewry should know . . . and what it should not know.

The cable to Prime Minister Eshkol signed by the seven American organizations, charged that "extremist groups in the United States have urged that even non-Jewish groups in Israel be curtailed in the full exercise of their basic religious rights." The decision-makers in JTA seem to have felt that the reference to restrictions against non-Jews in Israel was either unwarranted or that it tended to confuse the issue. Whatever the reasoning was, this vital point, which highlights the ridiculousness of the charges against American Orthodoxy, was omitted by JTA and the hundreds of thousands of Jews who read the report in their local Anglo-Jewish newspapers were unaware of it.

It would be most unrealistic to ask or to hope for complete objectivity and unhampered reporting of vital Jewish issues in the Anglo-Jewish press. However, if the Jewish Telegraphic Agency hopes to maintain its now mythical status as a news agency, there must be some effort to raise its journalistic standards and above all its presently low standard of integrity. Otherwise, a militant and angry Orthodoxy will be forced to muster its own resources and establish a news agency which will make possible the distribution of news which is vital to a growing Torah community. One way . . . or another . . . there must be a flow of accurate and objective news to the American Jew.

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May 13..June 9	Aug. 30..Oct. 4		
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THE DEPUTY

The world of the theatre is not our world, but some of the circumstances, surrounding the Broadway production of "The Deputy" are of supreme concern to us. The issues raised by the play impel the formulation on our part of a reaction based on the *hashkafah* of Torah.

To date most of the controversy engendered by "The Deputy" revolves around the silence of Pope Pius XII during Hitler's genocide attempt on the life of our people, and his failure to have issued a statement publicly condemning the Nazi extermination of millions of Jews. Almost all the protagonists phrase the question in personal terms: "Was Pius guilty or not? Would public protest on his part have helped save Jewish lives or not? Was he motivated by a sense of expediency or not?" Most of those who favor the viewpoint projected by "The Deputy" are quick to point out that the play by no means intends to attack Christianity. The very failure of the Pope is seen as a personal failure and as a deep violation of all that Christianity stands for. In fact, a young Jesuit priest is the symbol of conscience in the play, and it is he who is projected as the authentic Christian response to the Nazi effort to exterminate our people.

The Wrong Questions

All this however, is an oversimplification. The Jew who approaches the matter out of an understanding of the lessons of the last twenty centuries of Jewish history; out of the explicit and implicit insights of our sages and *seforim*, will ask a different set of questions. Was the Pope acting "in character" or "out of character?" Was the course of action he chose a *result* of Catholic history, or an *exception* to Catholic history?

A knowledge of Jewish history would clearly teach us that Catholic policy towards the Jew depends on the degree of Church control and power in the life of a given country. In medieval Spain we were accord-

SECOND LOOKS

at the Jewish scene

by Ben-Meir

ed one kind of treatment and even after the Inquisition's torture chambers had "fallen into neglect," by the advent of the twentieth century, the existence of Jewish houses of worship was still not legally permissible during the first years of this century. In Protestant countries, the policy of the Catholic Church has been friendlier on occasion. In democratic countries Catholic policy towards the Jew has even been cordial.

"Lost Sheep"

The response of Catholic policy to a situation in which non-Catholics initiate persecution of the Jew is however a completely different matter. Those of us who have not been blinded or intoxicated by the lure of assimilation, who have not been overcome by the stupor of ecumenism, have not forgotten how the people of Israel are viewed in Catholic doctrine. In that doctrine we are "lost sheep" damned and doomed because of our rejection of the founder of Christianity. Our exile is seen as an eternal testimony to our damnation. The only thing that could possibly save us would be the embracing of the Christian faith.

When the Vatican observes the persecutions of Jews at non-Catholic hands, its own doctrine might lead to the shedding of tears in behalf of the Jews—but those tears would accompany prayer that the "hearts of the stubborn Jews might finally

be softened a bit and be made more susceptible to persuasion. . . . Certainly we were never foolish enough to expect the Church to expose itself to danger to its interest, through intercession in our behalf. The fundamental principles of Catholic theology, all of Catholic history, have made it ludicrous for us to ever entertain such expectations.

