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THE JEWISH OBSERVER

**ISRAEL'S
CHIEF RABBINATE**

**THE FIFTH
K'NESSIA GEDOLA**

**CHARACTERISTICS
OF TORAH**

**WHO SHALL GUARD
OUR VINEYARDS?**

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**SOME CONCERNS OF
A TORAHLESS JEWRY**

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**THE AMERICAN
RABBINATE
— A Rebuttal**

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**SECOND LOOKS AT:
The Washington
Conference
Israel's Mission Trials
"L'Affaire Jacobs"**

THE JEWISH OBSERVER

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Israel's Chief Rabbinate

Reflections on the election and some historical background

A PERIOD of more than five years has elapsed since the post of Ashkenazi Chief Rabbi became vacant in the State of Israel upon the demise of Rav Herzog זצ"ל. Elections for a new Chief Rabbi have finally taken place.

In the elections for the post of Sephardi Chief Rabbi, the incumbent, Rabbi Nissim, was reelected with a decisive majority, despite considerable government opposition to his candidacy. On the other hand, in the elections for an Ashkenazi Chief Rabbi, Rabbi Unterman received 60 electoral votes, while Rabbi Shlomo Goren, who was heavily supported by the non-religious government circles, received 57 electoral votes. Rabbi Unterman thus won the elections by a slender three vote plurality.

When one reflects that the five year delay in the recent election, was brought about by the persistent efforts of Mapai to wrest exclusive control and influence of the Chief Rabbinate from Mizrachi, and by the latter's resistance to these efforts, the three vote plurality by which the Mizrachi supported candidate, Rabbi Unterman, finally was elected, must be seen as fraught with tragic implications for the entire institution of the Chief Rabbinate.

Those implications are especially tragic when viewed against the background of the Israeli government's recent efforts to curtail the freedom and authority of the Chief Rabbinate in areas which had been acknowledged to be in the latter's exclusive domain since that body's inception. The effort to browbeat the Chief Rabbinate into giving a *hechsher* to the *Shalom*, and, more recently, into acknowledging the legitimacy of Conservative divorces, are two outstanding examples.

The crisis in which the Chief Rabbinate finds itself was still more sharply underscored in a recent interview given to the *London Jewish Chronicle* (April 3, 1964) by Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik of Boston.

Among other things, Rabbi Soloveitchik said:

"One of the reasons why I did not accept the post of Chief Rabbi—and the offer was made to me several times—was that I was afraid to be an

officer of the State. A rabbinate linked up with a State cannot be completely free. I admire the rabbis in Israel for their courage in standing up for the problems there and displaying almost superhuman heroism. However, the mere fact that, from time to time, Halachic problems are discussed as political issues at Cabinet meetings is an infringement of the sovereignty of the rabbinate."

In the light of the above, it should be of interest to review the origins of the Chief Rabbinate, and some of the crucial events in its history, which shed light on its present situation—and which might provide some necessary insights for the thinking of Torah-true Jews on the future of Torah in the State of Israel.

Some Little Known Historical Facts.

Shortly after the first World War, the world Zionist leader, and later the first President of the State of Israel, Dr. Chaim Weitzman came to Jerusalem in the interests of "organizing the Yishuv." He held a conference with the *Rabbonim* of Jerusalem, at which he addressed a number of demands to the assembled *Rabbonim*, who till then were the acknowledged and authoritative leadership of Jerusalem Jewry. He wanted certain "minor" changes in the education of the young. A little modernization perhaps . . . The funds raised in America were henceforth to be channeled through the Zionist movement to whom the Balfour Declaration had been addressed, and which had thereby become "representative" of World Jewry in the implementation of the Mandate.

Therefore, Dr. Weitzman informed the *Rabbonim*, in the event that the latter would accept his requests, he would promise an uninterrupted flow of American Jewish dollars to help maintain Jerusalem's religious institutions. Otherwise, Dr. Weitzman asserted, those institutions would henceforth be viewed as "objects of charity" rather than as legitimate religious, social or educational agencies. The response of the *Rabbonim* was in the negative.

Dr. Weitzman had another request. He wanted an "official Rabbinic address." Knowing as he did the opposition of the vast majority of the *Rabbonim* throughout the world, as well as in *Eretz Yisroel*, to the aspirations of the Zionist Organization for hegemony over the social and cultural life of *Eretz Yisroel*, as well as World Jewry, Dr. Weitzman understandably viewed it as necessary that a Zionist-controlled, or at least influenced Rabbinate be established in *Eretz Yisroel*, under the aegis of a Zionist controlled Kehilla apparatus. For this purpose the *Knesses Yisroel* and a *Rabbanut Harashit* (a Chief Rabbinate) were to be organized; the latter to serve as the authoritative religious body of the entire Yishuv.

Now, the *Rabbonim* reacted with apprehension towards the idea of a Chief Rabbinate with institutional authority over all the individual *Rabbonim* throughout the country. In Jewish history there was little precedent for such a concept. But another matter made the *Rabbonim* even more apprehensive. Would the authority of the new Rabbinate extend to every phase of the activities of the new Kehilla? Would the new country-wide Kehilla be governed by Torah law? Who would elect the new Chief Rabbinate?

The *Rabbonim* were informed that "some of the electors would be representatives of the non-religious segment of the community." The authority of the Rabbinate would be limited to "ritual" and "religious" matters. In the functioning of the Kehilla "some" areas would not be subject to Torah law.

The great majority of the *Rabbonim* again said: "No!"

A minority, however, acquiesced. Some of the *Rabbonim*—among them individuals whose personal greatness was widely acknowledged—felt that by joining the new Kehilla and Rabbinate in its first stages of development, they would succeed in placing a Torah imprint on the new, emergent Yishuv in *Eretz Yisroel*.

Mizrachi supported the Chief Rabbinate, which hopefully was to serve as its Rabbinic authority—something which had previously been lacking, since the decisive majority of all the Rabbinate of Europe were opposed to its ideology. The new institution could also possibly "open a wedge" into the Orthodox world, hitherto largely hostile to Zionism.

Similarly did the World Zionist Organization—though expressly secularist and oftentimes anti-religious—take pride in the Chief Rabbinate. Though it is true the Chief Rabbinate never identified itself with the Zionist Organization, the latter always knew how to

utilize the authority of the Chief Rabbinate, to help gain acceptability for itself in the religious world. In time Zionist propaganda succeeded in creating an image of the Chief Rabbinate as that of a central World Rabbinate—a kind of, *l'havdil*, Jewish "Vatican." All this was done with the express intention of offsetting the influence of almost all the *Gedolai Yisroel* in the world—including *Reb Chaim Ozer* and the *Chofetz Chaim* זצ"ל, and almost all the Chassidic *Rebbs* throughout Eastern Europe—who were resolutely opposed to secular Zionism.

DURING THE PERIOD of the Mandate, the Chief Rabbinate functioned more or less normally. But the shadow of its dependence remained hanging. As long as the Chief Rabbinate limited its concerns to *kashrus*, marriage and divorce etc., the support of the Vaad Leumi (the governing body of the *Knesset Yisroel*) was forthcoming. The moment the former ventured out of its prescribed confines, it was immediately made clear that the Rabbinate's proper area of concern was "religion," i. e. *chupos*, voluntary *Din Toros* and the like—that "non-religious" matters were outside its jurisdiction.

An illustration of this attitude was given—with tragic import—by the Teheran episode. In 1944, there arrived in Teheran, a sizeable group of children who had been rescued and brought out of the Nazi-occupied areas. The Youth Aliyah of the Jewish Agency was given supervision over the children—most of whom came from religious homes. Shortly thereafter, information began to arrive in *Eretz Yisroel*, that *Madrichim* from the anti-religious Hashomer Hatzair were uprooting the children's religiosity. The children were "worked on" to discard their *tephillin*, to stop praying. Reports arrived that children were forced to eat on Yom Kippur.

In the name of the Chief Rabbinate, Rav Herzog זצ"ל, protested sharply, and warned that if such terror would not cease he would call upon World Jewry to boycott Zionist fund raising. When the matter became public, a storm ensued. How dare rabbis involve themselves in such matters? A famed leader of Mizrachi went so far as to warn the late Chief Rabbi, that the latter's persistence in his course would jeopardize his re-election to his post upon the forthcoming end of his five-year term of office.

During the first year after the *Medina* was established there was a period of relative harmony—which lasted until the Chief Rabbinate became "troublesome." During those first years the Chief Rabbinate was repeatedly

cowed into silence even when there were authenticated reports of extensive anti-religious coercion in the immigrant camps.

When the government decided to institute military service for girls, the entire rabbinic world protested sharply and *prohibited* such service. The Chief Rabbinate was not free to register its protest.

A time came when the government forbade the Chief Rabbinate to issue a call to Jewish parents to send their children to a religious school. Such a call was deemed "political", and therefore was "improper for the Rabbinate. Again the Chief Rabbinate was forced to remain silent.

Several years ago, when Rabbi Nissim dared to prohibit the use of paper for the printing of sacred books, which came from a mill which operated on Shabbos, a storm broke. In the Knesset the *Issur* was called an act of *Chutzpah*, an "overstepping" of the proper bounds of Rabbinic rights. Since then, Mapai has done everything in its power to make certain that the next Ashkenazi Chief Rabbi, who would succeed Rav Herzog, would be "trustworthy" and would not be "troublesome."

It is for this reason that it took five years since the death of the late Chief Rabbi to elect his successor. Mapai has been willing to allow such an election only on its terms. Committee has followed committee. The wagon somehow did not move. After a coalition

government was again formed with Mizrahi, it was understood that the election procedure would finally be expedited. Again delays. Mapai wanted to play a leading role in the elections . . . The elections finally took place and the Mapai supported candidate lost by three votes . . .

The above, in brief, clarifies the reason for Agudath Israel's not having recognized the Chief Rabbinate of Israel as the highest Rabbinic body of the land or of World Jewry—despite the fact that amongst the leadership and ranks of the Chief Rabbinate there were and are a number of *Gedolai Torah* who were and are respected in all circles.

Agudath Israel saw clearly, that this institution would always be subservient, in crucial matters to outside pressures and would not be free to act purely in accord with *Daas Torah*. For this stand Agudath Israel was often villified and denounced. Perhaps now, that Rabbi Soloveitchik has expressed similar sentiments, the Aguda's position will receive a more sympathetic hearing in non-Agudah circles.

As for the future, whatever their views on the Chief Rabbinate are, Orthodox Jews the world over, must necessarily share one hope—that the Chief Rabbinate may never become an instrument in the hands of a secularist Israeli government majority for the purpose of forcing the Torah into a Sodomite bed of adjustment to its policies or interests.

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Who Shall Guard Our Vineyards?

"Whom shall I send and who shall go forth—not I... not my son"

THE CLEAR and present dangers which threaten to engulf Torah Yiddishkeit as we know it, have lately become all too obvious to require much elaboration. The violent anti-religious tirades here and in Israel and the vicious campaign against Orthodoxy which is being mounted under the guise of an appeal for religious tolerance by the combined forces of secularism, Reform and Conservatism, have in recent months, all too clearly spelled out the perils which lie ahead.

Not so apparent, but nevertheless to be discerned by the intelligent observer, are the underlying currents which have brought matters to their present state. Also to be noted are indications of strength and potential weaknesses which must serve as guide lines in plotting the future course for faithful Jewry.

Running the risk of oversimplification, we might sum up the convictions of the opposition in the words of a well-known Yiddish-daily columnist who accused Orthodoxy of trying to force a "static Torah on a dynamic society" and advised us that we must adapt to the times or face extinction. For a truly understanding Jew, this is so much nonsense, for the Torah is not static nor is society anymore "dynamic" today than it has ever been. Living and pulsating Torah has outlived many "dynamic" societies—none of which was any less diametrically opposed to Torah values and Torah laws than our own.

FROM THE MOMENT TORAH was revealed to the world on Mt. Sinai—when the Egyptian fellow-travelers induced Jews to make the Golden Calf—until the present day, people of Torah have been faced with circumstances and movements which have tended to drag them into the mire of materialism and idolatry in one form or another.

Present day Reform and secularism are nothing more than the modern counterparts of the Sadducees and the Helenists.

What has brought these forces into open conflict with Torah Jewry in recent years is the growing organized strength of the Torah camp here and in *Eretz Yisroel*—a strength which has all too clearly demonstrated to the opposition that Torah Jews are not prepared to conveniently curl up and become historical curios. And as the conflict progresses and the true strength of Orthodoxy unfolds, we see emerging into ever sharper focus, the central position of the yeshivos in the life struggle for *Yiddishkeit*.

Although ostensibly the Orthodox rabbinic and lay organizations are taking the forefront in the battle, one who reads past the headlines will note that the initiative (and in many cases the actual work) for the campaign has come from the yeshivos. The *Roshai Yeshivos* have assumed the role of generals in the newly solidified Orthodox front and it was the courageous work of yeshivos students which brought at least one of the current issues to the fore. And let us face the facts—the majority of the rank and file of Orthodox *balle-batim* who can be counted on in the future to follow the leadership of the *Gedolim* are those who have been exposed to the *chinuch* of the yeshivos and who retain the *emunas chachomim* and respect for the *Roshai Yeshivos* without which all *p'sakim* and *issurim* are worthless.

In the final analysis the true strength of Orthodoxy lies not in the fanfare and trappings common to all American Jewish organizations—but in the number of homes which are permeated with the sanctity of Torah and which are guided by the *Shulchan Aruch*. Each individual whose personal life is dedicated to the principles of Torah and who establishes the miniature sanctuary that is the Jewish home, has done more for the survival of Orthodoxy than ten conventions and a hundred press releases. And these individuals will be,

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in the foreseeable future (almost exclusively) drawn from the Yeshiva World.

But this new force which has begun so hopefully to appear must have leaders it can turn to for guidance and direction. The leaders to whom observant Jewry has begun more and more to turn are these same *Roshai Yeshiva* (may G-d strengthen and protect them) who have been instrumental in the rebirth of Torah on this continent. Their word is becoming increasingly accepted in the struggle against the forces which threaten the very existence of Yiddishkeit.

But a few men are not enough to satisfy the growing demand for Torah guidance of the first order; and what of the future?

The Nazi holocaust which destroyed the great European strongholds of Torah learning and piety, paradoxically brought some measure of comfort through the handful of spiritual greats who have succeeded in the past twenty-five years in changing the Jewish map of the United States. But all too soon have many been taken from us. European Jewry is no more. We can expect no *Gedolim* from *Eretz Yisroel* to migrate to these shores.

Where, then, shall American Jewry look for the Torah leadership which will be so sorely needed in the trying years to come?

Our *Chachomim*, on a similar question, expressed themselves: גדיים נעשו חיישים "the kids have become goats." The tender young saplings must grow into the solid oaks. We must produce our own *Gedolim*—or face the bitter alternative of groping in the dark. And by *Gedolim* we do not mean those who occupy the highest positions of Torah leadership. We do not mean only the *Roshai Yeshiva*, the *Geonim*, the *Gedolai Hador*; for in order to produce a normal, healthy, Torah-directed society on these shores there must be a broad-based pyramid of Torah leadership. Every community must possess the *Talmidai Chachomim* without whose direction Judaism and Jewish affairs are bound to wander off course. From the ranks of the *Talmidai Chachomim* there emerge those select, G-d enlightened few—the *Gedolai Hador*.

HERE WE COME TO the crux of the problem. With the phenomenal growth of day-schools, *mesivtas* and *Yeshivos Gedolos*, we should feel quite secure in our contemplation of the future—and yet, such is not the case. In fact there is cause for great concern. For between the Yeshiva student of today and the *Godol Batorah* of tomorrow, there lies a great and seemingly unbridgeable gap. Whereas here in America we can be proud of the "thousand who enter

into the study of Chumash," somewhere along the line the "one who emerges to leadership" has been lost.

To deal with all phases of the problem would require more space than is available in the framework of one article. To dwell on just one aspect: Whereas there is a growing attitude of respect for the *Oysgevaksener Godol*—the finished product—very little appreciation is shown for the fledgling—that odd fellow who renounces all secular pursuits to devote his life to Torah study and to the cultivation of piety and fear of G-d.

Parents, themselves observant and G-d fearing, drag their sons away from the *gemorah*, at times by force to send them off to college for fear that if they continue their learning they will become *pushke collectors* (to use the actual words I heard from an Orthodox father). *Yeshivos* which encourage their students to spend their full time and energies in Torah study are regarded with apprehension by parents who are afraid that their sons will become "ruined" and will lose the desire and the ability to earn a livelihood. They send them therefore to institutions whose standards of Torah and *Yiras Shamayim* are lower, confident that their sons will not be "brainwashed" into wanting to "sit and learn."

Granted that not all yeshiva *talmidim* have the ability, nor indeed the desire, to devote themselves completely and unreservedly to advanced Torah studies and to develop into luminaries in Israel. But can there be no encouragement, no appreciation for those who do have the ability and the desire? Must they be squelched by over-protective parents and depreciated by a status-conscious society? Granted that there is a need for an intelligent and well informed Orthodox laity and that successful Orthodox professionals and business men raise the prestige of Torah. But have we become blind to the obvious: that in this highly specialized society we must have Torah specialists? Is there no room in our increasingly materialistic scheme of things for the young American *Talmid Chocham*, whose prime interest is Torah? Must the budding Talmudist be forced to lower his eyes and answer in an embarrassed undertone that "what he does, is learning"? And must he receive a half-pitying-half-questioning "oh" as a response? A long time ago a wise man said "that which is honored is cultivated." Must our would-be *Gedolim* be frightened off by the prospect of being regarded as social incongruities who can find nothing better to do than to study Torah?

In former years, when bread was harder to come by than in bountiful America, a Jewish woman would rock her son to sleep with the lullaby-wish that the tiny boy would one day be a *Talmid Chochom*. Now-

days the religious mother's dream is that her son should be an Orthodox scientist or a *Shomer Shabbos* lawyer. The old slogan "I don't want my son to be a rabbi" that kept the cream of our youth in the public schools, has now been supplemented by the "My son will never be a *Rosh Yeshiva*" that drives them off, still wet behind the ears to the corroding amorality and gnawing agnosticism of the college campus.

There they may retain their observance of mitzvos; they may even devote time to learning, but there is very little hope they will ever attain Torah greatness; for the *Talmid Chochom* is the product of long years of profound and uninterrupted toil in the study of Torah.

To look at the problem more subtly: certain basic Jewish values are being undermined in this state of affairs. The *z'chus* with which our fathers left Egypt and which has made possible the very existence of the Jewish people throughout the long night of *Golus* has been *emunah* and *bitachon*-faith in the Almighty and trust in Him under the most adverse circumstances. But paradoxically it would seem that here, in this land of plenty, these essential Jewish qualities are being discarded. Do we indeed have faith in the Almighty and believe that it is He and He alone who provides our sustenance? Or have we been so blinded by the driving compulsions of gross materialism that we have set up criteria for success and social acceptance that are draining off the finest minds and the most eager of the youthful talents of the Jewish people into strange reservoirs? What has happened to the unswerving trust in the Eternal that made us a nation of seers and prophets flying throughout the generations in the face of a dismal "reality"?

"They have made me the guardian of the vineyards—but my own vineyard have I not watched." (Song of Songs, 1:6).

Science, literature, the professions, the world of business and of industry have all been enriched by the choicest of Jewish brains and talents, but our own vineyards—the vineyard of Torah which is ours, and ours alone, has been left unattended.

Every movement of any significance has been forged by dreamers and been built by people who have been willing to overlook their personal convenience for the advancement of their ideals. Is it not then a sad commentary on observant Jewry that so few of such men have been found to advance our cause and that they should be limited further by the apathy and indeed the disparagement of those who should lift them on high? Is it not a sorrowful state of affairs when a typical

well-meaning Orthodox mother should say to me, "how many doctors and engineers has your Yeshiva produced?"