Our utmost practical expectations have envisioned the cessation of direct Catholic persecution of our people in the modern age. We have long known however that any possibility of uprooting anti-Jewish prejudice from the Catholic world, would require a radical transformation of Church doctrine.

On a deeper level, we have always known that the Church has not succeeded in radically transforming the inner nature of the pagan world it had converted. We knew that Christian influence had imposed a thin covering of civilization on an unregenerated pagan psyche; that the society it created was a profoundly schizophrenic one, in which an otherworldly ascetic ideal was the province of the few, while the broad masses of people were seen at best as capable of being "saved by grace," but certainly not by the hallowing of life through human effort. This world was seen as too basically depraved for regeneration from within. In such thinking no regimen of observance—such as, *lehavdil*, that of the Halachah—could be expected to transmute and refine the totality of human instinct. In the end, the layer of civilization was completely torn away and Nazi paganism proved to be stronger than Christian influence in the lives of almost eighty million German Christians.

There are still other questions we must ask, which go beyond the matter of Christian guilt and Christian moral failure at a time when the blood of our people cried to the Heavens. In addition to the Church there was another major force in Germany from whom we must ask an accounting. How could

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the world of the German universities have failed so abysmally to stop or restrain the Nazi insanity? If the representative—individual or collective—of Christian religiosity is accused, should we not at the same time put on trial the representatives of the world of German culture? Were they less guilty than the Vatican? Should we not have learned from the Nazi era that both Christianity and the Western academic tradition have failed to take the jungle out of the heart of mankind? How can Jews continue to place any trust in either? How can some of us continue to feel that it is their world we ought to imitate; that they are in possession of truths and values,, to which our Divinely revealed Torah ought to adjust?

It is our hope that "The Deputy" will not allow the lie of the present "ecumenical spirit" to go unchallenged. We hope that it will make some hundreds of thousands of people both in Europe and in America ask questions which go beyond those posed by the play itself; questions which lead to the realization that more than a few phrases about brotherhood are needed to wipe off the traces of Jewish blood from the collective hand of the Gentile world; questions which lead to the realization that the guilt of the Nazi era is the total guilt of Western culture and its majority religion. If there is to be expiation, it will have to come from the whole age in which we live, rather than from any one individual.

* * *

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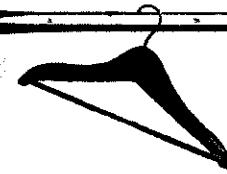
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An Exchange on Separatism

A Rabbi Asks

To the Editor:

May I first express my appreciation for the many fine articles which have been printed in the first five issues of your new publication. Although I cannot agree with the point of view of some of the writers, nevertheless, I feel that the JEWISH OBSERVER is a necessary and creditable addition to those few journals which espouse the Torah-true point of view.

In the latest of his articles entitled, "Antisemitism and the Jewish Response," Rabbi Bulman, basing his analysis on the Purim Megillah, offers us an extensive and thought-provoking description of the causes for antisemitism and the proper Jewish responses towards this age-old phenomenon.

In the section entitled, "the ingathering of the Jewish community for common effort," Rabbi Bulman writes as follows:

"The first step in planning a Jewish defense effort against antisemitism is necessarily the cultivation of a sense of common Jewish destiny . . . 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."

I wonder how we may reconcile the above words with the opinions expressed by Rabbi Bulman in his article, "What Price Unity" in the

first issue of your magazine wherein the author condemns as inimical and detrimental to Torah Judaism any form of cooperation with non-Orthodox elements in the Jewish community.

. . . I feel that Rabbi Bulman confuses the issues by citing examples of cooperation between Orthodox and non-Orthodox in religious services, joint educational facilities, and other examples pertaining to the sacred interests of Orthodoxy when in truth, the kind of cooperation advocated by the Synagogue Council of America, for example, is in the sphere of Jewish unity vis-a-vis the non-Jewish community, and the governmental structures of our society.

Of course, Rabbi Bulman's retort would be that even to recognize the existence of the non-Orthodox is already a disservice to the true Torah point of view. In that case, how are we ever going to attain, "the ingathering of the Jewish community for common effort" which is a prerequisite for the fighting of our enemies.