With absolutely no intention of deprecating these wonderful and dedicated people, can we not honestly ask: Is this to be the ultimate goal of the Yeshiva Movement—to produce doctors and engineers who understand a *blatt Gemora*? Is this to be the criterion of greatness of the Kingdom of Priests and the Holy Nation? Practical people that we are, let us ask ourselves: Who shall pass on the torch of Torah to posterity? Who shall chart the course of faithful Jewry through the dark and turbulent waters of ignorance and assimilation which lie ahead? The call goes out from on high: "Whom shall I send and who shall go forth for us? and each responds, "not I."—"not my son."

Actually it is these very businessmen and professional people, themselves products of yeshivos, who are the most insistent in their cry for true Torah leadership and who will be the first to reject anything short of greatness itself in their leaders.

Very few generations have been afforded the opportunity for greatness that is ours here in America and yet we may be witnessing the tragic prophecy of Amos come true.

"And I raised of your sons for prophets and of your young men to be nazirites, is this not so children of Israel, says the L-d? But you gave your nazirites wine to drink and you commanded the prophets saying, do not prophesy."

Rashi explains the term "nazirites" here to refer to those who have withdrawn from worldly pursuits to study and teach Torah to the people of Israel. But they gave them wine to drink which made them unfit to teach.

We have set out to intoxicate our youth with the wine of materialism and the consequences are all too painfully evident in the ever-growing lack of Torah visionaries.

There is yet hope for a great future. But American Jewry must do some serious soul-searching if the hope is to become, with G-d's help, a reality.

IN OUR NEXT ISSUE:

**A plan for checking Yeshiva drop-outs on the pre-school and high school levels
by Rabbi Nisson Wolpin**

The Fifth K'nessia Gedola

The forthcoming World Congress in the light of the past

ON THE COMING twelfth of Av, July 22, the Fifth K'nessia Gedola of Agudath Israel will open in Jerusalem. Since the first historic session in Kattowitz, even the words "Knessia Gedola" alone have had an electrifying effect on Torah Jews: the accomplishments have been felt in every area of contemporary Torah life. Speaking to one who was present at a past Knessia Gedola, certainly the First and Second, one has the feeling that here is someone who participated in the making of history.

The Jewish present and future can be understood only in the framework of the past, for Jewry is a timeless nation. So too with the forthcoming K'nessia: We can best understand its goals and potential by looking back at past K'nessios.

There have been only four K'nessios in this century, and each of them have brought in their wake major changes in the strength and structure of Torah Jewry. Each K'nessia dealt with its own unique problems, but all had this common purpose: To strengthen Torah and Torah life; to create a collective force which alone could stand against the trials and confusions of the time; and above all to insure that Torah would be the measure of all things in Jewish life.

The First K'nessia Gedola

The First K'nessia Gedola took place in Vienna, appropriately, in the early days of Elul, in the year 1923. The gathering of the greatest Torah luminaries of the time was not only a testament to the importance of the K'nessia, it was by itself a historic event of great moment. Among those present were: the *Chofetz Chaim*, the *Gerer Rebbe*, the *Chortkover Rebbe*, R. Chaim Ozer Grodzenski, the *Sokolover Rebbe*, R. Mair Don Plotzky, the *Lubliner Rav*—R. Mair Shapiro, the *Kishinever Rav*—R. Zirelson, the *Telzer Rav*—R. Yosef Laib Bloch, the *Raisher Rav*—R. Ahron Levin, R. Moshe Mordchai Epstein of Slobodka, R. Isar Zalman Meltzer of Slutsk, R. Meir Atlas of Shavel, R. Ahron Katz of Nitra, R. Shlome Breuer of Frankfort, to mention only a few of the great *Rabbonim* and *Rebbes* who attended.

What was it that brought these *Gedolim* together? What motivated them to undertake what was then for many a trying and arduous journey? The *Chofetz Chaim* himself then in his eighties, spoke for all of them when he summed up the purposes of the K'nessia in this simple yet masterful manner:

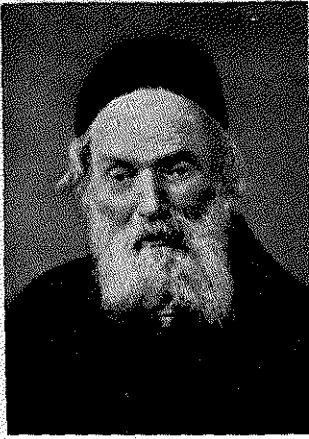
Around the bed of a man critically ill, stood the various doctors who were attending him. Each of them took careful note of the organ or limb of the body which was his medical specialty, and proposed various therapeutical measures. Suddenly one of the physicians approached the patient and listened to the beat of his heart. "Hold off," he said to his colleagues, "listen to his heart: the beat is very weak. Let's get his heart beating normally again, and we can then turn to other matters."

My dear brothers, the heartbeat of Klal Yisroel is the Holy Torah and the tempo of its beat is slowing. We have come here to save the heart of the Jewish People.

The Jewish heart, which had for generations successfully withstood adversity, was now taking severe abuse from the onslaughts of the new spirit of the times. Intoxicated with freedom and emancipation, large numbers of Jews switched their Torah loyalty to the false-gods of secular materialism and socialism. It was this challenge to the continuity of Jewish life that faced the K'nessia Gedola.

Together with the *Gedolim*—the K'nessia was not a leadership gathering alone—there assembled thousands of Jews from all parts of the world who sought to pool their efforts and their love of G-d and His Torah, to resist the blows against the centrality of Torah in Jewish life.

The K'nessia was a study in contrasts: Present were *Chassidim* and *Misnagdim*, *Polish Rebbes* and *Litvishe Roshai Yeshiva*, *B'nai Torah* from Lithuania, Hungary and Roumania and professors and scholars from Western Europe. The differences which divided many of these Jews, often apparent even in their physical appearance, were dispelled as if by a charm, as they listened with baited breath to their revered teachers



The heartbeat of
Klal Yisroel is
the Holy Torah. . . .
We have come here
to save the heart
of the Jewish
people. . . .

Chofetz Chaim
at the First
K'nessia Gedola

and leaders. The eternity of the Jewish people which obliterates the barriers separating past, present and future, was able to make to naught, the less powerful barriers of geographic and cultural lines of demarcation. One of the major lessons of the K'nessia, ever more apparent today, is the ability of the Jewish people to set aside differences when the centrality of Torah is upheld by all. *So long as Torah unites us, nothing can divide us.*

The K'nessia did not content itself with the pageantry and color of the gathering, exciting though it is to contemplate even today. The collective force of the *Gedolim* and their thousands of loyal followers, forged the superstructure of the Agudath Israel World Movement, which brought together the varied elements of Torah Jewry which had previously stood apart. No longer would a single community have to face alone the onslaughts of assimilation and "nationalization" of Jewry. There was created a world-wide force which would take up the struggle wherever the battle flared. Even those few groups in Orthodox life who chose not to participate in the K'nessia benefitted by the spirit of Torah which poured over from the gathering into all areas of Jewish life.

The *Daf Yomi*, which to this day unites Jews throughout the world in the study of Torah, became a reality at this K'nessia through the initiative of the *Lubliner Rav* R. Mair Shapiro. The yeshivos in Eastern Europe which had been suffering under unbearable financial burdens, were placed on a firmer footing through the *Keren Hatorah*, another of the practical results of the First K'nessia.

The K'nessia also concretized the Beth Jacob movement whose schools for Jewish daughters become a mighty force in strengthening the positions of Torah Jewry. Hundreds of thousands of Jewish children

studied Torah in the Agudah schools organized as a result of the spiritual impact of the K'nessia.

Turning its eyes toward *Eretz Yisroel* and the need for building the land in the spirit of Torah, the K'nessia established the *Keren Hayishuv*, which was the springboard for the establishment of many important communal institutions in the Holy Land.

AT THE OUTSET, THE K'NESSIA was the object of ridicule by the opponents of Torah; they could not believe that a rabble of Orthodox Jews could effectively organize themselves as a force in Jewish life. They described the K'nessia as a *Shtraymel Congress*, but the new winds which came out of the sessions made them quickly sit up and take notice.

Torah Jewry was suffering from a downward trend. Thousands of young people were enticed by the temptations of modernity and Jewish nationalism. Jewish workers fell prey to the "pie-in-the sky" offered to them by the socialist movement. The Torah force generated by the K'nessia began to reverse this process. Young men went back to the *Bais Hamedrash* with their heads high, and Jewish workers, realizing that the solution to their problems could more readily be found in Torah, organized themselves in the *Poalei Agudath Israel*.

Torah youth rallied to the *Zeirei Agudath Israel* and Orthodox women banded together in the *N'shei* and *B'nos Agudath Israel*. The therapy prescribed by the *Chofetz Chaim* proved to be most effective; by turning to Torah for solutions to Jewish problems, the heartbeat of *K'lal Yisroel* responded to the treatment and began to beat normally.

The new spirit created by K'nessia, soon manifested itself in the structure of communal life. Leadership of Jewish communities in Europe was recaptured from the assimilated and nationalistic "Jewish" leaders. Orthodoxy found a voice in governmental matters by sending their representatives to various parliaments in Europe. In *Eretz Yisroel*, where leadership had been snatched by the secular Zionists, Orthodox Jews renewed the struggle for the primacy of Torah in the Holy Land.

Perhaps least touched by the First K'nessia Gedola was American Jewry. Only a handful of representatives were present, which was symptomatic of the weak state of American Orthodoxy in those years. But ultimately, the influence of the K'nessia made itself felt, and gave rise to the establishment of *Agudath Israel of America*.



R. Mair Shapiro



R. Chaim Ozer Grodzenski

The Second K'nessia Gedola

In contrast to the first session, the Second K'nessia Gedola, convened in 1929, found world Orthodoxy in a much stronger position. Again, the K'nessia brought together *Gedolai Torah* from all parts of the world. Dramatizing the importance of the K'nessia, was the presence of the Gaon R. Chaim Ozer Grodzenski, whose poor health made it impossible for him to speak until the final session—and then only, as he put it, to bring to the K'nessia the blessings of the *Chofetz Chaim*.