Rabbi Philip Kaplan
Colchester, Connecticut

. . . . Rabbi Bulman Replies

My sincere thanks for Rabbi Kaplan's appreciative remarks concerning THE JEWISH OBSERVER. As to the seeming contradiction between the opinions expressed in, "What Price Unity" (J.O. Sept. 1963) and the views espoused in, "Antisemitism and the Jewish Response," (March, '64) may I state the following.

Rabbi Kaplan asserts that I "condemn as inimical and detrimental to Torah Judaism any form of cooperation with non-orthodox elements." But that is not my view at all. The burden of my remarks in "What Price Unity," was a critique of the almost prevalent "Unity above all" approach. I took

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issue with the mood of "unity at any expense." But that is a far-cry from condemning *any form of co-operation* with the non-orthodox community. If such cooperation is predicated on the granting of religious legitimacy to non-orthodoxy, or on compromising the principles of Torah or its observance, I oppose it. If such cooperation relates to the defense of Jewish physical well being or Jewish freedoms, or to specific areas of charitable endeavor, I favor it. *I certainly do not favor the fostering of social separatism from our non-observant brethren.* I ardently favor every possible exertion, to draw non-orthodox Jews closer to Torah, with "bands of love."

The one precondition for cooperative endeavor with non-orthodoxy, which I view as axiomatic, is the guaranteed capacity of Orthodoxy to continue to function *without prejudice or danger to its principles and life-interests* as a result of such cooperation. Jews to whom the Torah and Israel's sacred traditions are true and unalterably binding cannot bargain or cut corners on this principle. It is a foundation stone of our existence. It is sadly, an incontrovertible truth, that the "mixed" Rabbinic and Synagogue bodies *do not abide by this principle.* Let us take a look at how two of these organizations—the Synagogue Council of America (representing the Orthodox, Conservative, and Reform Congregational bodies), and the New York Board of Rabbis (consisting of rabbis of "all three wings of Judaism")—represent themselves, and we shall be able to judge whether there is any truth to the allegation that their area of concern is "external" only.

In the recent jubilee issue of *The Day* (March 6) the Synagogue Council of America placed a full page ad, in which—in addition to representation vis-a-vis the non-Jewish community—the following are cited as the purposes of the Council.

"Beside representing American

Jewry externally, the Synagogue Council strives for: The strengthening of Jewish religious life in America and elsewhere—to encourage the spiritual influence of the Synagogue, of our moral, religious heritage; the observance of Shabbos, the observance of Yomim Tovim, and to give the young Jewish generation a religious Jewish education. We strive that every Jew should observe Judaism."

Is the above "external" or "internal"? And since—as is obviously the case—it is "internal," then we must ask: Aren't the Orthodox signatories of the above guilty of misleading all of Jewry by fostering the notion that phrases like "strengthening of Jewish religious life, observance of Shabbos, religious Jewish education" etc., may truthfully be applied to the work of the Reform and Conservative bodies. Does what they call observance of Shabbos have anything to do with the meaning of the phrase in the Torah and Rabbinic tradition? Does their tragicomic caricature of religious Jewish education have anything to do with what Torah Jewry means by religious Jewish education? And what they describe as "striving that every Jew should observe Judaism"—do we not describe those activities as the "poisoning the souls of Jews with denial of all that is sacred to Judaism?"

And as for the "New York Board of Rabbis"—it too placed an ad in the same issue of *The Day*, in which—in addition to "external" representation and chaplaincy work—the Board is represented as "encouraging Jewish education." Can we be partners to deluding Jews into thinking that what *they* mean by Jewish education, is indeed Jewish education?

The ad further informs us that the Board "presents religious radio and TV programs." Can we take part in an activity which fosters the notion that the Reform and Conservative clergy constitute a legitimate rabbinate and that their houses of worship are authentic syna-

gogues? As to the contents of these programs, do they not often directly violate the halachah? Can we then allow Jews to think that we grant legitimacy to Conservative and Reform practice, by co-sponsoring such programs? If the New York Board of Rabbis sponsors an international synagogue at the JFK Airport, whose rabbis are to serve on a "three-way rotation basis" and whose *Sidurim* are to be of all "three kinds"—is that "external representation" or internal falsification? When the Israeli Rabbinate refuses to recognize a Conservative divorce, and three "neutral community-wide" bodies and four members of the Synagogue Council in-

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form Israel and the whole world that in America non-Orthodox Judaism is acknowledged as legitimate—what made it possible for them to do so if not our acceptance of the principle of “unity at all cost?”

A few further results of granting non-Orthodox Judaism public legitimacy.

Those who do so cannot tell their own congregants that Reform and Conservative clergy and congregations are not in truth rabbis and synagogues. Thousands upon thousands of those congregants learn to feel—through our “unity policy”—that mixed-pews, mixed choirs, arbitrary changes in the *t'filos*, denial of fundamental principles of Jewish faith can't possibly be *that bad*. Can we then be surprised when we hear the following from our congregants: “Why is our rabbi such a fanatic? Why can't we have mixed-pews? Why won't our rabbi ‘jointly’ officiate at the marriage of X to Y? After all Reform rabbi Z converted Y to Judaism, and X's family is one of the oldest families in our synagogue? Why won't he permit the butcher to obtain meat from the city of C just because the Shochet is Conservative, or allow him to be a *mohel* for our children just because he uses a different instrument? Why does he keep insisting on using the word “orthodox” about the Day School so often? After all don't we want it to be community-wide? Why won't he allow the Conservative Rabbi to pinchhit for him at Bar Mitzvahs in our shule when he is on vacation? He's just too fanatic. Next time, we'll either have to get a more liberal, Orthodox rabbi, or we may have to go Conservative to keep our members. We can't just let the *shule* fall apart!”

We cannot play it both ways.

Our life interests demand that we prevent the blurring of distinction between us. Once we and *they* know how far apart we are religiously, and *they* learn to respect

Letters to the Editor

“What is an Orthodox Jew?”

Dear Editor:

The article by Rabbi Weitman (Jan. 1964) did a good job in answering “What is a Jew?”. This article effectively revealed the harm done by the Conservative rabbi who used the pages of Harper's Magazine to confuse the public on this very serious and basic question.

However, what I would like to see your excellent magazine come to grips with is a problem even more important, i.e., “What is an Orthodox Jew?” There are so many versions of Orthodoxy one hears about, that your publication — which doesn't seem to be afraid to tackle controversial issues — would be performing a great service for Judaism, if you were to print an authoritative opinion on this subject.

Lawrence Miller

Chicago, Ill.

* * *

Questions Federal Aid — Boon or Burden?

Dear Editor:

The orthodox day school movement, since its inception, has had two educational purposes. First, that of educating the offspring of Torah observant parents who desired that their children receive an education in accordance with *v'she-nantem Ivonechoh*. Second, and not less important, to approach our less observant brethren through their children, and thereby attempt to bring them back to our priceless heritage. Those of us who graduated from day schools 15-20 years ago may recall instances where 80-90% of our classmates came from homes where Shabbas was a stranger and many

that difference it will be much easier to find legitimate channels for Orthodox and non-Orthodox cooperation in areas that affect the physical well-being of our people.

from homes where *chazer* was no stranger. Today we proudly point at those who came from such backgrounds and were transformed by the day school. Many were able to influence their parents and siblings to change also. It is surely no exaggeration to say that many of our present Roshei Yeshivos, day school teachers, *froome baalebatim*, etc., show the effectiveness of the day school movement in this respect.

Recently, many orthodox groups, your publication among them, have decided to endorse federal aid to private schools in the hope that this will relieve the crushing burden on day school parents. Intuitively, I count myself as a supporter of this move, but feel that there are some issues involved that require further thought. One such issue is the effect such subsidy would have on the two financial mainstays of Jewish education: the philanthropist and the parent. Would they keep on contributing in the same measure; or would they feel that, “now it's the government's job and we can relax?” In short, would there really be a significant improvement in day school finances or merely a transferring of the burden?