While the First K'nessia was in a sense a holding action, preparing the defenses for Torah positions, the Second K'nessia mounted the counter-offensive. Heading the agenda were the problems of Torah education; observance of Shabbos; the status of Jews in the Soviet Union; the economic hardships of Eastern Jewry and the dangers of anti-shechita legislation and calendar reform.

Delegates to the K'nessia were not always in agreement in their approach to these problems, which were sharply debated, but when the *Moetzes Gedolai Ha-torah* spoke on these matters, previous differences dissolved and the various groups closed ranks behind their Torah leaders. They willingly committed themselves to the *Da'as Torah* expounded by the *Gedolai Torah*.

A Torah Program for Eretz Yisroel

Until the outset of the Second K'nessia, Agudath Israel still held hopes for a unified program for rebuilding *Eretz Yisroel*. While Agudath Israel took a negative approach to Zionism from the very beginning, the movement took a positive approach to the rebuilding of the land, and was ready to work with all other Jewish groups.

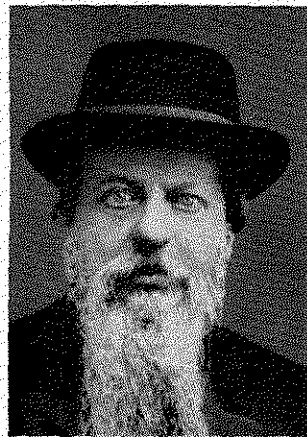
This ran contrary to the interests of the Zionists who wanted to make certain that the Land would carry the stamp of their own secular ideology. The Jewish Agency rejected Agudath Israel's proposal that the Agency confine itself to colonization and economic affairs, where there would have been common ground. When the Agency chose to play a role in the cultural life of the emerging Yishuv, the inevitability of constant friction make the independent approach the only obvious way.

The Second K'nessia hammered out the independent approach of Agudath Israel to work in the Land, which laid the groundwork for the now flourishing Torah Yishuv in Israel today.

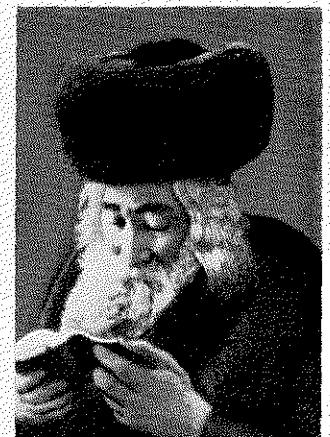
The Third K'nessia

The delegates who journeyed to Marienbad to attend the Third K'nessia Gedola in Elul of 1937, represented a gigantic network of loyal Jews and Torah institutions. While death had claimed the *Chofetz Chaim*, the *Chortkover Rebbe*, the *Lubliner Rav*, and other *Gedolim*, (their absence was keenly felt), still there was an outpouring of *Gedolai Torah*, which was the hallmark of previous K'nessios. Among those present were: the *Rebbes* of Ger, Alexander, Sochochov and Sokolov; R. Elchanan Wasserman of Baranowitz; R. Menachem Zemba of Warsaw; the *Raisher Rav*, *Harav* Levin; *Harav* Dushinsky of Jerusalem; *Harav* Zirelsohn of Kishinev; *Harav* Sofer of Pressbourg; the *Naiter Rav*; the *Telzer Rav* and many others.

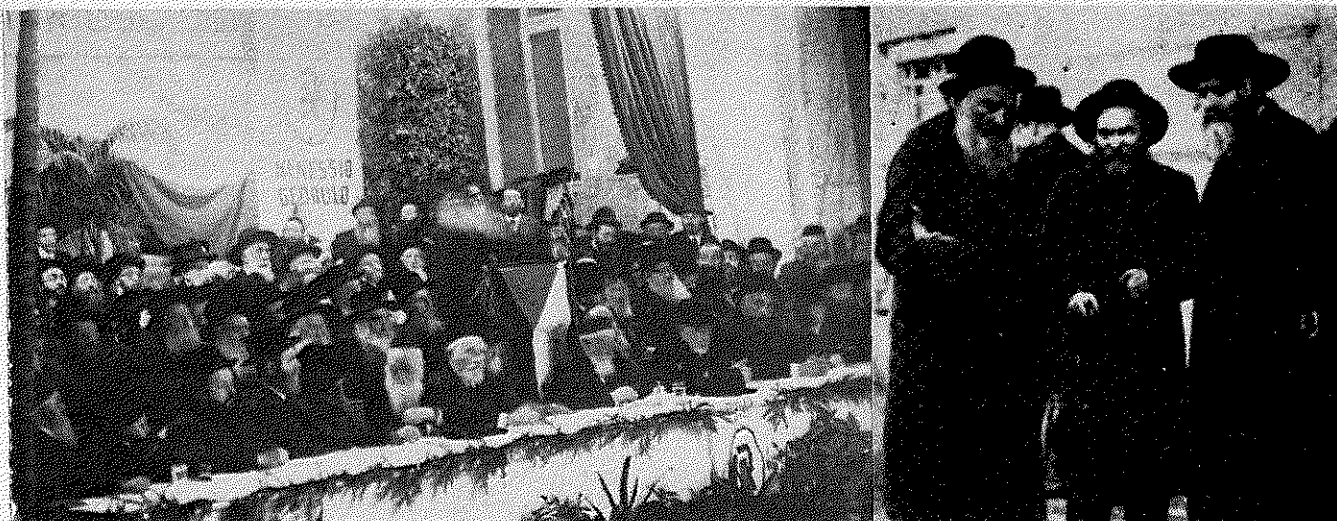
The Third K'nessia was no less festive than the others, though a shadow of fear hovered over the sessions. Hitler's power was growing and Jews were trying to escape the powder-box of Europe, only to be met by closed doors. Of necessity the K'nessia laid more emphasis on the problems of rescue. It was at



Czortkover Rebbe



Gerer Rebbe



The Presidium table at the Third K'nessia Gedola in Marienbad. Pictured on the right, in a discussion following a K'nessia Gedola session, are R. Elchanan Wasserman, R. Ahron Kotler and R. Moshe Blau רמב"ל.

this time that the groundwork was laid for the vast *hatzala* operation which Agudath Israel manned through and following the war years.

The Agudah movements in America and in *Eretz Yisroel* emerged at this K'nessia as important sections of the movement and the impact of this K'nessia is still particularly felt in those areas. On the brink of the destruction of European Jewry, a program emerged too, which was to make possible the rebuilding of Torah centers after the war.

The Fourth K'nessia Gedola

The European holocaust left Torah Jewry limp. It took many years before the Fourth K'nessia Gedola could be convened, and still the scars and the empty places were most evident. Many of the Gedolim who had graced past K'nessios, had perished *Al Kiddush Hashem* together with their followers. The fears of those who questioned the wisdom of convening a K'nessia, were, however quieted when close to 30,000 Jews came to the city of Jerusalem to be counted among the loyal supporters of Torah. Nevertheless, there hovered over the K'nessia a mood of mourning as veteran K'nessia participants recalled the glory that was past.

THE MAJOR PRE-OCCUPATION of the Fourth K'nessia Gedola was the strengthening of the new concentrations of Torah Jewry which had supplanted the European centers. Agudah leaders drew inspiration from the presence of most of the leaders of European Jewry who had survived, for it was a manifestation of their faith in Agudath Israel as the unifying force in Torah life. The Fourth K'nessia helped Aguda to recoup a

good deal of the strength the holocaust had drawn off.

The aspirations of the Fourth K'nessia were best expressed by the sainted Reb Ahron Kotler who by virtue of his role as leader of Torah Jewry was the leading spokesman at the K'nessia.

"We have come together from all parts of the world to this K'nessia in order to strengthen the Faith and Torah Life on the communal and personal level. The *Gedolai Torah* of previous generations have already delineated the urgent need for Agudath Israel. (Events of) recent years, and particularly the establishment of *Medinas Yisroel* demonstrate how urgently we need a union of all Jews loyal to Torah. This K'nessia meets in a state where the theory has been espoused that it is necessary to adjust the Torah to the needs of the State. In other lands the position of those who propose that the Torah must be adjusted to the new times and to the new needs of men, is growing stronger. We have therefore gathered here to proclaim our Belief: The Torah is Eternal and is a Torah of Life; the State must bow to the Torah; Jewish life, communal and personal must adjust itself to the Torah, and not, *Chas V'sholom*, the reverse. Our purpose is to bring this recognition into the hearts and minds of all Jews."

The Fourth K'nessia did much to fulfill the spirit of Reb Ahron's words, contributing to the phenomenal growth of the Torah Yishuv in *Eretz Yisroel* in recent years, and strengthening the positions of Torah Jewry

in the Holy Land and in the United States. While this K'nessia did not bring together all forces in Torah life, as in the past the impact of the K'nessia was felt in all areas of Torah life throughout the world.

Ten years have passed since the last K'nessia Gedola, but the struggle which Reb Ahron outlined as the basic challenge to Torah Jewry rages on. Whether it be the struggle by Torah Jewry in *Eretz Yisroel* against attempts to subvert the role of Torah, or the continued efforts by the non-Orthodox groups in this country to adjust the Torah to the times, the basic question revolves around the acceptance of the authority of the *Gedolai Torah*. While the struggle manifests itself in varying forms, the Fifth K'nessia Gedola faces the same basic problems that the previous K'nessios contended with, which can only be solved by mobilizing into a single force all Torah Jews.



"TORAH IS ETERNAL" R. Ahron Kotler שליט"א, addressing the Fourth K'nessia. To his right, the late H. A. Goodman שליט"א, Dr. Isaac Lewin, and Moreinu Jacob Rosenheim.

Yaakov Jacobs

Concerns of a Torahless Jewry

Jews are asking the wrong questions and getting the wrong answers

COMPUTERS HAVE BEEN developed which are capable of making calculations in seconds that would occupy the human mind for months and even years. Nevertheless these computers have a most severe limitation: If the information fed to the computer is incorrect, the results will be incorrect and the mass of wire and electronic devices will have strained in vain.

In the vast outpouring of print produced by national and local Jewish groups throughout the United States, there appears a constant stream of articles and reports of public addresses outlining so-called problems and dilemmas of Jewish life today. The recording of a problem brings in its wake proposed solutions to the problems. The proposed solutions are attacked as being inadequate and what appears to be constructive dialogue ensues.

An excellent illustration of this process is contained in an article by Manheim Shapiro, Director of Jewish Communal Affairs for the American Jewish Committee. The article which appeared in *Council Woman*, published by the National Council of Jewish Women, opens with a barrage of problems. A young Jewish mother states:

We send our children to a religious school, but

they know that if they have any problem with their Hebrew homework, they are not to ask us, because we don't know any Hebrew. And what is more, we don't want to know any.

Three couples in a discussion group of "young marrieds" say they are troubled by the fact that because they live in almost completely Jewish neighborhoods, their children never have the opportunity to play with children from other groups. But they chose to move into this neighborhood and are remaining.

A mother answering questions in a survey says she would prefer to have her grade-school child in a Boy Scout troop which includes both Jewish and non-Jewish children. Later, in the same interview, she says she would prefer it if her teen-age youngster never dated a non-Jewish teen-ager.

A father is angry at the rabbi of his congregation because his child after returning from Sunday School and comparing what the rabbi said "Jews do" with what actually happens in his home, announces, "the rabbi says we're not Jews."

Who would not sympathize with these people and their many Jewish brethren who share their confusion:

the parents who send their children to "religious" school and shudder at the thought of the children actually practicing religion; the mother who wants her children to mingle with non-Jewish children, but not to date them; the angry father who is told by his child "we're not Jews." But—where do these dilemmas come from and how can they be resolved?

One of the earmarks of American Judaism is to turn for guidance, not to the Torah, the Prophets and the Sages of the past, but to the sociologists and psychologists who are currently in vogue. Mr. Shapiro, in attempting to find solace for the confused parents and a solution to their problems, follows this approach in the grand style. *"These dilemmas of American Jewish parents,"* he writes, *"are the products of a social and historical process associated with the changes produced by emancipation from the ghettos, immigration to America and adjustment to the American environment."*

No doubt, the radical changes Mr. Shapiro enumerates have contributed to the dilemmas of the American Jewish parent, but Shapiro and most other students of Jewish life in this country are themselves confused by their one-dimensional approach to Jewish life. The Jewish people, many times in their history have experienced the process of being uprooted from their homes and forced to resettle in unfriendly societies. They have even managed to taste of freedom and emancipation and yet retain their integrity and identity as Jews. Yet, they did not face the kind of problems and dilemmas which confront the average American Jew today. It is the uniqueness of these problems that most Jews refuse to come to grips with, that offers a clue to their solution.

Making the case that most American Jews want their children to be Jews, Shapiro cites "the most extensive study of American Jewish education, conducted in 1958" which reveals that well over 80% of Jewish children "receive some Jewish schooling at some time during school age." "Some" schooling at "some" time—here again is a key to the problem which students of American Jewish life sweep under the carpet. The shallowness of this "Jewish schooling" and its brief span—as indicated in the words "at some time"—starkly manifest the failure of parents and "educators" to take Jewish education seriously and to relate "Jewish schooling" to Jewish living.

In a final instance, Shapiro leads us to the water, but refuses to let us drink. In surveys which he has conducted for the American Jewish Committee, Shapiro tells us, "Jewish parents consistently expressed their

"they've suffered . . . for five years"

While waiting in a temple parking lot to pick up my son from the (Sunday) school from which he was about to graduate, I was chatting with the mother of one of his classmates. When I commented about the number of events that were scheduled for these children, her response was, "Well, they deserve some parties. After all they've suffered through this for five years."

M. Shapiro in *Council Woman*

abhorrence at the thought of their children intermarrying. While they wanted their pre-school and primary school children to have contact with non-Jewish children, they preferred that their teen-agers have little or no contact with non-Jewish youngsters. Most of them said they would "disapprove their teen-agers dating non-Jews regularly and would approve these youngsters never dating a non-Jew."

What happens to the sophistication of the Jewish parents who want their children to mix with non-Jewish children (often an excuse for not sending a child to a day-school) when the child grows up and the possibility of marriage looms on the horizon. Which is the true expression of their Jewish feelings, the desire that their children mix with non-Jews, or their abhorrence at the thought that their children will marry non-Jews? The answer to this question will lead us to a deeper understanding of the dilemmas and problems, or better, to the realization that they are pseudo-problems based on false assumptions. Like the computer that will fail to give correct answers when not properly programmed, these pseudo-questions can offer only pseudo-solutions.

IN THE HEART OF EVERY JEW burns *dos pinte* *Yid*, the divine spark that drives him to overcome all obstacles to his Jewishness, even to the extent of relinquishing life itself as an alternative to renouncing his faith. Why have so many American Jews (and others) failed to overcome the obstacles of emancipation and pseudo-sophistication? Perhaps here the sociologists can be of some assistance, but human behavior has not changed through the centuries, nor has the validity of the insights of our Sages in this area.

A similar question was asked by the Rabbis. Looking back at the periods in Jewish history when Jews practiced idolatry they found it difficult to fathom how our people could sink to such nonsensical practices. They concluded that the idolatry was simply a mask to cover

their inability to resist the passions of material desire and physical lust.

ידעין היו ישראל בעכו"ם שאין בו ממש ולא עבדו עכו"ם אלא להתיר להם עריות... (סנהדרין סג.)

Jews knew that idolatry had no substance; they practiced idolatry only for license to immorality . . . (Sanhedrin 63b).

While the Torah made strenuous demands of them, the idols of stone and wood were most generous in not interfering with their personal lives. Yet, their failure to overrule their passions did not entirely overwhelm *dos pinteles Yid*, and so the idolatry was cast in a Jewish frame.

Similarly, American life offers so many distractions, so many magnetic forces tug at the soul of the Jew. He is unable to overcome the magnitude of the pressures—but he wants to remain a Jew and abhors the thought of his own flesh and blood marrying out of his people. This makes him easy prey to the purveyors of twentieth century idolatry served up with Jewish trimmings and the emotional appeal of pseudo-Judaism.

In a word—the Jew can not live without Torah; when he attempts to do so all sorts of problems present themselves and with problems come “solutions.” But . . . the solutions won't work because they ignore the essence of the problem and thereby create ever more insoluble problems.

The proponents of *Ahavas Yisroel* will protest that we can not win Jews back to Torah by preaching at them and calling them “idolators.” Was this not the method of the Prophets, who cut through the morass of deception and rationalization to tell people what they were really doing, and did the Prophets keep score of their successes as a test of the validity of their efforts?

There is yet another point to be considered. The Jew who is committed to Torah and Mitzvochs in many

cases achieved this status as a result of an inner struggle, followed by a rejection of the distractions which threatened to tear him away from Torah. Too often he concludes that the struggle is over and that the rest of the way will be an easy one. Torah teaches the very opposite, that inner struggle is an eternal process and that when one relaxes his guard, he may find himself suddenly and devastatingly defeated.

If we can better appreciate the problem of being a loyal Jew from the depths of our own experience, we will be fortified in our efforts to share our understanding of the primacy of Torah with our brethren.

Shapiro ends his analysis of Jewish dilemmas with the words, “depth and realism will have to be substituted for surfaces and mere form,” to which we add that in the depths of Torah and the realism of commitment to Torah lies the resolution of all of our problems and dilemmas.

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The American Rabbinate — a Rebuttal

In our March issue, Rabbi Berl Wein of Chicago weighed the American Rabbinate and found it wanting. Rabbi Jacob Traub of the Congregation Adas Israel in Duluth, Minnesota, here takes sharp issue with some of Rabbi Wein's findings.

We welcome our reader's comments.

Rabbi Traub, a native of New London, Connecticut, is a *musmach* of Mesivta Torah Vodaath.

WHEN I was a child there was a popular taunt that was held in reserve to be hurled mercilessly at any one of our peers who crossed the line of propriety and especially annoyed or outraged us. Of course, it wasn't a very nice thing to say, but then again, it was a relatively innocent jibe and a way of ridding ourselves of those terrible traumas that we worry so much about. It went: *As an outsider, what do you think of the human race?* But, remember, we were only children.

I had been casting about in my mind for the least severe thing to say about Rabbi Berel Wein's article in THE JEWISH OBSERVER (March, 1964), "The American Rabbinate." After reading his piece I might have been more deeply distressed about his observations, and indeed more impassioned in disagreement, had not the editors providentially provided a three line biographical sketch introducing Rabbi Wein as a *musmach* of the Chicago Yeshiva, holder of a Law degree, and currently associated with Grant Industries in Chicago.

Digesting that tidbit of information his article can now be seen in a new light, as an answer to the redoing of that old, boyhood taunt: *As an outsider, what do you think of the American rabbinate?*

Rabbi Wein informs us that "*The rabbinate is infested with mediocrity*"; "*Scholars do not enter the rabbinate*," and "*The men of sincerity and ingenuity are not now entering the rabbinate, while the less scholarly students will become the rabbis of tomorrow*."

Those rather harsh allegations could cause a great deal of harm and be most detrimental to the noble goals many are attempting to achieve in the American Rabbinate. I searched carefully in Rabbi Wein's article for evidence to support his accusations. I read on with bated breath, expecting at any moment to meet up with tales of merchants of mediocrity meting out mealy *halacha* to their unsuspecting followers. I expected to encounter accounts of sham, unscholarly rabbis put

to shame by the students of the local Talmud Torah or day-school. Alas, no such documentation was put into print and we cannot but conclude that Rabbi Wein has recorded only his own opinions and suppositions.

It is a well-known fact, and has been so for a long time, that much of the talent that passes through yeshiva portals does not pass on to the rabbinate. But this does not mean that "there is a paucity of talent" in the American rabbinate. The rabbinate of today is deeply devoted to scholarship; as devoted as any generation since the emergence of an American rabbinate of consequence. Perhaps the error that Rabbi Wein makes is in confusing scholarship with tumult.

The rabbinate today is made up largely of men who prize scholarship for its own sake, and here Rabbi Wein has not scratched beyond the surface in his article.

Too often, the scholarship is remarkably academic, with no attempt made to impart this wisdom to others.