Another issue is the impetus such legis-



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lation would give to the formation of other private schools, either without religious orientation or geared to the reform and conservative heresies. The significance of this is that today non-observant parents, who for any one of a number of reasons don't wish to send their children to public schools, have very little choice, but to send them to yeshivos ketanos where the process outlined above can thereby begin. With the opening of more private schools, spurred by federal subsidy, their choice would be broadened; and the number of children from irreligious homes attending day schools will drop.

Professor Milton Friedman of the University of Chicago, America's most prominent right wing or, as he prefers, "liberal," economist, in his book, **Capitalism and Freedom** (pp. 90-91), has argued that state aid to education would, because of the increased freedom of choice, weaken parochial schools rather than strengthen them. Friedman is in favor of such weakening. Are we? In other words, the decision to support federal aid is essentially a decision to concentrate on the first purpose mentioned above to the neglect of the second, a selfish decision to ease the burden on religious parents while abandoning the children of other parents. This may be a proper decision, but we should be aware of the consequences before making it.

Mordechai E. Lando

Instructor in Economics
Hofstra University
Hempstead, Long Island

* * *

The Missing "Yarmulke"

Dear Editor:

Anent your comment in "Second Looks" on the visit of the Pope to Israel (January 1964), the **Jerusalem Post** reported that the "shamash" of a London synagogue, who had been watching the television program showing the Pope being met at Megiddo by the president of Israel and the other government leaders, commented: "The only one of the whole company who has a proper 'yarmulke' on his head is the Pope!"

Seriously speaking, though, your magazine is to be commended for the courage of speaking up to expose the "missionary designs of Rome" which were helped by the Papal visit.

Abraham Karpel

Brooklyn 13, N. Y.

* * *

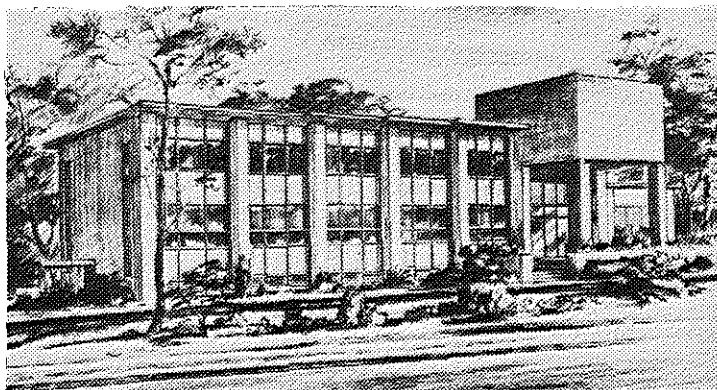
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Herman Wouk

St. Thomas, Virgin Islands

* * *

Dear Editor:

Since the arrival of your very first issue my family and I have enjoyed every article, marvelling at the high degree of scholarship and literary content. Agudath Israel of America has made the "break-through" into the language of the Jewish English-reading intellectual.

Samson Raphael Hirsch, z.t.l., if I recall correctly, found that about 50 non-religious German-Jewish writers had complete control of the Jewish periodical press and that most of their readers were religious Jews. He set about to rectify this by training a new generation of writers who could offer the religious Jew a forum and a mouthpiece. May your publication follow in his steps.

The inroads of the secular and pseudo-religious college, along with a deep left-wing penetration in both the United States and in Israel, have forced all Torah-centered Jews to exercise the greatest personal vigilance; your publication will reinforce the individual in the

struggle and will help to break the bonds of isolation.

Herman Van Gelder

Los Angeles 35, Calif.

* * *

Dear Editor:

I must congratulate you on your high standards of not permitting **The Jewish Observer** to be narrowed down to an organization house organ. Although Agudath Israel is your official publisher, I am very pleased to note that your magazine is a broad forum for orthodox discussion, which is indeed a rare phenomenon in such publications. I find that only the "Commentary" published by the American Jewish Committee follows a

similar policy of self-effacement. Keep up your wonderful work! . . .

Abraham A. Rosenstein

Bronx 52, N. Y.