There is no lack of erudition today in the ranks of the Orthodox rabbinate, and Rabbi Wein has no justification for the alarming statements he makes. What does not exist—and this is indeed cause for alarm—is a bridge connecting the learning of the rabbis and the bulk of their followers. There is a genuine desire to delve into the meaning of *Yiddishkeit*, into the intricacies of Jewish law and lore. There exists a profound and deep-rooted thirst among the Orthodox—and non-Orthodox as well—to drink deeply of the mysteries locked up in the rabbi's bookcase. But how does the cat cross the water? This can only be accomplished by a living scholarship wherein the knowledge amassed in the yeshiva is made available to the eager in a language they can understand, the vernacular, the English language.

The *Shaylos* and *T'shuvos* for example, the questions and answers of a people, that uniquely rejuvenating spirit of the *halacha* that brings each generation and the Torah face-to-face with each other, need not be the sole possession of the rabbis, a mystic code devised to keep the uninitiated out of earshot. We must prevent the teachings of the Torah from reaching the state where they can be compared to a doctor scribbling a cryptic note, only intelligible to the pharmacist, and carried blandly between them.

Eventually, perhaps, the people, from whom the *shaylos* emanate, will read and study the answers and

be instructed by *t'shuvos* in the language they understand.

For the American rabbi to be effective, he must communicate; that is axiomatic. And to communicate, especially on a scholarly level, he must be completely understood.

No, Rabbi Wein, there is no lack of scholarship. There is however a need for an eloquent, graceful approach to realistic problems, and I have faith in the ability of today's rabbi to solve this problem. Till now there has been a lack of effectiveness in this area, and that makes for a feeling of "paucity of talent" and profundity. I recall a *rebbe*, once telling me that I did not sufficiently understand a particular *Rashbo's* question unless I could explain it to someone else and make him understand it. Perhaps the time has come to put ourselves to the test.

After discussing the unfortunate state of affairs of the American rabbinate of today, Rabbi Wein offers some suggestions for alleviating the situation. I hesitate to discuss all of his solutions, such as his proposal that the already beleaguered yeshivos subsidize young rabbis, (it's a wonderful idea, and may the day come when it becomes more feasible), but one particular suggestion cries out for comment.

I cannot take seriously his proposed solution to the problem by seducing *bnei Torah* into the rabbinate by way of building up respect for the position at the yeshiva level. It is hoped, according to Rabbi Wein, that the *ben Torah* will throw away his physics books and turn off his bunson burner when it is demonstrated that the rabbinate is a respectable profession. It has been my experience that the true *ben Torah* respects and reveres another *ben Torah*, be he a lawyer, engineer, doctor—or even a rabbi. And they realize, moreover, that one cannot separate the concept of *rabbi* from *rabbinate*. The two are inextricably interwoven and each acts upon the other. It is not possible to schizophrenically hold one in high esteem and be disdainful of the other. The *ben Torah* realizes, that there exists both chaf and brilliance in the rabbinate, as in all fields of human endeavor. There is the sham and the real, the sincere individual and the opportunist; aspects deserving of respect and otherwise. But this does not shake his confidence in the rabbinate as a whole.

What Rabbi Wein hit upon, is the problem of "lack of respect" and its importance in the decision made by the potential rabbi. It is not the lack of respect for the rabbinate that so often is a factor in that decision, but rather a lack of respect for one's own abilities and oneself.

Many young men with the sincerity and ability to become successful rabbis (and even the desire) fear the effects of "out-of-town" away from the mother lode. They would sincerely like to utilize the talents honed to so sharp an edge during the golden yeshiva years for something other than hallowing the mundane, but they lack the respect, not for the rabbinate, but for their own ability to act upon and to influence others. There is an unhealthy feeling that if one stays close to home everything will work out well, even if it is necessary to teach in a Conservative Talmud Torah.

No, the gears that drive the American rabbinate of today are not greased by *kovod*. The average rabbi (if there is such a person) usually has his fill of *kovod* in his home community so does not feel compromised if the entire *Bais Medrash* of his yeshiva does not stand for him when he enters. He does not search for it any more than does the *ben Torah* use it as a yardstick in choosing a career.

It is *this* aspect of respect that must be instilled in the budding rabbi, the respect for himself and his capabilities, no matter how far "out-of-town" he may have to travel to test them. The young rabbi must make his choice along these lines for it is here that the battle is fought. Without this self-respect the rabbi had better use his sincerity, ingenuity, scholarship and talents in a field other than the rabbinate.

It is most difficult to simulate objectivity about the American rabbinate. One cannot stand off to the side, as Rabbi Wein does, and comment that "the battle is going badly." The rabbinate of today is a constantly changing, ever fluctuating battleground with unexplored and unknown terrain being stumbled upon daily. Of course it has its problems; Rabbi Wein's mention of a lack of new recruits is one. A greater problem and and a more dangerous state of affairs is the other side of the coin. Capable and devoted men are *leaving* the rabbinate for scores of personal reasons. I leave that disturbing thought for discussion at another time.

There is a Chassidic tale that relates the following: when the Satan learned that the *Berdichever Rebbe* was about to be born he came before G-d with the argument that the *Berdichever* would turn all Jews into *tzaddikim*, leaving nothing for the Satan to occupy himself with. G-d told the Satan not to worry; that the *Berdichever* would become a rabbi, and have no time, with all of his communal duties, to turn Jews into *tzaddikim*.

The tale notwithstanding, and Rabbi Berel Wein notwithstanding, *Lo Almon Yisroel*, Israel need not mourn.

Characteristics of Torah

Translated by Nathan Bulman

TORAH! A WORD that is untranslatable into any other language. A concept whose like is unknown among the nations of the world. They do not understand it, just as they do not understand the secret of our People's existence. Nevertheless the world does know it to be the decisive factor in the essential characteristic of the life of the People of Israel.

It was not only the great of our People and its leaders who understood that Torah is our very life; who in times of catastrophe utilized every possible means to sustain Torah, in order to save Israel from destruction ו'ן. Our enemies and adversaries too, have always understood, that Torah is the life force of the People of Israel, which they therefore tried to "cut off" from us, knowing as they did that success in this effort could alone make it possible for them to execute their destructive designs against us ו'ן.

Despite all this, even among us, the concept, *Torah*, remains not clearly defined.

In the Torah we discern three precious characteristics:

I. **TORAH AS CULTURE:** — great and endless wisdom, which gives to Man exalted insights on faith in G-d; on the foundations of justice, between men and between nations; on the natural laws which are inherent in Creation. It sharpens man's rational faculty, and develops his power of thought. It teaches him to recognize his spiritual powers and his minutest sensibilities. It refines his soul through purification of character. The synthesis of all these virtues leads one, after sustained dedication in the pursuit of such a life to become a person of all embracing wisdom and rich culture.

II. **TORAH AS A GUIDE FOR LIFE:** — from which we learn the way on which we are to go, and the deeds we are to carry out. For thorough acquisition of this knowledge, long and strenuous effort is likewise necessary; though with reference to specific matters and events, it may suffice to refer questions for resolution by the scholar.

III. **TORAH AS SPIRIT OF HOLINESS:** — the Torah engenders a spirit of holiness and purity in the

hearts of its students; exalts their souls, causes them to cleave to the Creator and to Israel's saints. This spirit of holiness envelopes not only those who constantly study Torah; whoever so much as enters the Torah's dwelling-place and draws near to its atmosphere, is affected by the influence of this spirit, and inwardly senses that he stands at the gate of Heaven.

THERE ARE MANY who perceive some aspect of the excellence and the preciousness of Torah, and in accord with their insights they ascribe necessity and significance to the study of Torah, both for our People as a whole, as well as for each individual. But since they have never experienced the taste of the study of Torah and never recognized the breadth of its dimensions, they are incapable of understanding its true merit even partially; for all the aspects of Torah are interdependent and balance each other.

He who studies Torah for its own sake, that is, through correct understanding of its essence, achieves great understanding. But if he understands its treasures only in a fragmented sense, he finds that "his hand had brought up nothing more than soil." A ray of light which is saturated by the light of Torah, shines eternally and imparts bliss and eternal life.

Man needs not only to study Torah. He must find himself in the world of Torah. He must breathe the air of Torah, and must sustain the spirit of his life by the spirit of Torah. The Torah is to be the core of his life and every bit of knowledge he derives from it is to be a matter on which his very life depends.

It is for this reason that there is such wondrous, glowing enthusiasm among students of Torah; that there is so much worry and anguish in the presence of an unresolved problem, and so much rejoicing and glee when a particular problem is clarified. People stand on the sidelines and wonder; they do not know or understand why it is such a tragedy for a question to remain unanswered; what great rejoicing there is in having found an answer for the question! Since they do not live in the exalted world of Torah, they do not experience the *desire for Torah* (Behold I have desired Your commandments—Tehillim 119:40). They do not sense the love which students of Torah feel for its knowledge. They fail therefore to understand the rejoicing over Torah which one feels whose entire being

is filled with Torah, and whose soul draws therefrom sustenance for life.

Our Sages have commented on the verse, "*And they stood at the bottom of the mountain*": "We are taught here that the Holy One, Blessed Is He, arched the mountain over them like a huge vessel and said to them: 'If you accept the Torah—good, but if not, *there* your grave will be found.'" (*Shabbos* 88:1). Not only did the People of Israel understand that the Torah was important and that they needed it. Rather, they all stood "at the bottom of the mountain," *under the total influence of the spirit of Sinai*. They no longer had any other feeling than that of the spirit of Torah. They lost all freedom of choice, because they no longer felt the possibility of any form of life without Torah. They felt only one of two possibilities—either Torah or destruction.

Israel did not need this experience in order that they should not refuse to accept the Torah but rather because the Torah cannot be accepted in any other manner. For when the Torah is accepted in any other manner, it cannot be enduringly possessed, sensed, and understood.

It is not possible to understand the Torah, and certainly not to grasp the light of Torah, to extract the "wine" of Torah, if it is approached only for the acquisition of rational wisdom. Rather must the Torah be studied *at the bottom of the mountain*, in the keen awareness that every bit of knowledge it imparts, imparts life; that the slightest lack in its knowledge, diminishes life.

WHEN WE WONDER AND REFLECT on the history of our people, which is written in the blood and fire of the souls of our martyrs and saints, who offered their lives in behalf of our Torah, and who withstood the harshest and most terrible tests with feelings of joy, pride and strength—we perceive that they drew this wondrous strength not only from the Torah's teachings and perspectives, but also from the very study of Torah. It was through the study of Torah that the Divine Voice from Sinai found an echo in their hearts. "If you accept the Torah good, and if not, *there* your grave will be found." Either Torah or death. There is no alternative way.

But the Torah did not only enable us to pass through conflagrations of fire and rivers of blood; it gave us not only the strength to offer our throats to slaughter, but also—Life! Happiness and strength, pride and hope for good, were also found by us in the Torah! It was nourishment for our spirits; *Bread of G-d*, which only a Jewish soul is capable of digesting until it be-

comes part of the human organism; until its every detail becomes—a chapter and a limb of life; every question, every law—a matter on which life depends; the knowledge of any part of Torah—a matter of existence; but at the same time, also a chapter of song—of angelic song, which is entwined in the human soul.

Were we not to have seen with our own eyes the sanctified dwelling places of Torah, which bear witness to all that was here said, the matter would be considered in our eyes as some kind of fantasy, totally removed from reality. But if any one doubts it, let him enter a yeshiva, a place where the youths of our People, filled with life, breathe the air of Torah, and a flow of rejoicing breaks forth from their hearts. And when this flow touches a congealed soul its effect is that of the dew of life; and the person touched thereby, senses the Torah to be the source of the life of our People!

And even a Jew who has become estranged from this source of life, should he search for the secret of our existence, if he but has a sensitive heart, let him turn his glance towards the *Bais Medrash*. If only a single fragment from this content-filled life will reach his broken soul, his question would be answered, and the secret of Jewish eternity would be revealed to him.

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BOOK REVIEW

GRAPHIC HISTORY OF THE JEWISH HERITAGE.
Edited by Pinchas Wollman-Tsamir, (New York
1963, Shengold Publishers, \$15)

A UNIQUE *encyclopedic presentation with illustrations, charts, vignettes and tables,* the work before us sets out to trace the history of the Written and Oral Law in its descent through the ages. The present volume covers the biblical period, while a master chart included with it traces the outline of the entire gigantic undertaking to which the author has devoted decades of his life.

It is hard to describe the wealth of data included in this first volume. The books of the *Tanach* are outlined, with their authors, listed in their proper order. Each of the weekly portions of the *Chumash* appear, and a synopsis is given of the main events, ideas, and laws contained in each. In the same way the contents of each of the Prophets and Writings is ably summarized.

There follow charts of the fifteen Judges and the main events of their lives; and of the Kings of Judah and Israel, indicating the length of their reign and the prophets and high priests that lived during their rule; separate charts show the prophets (both according to *Rashi's* view and that of the Gaon of Vilna), and the high priests (with a listing of the specific duties of the priesthood). Each of these charts is followed by biographies of the personalities who appear on the charts, complete with scriptural sources and a good many references to Rabbinic literature.

The best part of the book is devoted to genealogical tables tracing the generations from Adam to Moses; chronological tables listing major events from Adam to the end of King Solomon's reign; and synchronized tables from the division of King Solomon's empire until Nehemiah. Appendices list the major prophetic messages and prayers recounted in the *T'nach*, the miracles of Elijah and Elishah, the Davidic dynasty, and the queen mothers in Jewish history.

With the paucity of reference materials available to us, an undertaking of such scope (which incidentally also boasts an excellent index) can be a lasting contribution. At the same time, a work of this nature is bound to encounter colossal problems; foremost among them the problem of chronology. The studies of Dr. Philip Biberfeld (*Universal Jewish History*) and Rabbi Simon Schwab (in the *Rabbi Breuer Jubilee Volume*) have expertly analyzed the discrepancy between our traditional sources and the dates suggested

by general historians, and offered suggestions for resolving the problem. However, a completely satisfactory solution is yet to be found.

In response to this situation, our author's tables and charts give the traditional dates—according to the *Seder Olam*—as well as two other sets of dates, reflecting the opinions of general history and more recent revisions of these opinions. However, he is not consistent, as he himself point out. Some of his tables list the traditional figures together with the long-accepted dates of general history, while others use the revised dates in conjunction with the traditional figures. As a result, these tables are in glaring and unrelieved conflict with some of the rabbinic statements quoted by the author in the biographical sections. There, for example, Mordechai as well as Malachi (identified with Esra) are described as receiving the tradition from Boruch, the disciple of Jeremiah; while the time charts show them as separated by several generations.

TURNING ASIDE FROM the difficult field of chronology, we find the author presenting a number of other opinions that can hardly be said to take the Torah view. His repeated statement that the Book of Ruth was composed by Hezekiah and his circle (rather than by Samuel) may be a mere slip; but about the Book of Psalms he writes that the assertion of the Sages, "*is the source for the tradition that King David himself composed the Book of Psalms. . . . Apparently, the Book of Psalms consists of several separate compilations. . . . Undoubtedly (Psalm 72) marks the conclusion of one collection of psalms; later another collection of psalms was discovered and added.*" (p. 66) The author repeatedly speaks of the Book of Psalms as "*attributed to David*" and declares: "*The Sages include David among the prophets on the basis of the psalms and prayers ascribed to him.*" (chart following p. 127)

He quotes Jerome's interpretation that Joash was crowned with *tefillin*, (p. 111) even though this is in conflict with, and probably based on a misunderstanding of the Talmudic view. He states that the authors of the Book of Kings and of Chronicles differed as to the character of King Abijah (p. 108) and points out a contradiction between these two sources as to Jehoiachim's age at his coronation (p. 116), even though both these points are readily explained by the commentaries. Likewise, his view that "*Daniel is not to be confused with the Daniel mentioned in Ezekiel*" (p. 71) whom he considers to have been a non-Jew, is in conflict with the Rabbinic view.

"*The Rabbis believed . . .*", "*The Rabbis attributed*

...”—recurrent expressions such as these, together with the examples previously cited, create the feeling that there is here a lack of the complete identification with the Rabbinic interpretation that is so fundamental to us. The author, in a most praiseworthy and truly encyclopedic fashion, quotes a wealth of Talmudic observations; but we have to digest these and make them our own. Quite often they appear contradictory in their appraisal of certain events or personalities—this being due to the fact that their authors emphasized different aspects of the historical moment. It is our task to crystallize from their utterances a cohesive and authoritative picture of our past.

THIS IS THE ONLY VIEW of history that is possible for us—drawn from the Written Torah in the light of the Oral Torah. Somehow the author has fallen short of this goal, which, admittedly, is not

easily achieved. One result is that occasional statements appear that seem to echo the misinterpretations of non-Jewish biblical “scholarship.” “*Samuel expressed the view that . . . good actions are more important than ritual worship in the service of G-d.*” (p. 138); “*Isaiah was the first prophet to declare that idolatry and evil would one day cease to exist, as the result of a reformation on the part of the people*” (p. 147).

To sum up, the volume before us is a significant undertaking of broad scope and of great usefulness in many respects. However, it falls short in its treatment of Jewish chronology and, beyond that, in not following the guidance of the *Torah Shebe'al Peh* in the instances quoted. However, we trust that the volumes to follow, which will deal with the much less complex post-biblical period, will be free of such shortcomings.

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The Conference on Jews in Soviet Union

The terrible plight of Russian Jewry has called forth from the Jewish communities of the world reactions of deep anguish, of frustrated anger and of trembling and trepidation over the fate of the broken remnants of the once great Russian Jewish community.

By now the recent conference convened by twenty-four major American Jewish organizations in Washington, is over. That part of the Torah world which follows the lead of the *Roshai Yeshivos*, [*Agudas Harabbonim* (The Union of Orthodox Rabbis) and *Agudath Israel*] decided, with heavy heart, that they could not participate in the conference. The following is a general summation of their point of view.

• Soviet government policy is hospitable to autonomy for minorities only when such autonomy does not open up floodgates of communication with the outside, capitalist world. Such communication is seen—as evidenced by the utter disregard of world-wide protest over the wall dividing East from West Berlin—to imperil the entire dictatorial control over the Russian population, upon which the Soviet system stands or falls. However sensitive to world public opinion the Soviet authorities might be during the present thaw in the cold war, they are not about to jeopardize their most vital interests for favorable publicity in the world capitalist press. Paradoxical though it is, for all their anti-religious doctrines, the very limited freedom which they did give to representatives of the Russian Orthodox Church to meet with church leaders in the capitalist world, was contained within a purely religious context. The extent to which the

SECOND LOOKS

at the Jewish scene

by Ben-Meir

Soviet authorities fear the infiltration and the attractiveness of capitalism was sharply underscored by the dispersion from their earlier homes to distant parts of the Soviet Union, of many thousands of Russian soldiers who had come into close contact with the West during the German-occupation period.

Similarly, after a spontaneous outburst of "international" Jewish feeling which caused thousands of Moscow Jews to fill the streets in front of the Great Synagogue of Moscow on a recent Rosh Hashonah in a demonstration of welcome for Golda Meir, the Russian authorities cracked down mercilessly. A wave of Synagogue closings ensued. *Those who know*, relate that thousands of Moscow Jews paid a terrible price then. The little bit of freedom of development for the fledgling Moscow Yeshiva was sealed off.

• Since the last war, Jews have come out . . . but only when there was no fanfare and no publicity. After a period during which emigration restrictions from an Eastern European country were eased, the publicity urge got the better of certain American Jewish organizations. The press releases started flowing

. . . and almost instantly the flow of Jews stopped. . . . Even in the recent matter of matzos, Jews will one day find out with sorrow and anger that *till the press releases started flowing*, matzohs were delivered . . . when the publicity barrage began, the lid was clamped down tight. Let it be noted as another instance of the situation of Russian Jewry which our publicity-oriented American Jewish secularist organizations are oblivious to, that a Jewish individual who receives any kind of shipment sent by a Jewish organization in the capitalist world, or who receives several items over brief time intervals even from individuals in capitalist countries, is

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under immediate surveillance, and is in danger. . . . How dreadfully naive is the editor of a California Anglo-American weekly—and he is not atypical—when he writes in an editorial that “the Rabbi of Moscow ought to resign in protest.”