* * *

Dear Editor:

The time is long overdue for the **Daas Torah** in its clearest form to be properly translated to our large English masses. Keep up your great achievement in presenting us with eloquent and undistorted discussions of the vital issues confronting us during these days of **Acharis Hayomim** . . .

Benjamin Rosenbaum

Brooklyn 11, N. Y.

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From the AGUDAH MOVEMENT

Over a thousand at Pirchei Torah banquet

Over 1000 Yeshiva boys filled the Dining Hall of the Bais Yaakov of Boro Park on Saturday night, March 7th, for the banquet which climaxed the National "Siyum Mishnayos" of Pirchei Agudath Israel of America. The huge crowd, after filling every available seat in the hall, lined the walls four deep and eventually overflowed onto the stage and out into the school yard. Spectators commented that this event was a Kiddush Hashem in the fullest sense.

The banquet was the culmination of one of the most successful Pirchei Inter-branch weekends in history. Over 200 Pirchim from all sections of New York City, plus large contingents from such distant places as Toronto, Baltimore, Monsey, and Lakewood partook of the hospitality extended to them by Boro Park Jewry.

Using Yeshiva Toras Emes as a base of operation, over 400 youths attended each of the Shabbos minyanim. A still larger number participated in the other Pirchei functions of the weekend, including an Oneg Shabbos Friday night, and Shabbos afternoon, a Hilchos Shabbos Suhir, and Sholosh Seudos, Rabbi Ronnie Greenwald, Rabbi Yehudah Oelbaum, Rabbi Shimon Eider, and Rabbi Nissin Wolpin as guest speakers.

The basic thought underlying the Pirchei project was that of getting Yeshiva students from all areas united in the study of Torah. The six tractates of the Mishnah were divided up among the various Pirchei branches throughout the United States.

The "Hadran" at the Siyum was rendered by ten-year old Yosi Plotzker of the Boro Park Pirchei, who astounded all those present with his intricate Talmudic discourse. As a token of appreciation for his many years of dedicated work for Pirchei, Rabbi Joshua Silbermintz was presented with a gift by Moshe Rosenberg, Co-Chairman of the Pirchei Committee. Entertainment was provided by Chazan David Werdyger of Gerer Record fame and the Pirchei band.



Rabbi Menachem Porush, Agudah representative in the Knesset, brought greetings from the Agudist Youth of Eretz Israel. The greetings of prominent Roshei Yeshivos and Chasidic Rebbes were read by Schaye Schonbrun and Rabbi C. B. Gluck.

The guest speaker, Rabbi Moshe Sherer, Executive Vice-President of Agudath Israel of America, called upon the assembled to develop themselves into the future Torah leaders of our people. In addition, he called for a plan to enable a delegation of Pirchim, representing the thousands of Yeshiva Bochurim in the United States, to participate in the Knessiah Gedolah to be held this July in Jerusalem.

Zeirei Expands "Bikur Cholim" Activity

Zeirei Agudath Israel has expanded its efforts of mobilizing young people to visit sick Jewish patients in hospitals throughout New York, and hopes to extend this "Bikur Cholim" activity to other major Jewish communities. A special campaign is also being conducted to provide toys to Jewish children who are bedridden in hospitals. A Blood Bank is now being organized under Zeirei

42nd ANNIVERSARY DINNER

A full report, with pictures, of the 42nd Anniversary Dinner of Agudath Israel, which honored the distinguished Telzer Rosh Yeshiva, Harav Chaim Mordecai Katz, will appear in our next issue.

Agudath Israel Rejects Public Gathering on Russian Jewry

A representative of Agudath Israel of America, who participated as an observer in an "all auspices" conference of Jewish organizations on January 28th on the situation of Russian Jewry, appealed to the organizations to call off their planned national conference on Russian Jewry in Washington, D.C. The Agudah representative declared that such highly-publicized public gatherings can harm the position of Russian Jewry, whose interests can best be served through discreet negotiations. He stated that the Agudath Israel World Organization will continue its efforts in this area in a manner which the movement, guided by the G'dolei Torah, considers in the welfare of Russia's Jews.

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