• For Jews who search in the Torah for the meaning of contemporary events, and who are not blinded by false pride, the words of our Sages on the archetypal experience of our father Jacob ought to be recalled and re-experienced: Jacob prepared himself for three things—for the giving of gifts, for prayer and for war. Through all of our history these words served as a blueprint of response to the recurrent Esaus we have faced. We have never relied on any one of these three alone. But we have not Quixotically waved the sword where we had no sword, or waved it in disregard of the other two Jewish weapons. . . . With reference to what *is* being done directly—a sense of responsibility for Jewish lives, bids us be silent at this time. . . .

The Mission Trials

The entire Israeli press reported on *Erev Pesach* at the conclusion of the trial against the anti-mission demonstrators, that the court had found conclusively that the demonstrators had *not* harmed property during the demonstrations, had *not* harmed priests or nuns, had *not* disobeyed police orders when the police arrived. They were found guilty of one thing alone—illegal trespassing. To us of course their “burden of guilt” is a mark of honor, but at this point, one question begs to be asked: Does anybody still remember the hate propaganda that filled the entire Anglo-Jewish press about the riots, beating of nuns, destruction of property, which the fanatic Yeshiva students

had perpetuated. Does any one care to apologize?

Hats off . . . on?

Without a humorous twinkle *The National Jewish Monthly* of B'nai B'rith recently published an article under the following heading:

**To wear
or not
to wear a
YARMULKE**

**Survey shows Reform rabbis
not opposed, in principle.**

In the survey, we thought that two paragraphs were particularly choice.

“There is, of course, the argument that ‘western man’ removes his hat as a sign of respect. I shudder to think of the effect upon Judaism if conformity with the etiquette of ‘western man’ became our

standard of behavior. When does western man celebrate the Sabbath? When — and how — does Western Man celebrate the New Year?

“I am not opposed to emulating Gentiles when it will intensify religious life. Our modern synagogues have organs because we learned that Gentiles got inspiring music out of them and this music brings us closer to the living God. But what progress does a Jew make on his journey toward the Master of the universe when he takes off his cap?”

Several paragraphs later we are told in large bold type that:

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In the presence of such courage and bravery one stands perplexed. How to respond? To remove one's cap as a mark of respect for the new bravery of one third of the Reform rabbinate, or, should one rather say, to put it on?

"L'Affaire Jacobs"

THE CITY OF ST. LOUIS, situated on the west bank of the Mississippi River in Missouri, is far removed from the staid city of London, capital of the British Empire. Yet, attitudes toward Torah tend to cross oceans and continents and achieve a sameness, which is sometimes alarming.

In St. Louis, a number of years ago, one of the old Orthodox congregations took note of the exodus of their membership to the suburbs and decided to follow after them. The schul building was sold and temporary quarters were set up in a remodeled residence. It was decided that through the interim period the *mechitza*, separating the men from the women, would be done without. When the architect submitted his plans for the new structure, the matter of *mechitza* came to a head. A small, but vocal minority insisted that the *mechitza* should be retained. The newer members, smitten with the modernity of suburbia, strongly opposed the inclusion of a *mechitza* on the grounds that a traditional schul without separate seating would attract more of the younger set in the new area.

The president of the congregation, who by no coincidence was also a major contributor to the building fund, sagely decided that a meeting of the entire membership would be called to resolve the matter. When both sides had spoken their minds, a heated argument developed and the flustered president lost control of the meeting. Angri-ly

he rapped his shiny new gavel and shouted:

"Darn it . . . we're trying to build a schul; why do you fellows insist on mixing religion into it. . . ."

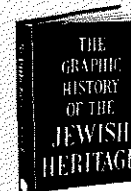
In London, England, several years ago, Dr. Louis Jacobs left his pulpit in the New West End Synagogue and became a tutor at Jew's College, which trains young men for the Orthodox rabbinate. Two years ago, the post of principal at Jews College became vacant and Dr. Jacobs became a candidate for the principalship, insisting that it had been promised to him. Britain's Chief Rabbi, Dr. Israel Brodie, passed over Dr. Jacobs' candidacy on the grounds that in public discussion and in his published works, Dr. Jacobs had veered from the traditional belief in *Torah MiSinai*. Rabbi Brodie ruled that one who has compromised himself by questioning the Divine origin of even the most minute aspect of Torah, is not eligible to serve as the head of an institution which trains future Orthodox rabbis.

The furor which greeted the Chief Rabbi's firm stand, rocked British Jewry and was widely reported by the British press and in newspapers throughout the world. The *London Jewish Chronicle*, which had traditionally supported the unquestioned authority of the Chief Rabbinate, unleashed a vicious attack on Rabbi Brodie and accused him of being a prisoner of the extremists in British Jewry. Rabbi Brodie stood firm and there the matter rested with only occasional flare-ups, with extensive coverage in the *Jewish Chronicle*, when Dr. Jacobs repeated his un-Orthodox views. Jacobs became the rallying point for those who desired to undermine the discipline of British Jewry and the authority of the Chief Rabbi.

Today, "L'Affaire Jacobs" is once again in the news. The New West End Synagogue in Bayswater has decided to re-engage Dr. Jacobs as their spiritual leader. As a constituent of the United Synagogue, the Synagogue must submit to the Chief Rabbi for approval, the candidacy of a rabbi who wishes to serve as their spiritual leader. Rabbi Brodie has vetoed this appointment. James Feron, London correspondent of *The New York Times* reports the objection to Dr. Jacobs in these words:

Dr. Jacobs, an Orthodox Jew, has challenged the view that the five books were dictated by G-d to Moses, that the text has been presented unchanged through the ages, and that consequently all the rules of the Jewish faith can be obtained from an infallible text.

He has urged that modern research in the Bible, the Talmud and other classical sources of



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Judaism has made it necessary to reinterpret this view.

While *The New York Times* has proven itself to be less than infallible, in this case they have accurately reported the current views of Dr. Jacobs. This being the case, he has, of his own free will, rejected the belief which makes one a believing Jew, and he has certainly disqualified himself from being the rabbi and teacher of a congregation of Orthodox Jews.

Yet, and here we come to the shades of St. Louis, Missouri, members of the congregation have chosen to challenge, and perhaps to defy, the ruling of the Chief Rabbi. What they are saying in essence, though no doubt in more sophisticated verbiage and tone, is this:

We want Dr. Jacobs as our leader. He is a talented speaker, a most literate writer, and is quite effective in winning young people to Judaism. Why does the Chief Rabbi insist on mixing religion into the matter?

POST SCRIPT: The New York Times of Sunday April 19, 1964, reports that the congregation has engaged Dr. Jacobs in defiance of the Chief Rabbi's ruling. A more detailed analysis of this matter will appear in our next issue.

Without Comment

The Anglo-Jewish press recently cited remarks made by Mr. Abba Eban, the Deputy Prime Minister of the State of Israel at a press conference prior to his return to Israel after a stay of several months in the United States and Canada. Said Mr. Eban:

"There is no religious coercion in Israel. If I cannot have butter with my meat dinner at a restaurant in Israel, this is a small and infinitesimal sacrifice that we can make for the unity of Israel."



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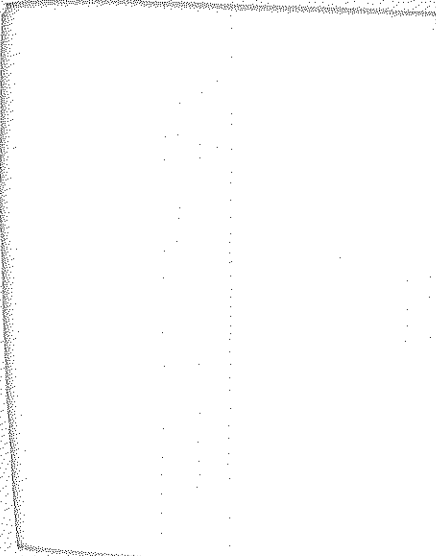
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Letters to the Editor



Have we forgotten about Missionaries in Israel?

To the Editor:

Bravo for keeping the issue of the missionary activity in Israel alive before the public. I dread the results ten years from now when the fruit of this missionary activity begins to spread over Jewish communities throughout the world, and will begin to infect innocent Jewish minds. However, although you as a magazine are doing a good job, I sometimes wonder whether Orthodoxy as such is doing all that it should. In your last issue (March, 1964) you quote various documents signed by *all* Orthodox groups and religious leaders, ad-

ressed to Prime Minister Eshkol on this matter. The American document states: "We have resolved not to rest nor to remain silent, until the Holy Land is cleansed of the abomination of the missions." The British document states that "British Jewry would not be able under any circumstances to make peace" with the idea of missionary activity in an independent Jewish State.

For an ordinary layman like myself it seems that Orthodoxy in the United States and in Great Britain is "resting" and "making peace" with this shameful situation, because I have not heard of any follow-up activity since these declarations of several months ago. If the Orthodox groups are doing something to follow up such strong declarations, then it would be the duty of your magazine to keep us informed.

M. I. GROSS
Los Angeles, Calif.


An Editorial Note

In the article, "The Lines Are Drawn" which appeared in our March issue, reference was made to the Orthodox organizations which signed the cable to the Prime Minister of Israel, urging legislation to ban missionary activity in Israel.

Several organizations called to our attention the absence of their names. A careful reading of the sentence would make it clear that only a sampling of names were listed. Nevertheless, so that the record may be clear, we herewith list each signator to the historic statement in the order in which they appear following the text of the cable.

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ica, Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations of America, Metropolitan Board of Rabbis of New York, Agudath Israel of America, Religious Zionists of America, Poale Agudath Israel, Rabbinical Alliance of America, National Council of Young Israel.

Praise . . . and Censure

To the Editor:

Congratulations to Yaakov Jacobs for exposing the Jewish Telegraphic Agency. . . .

However, Rabbi Jacobs' final paragraph where he meekly threat-

ens that unless the JTA reforms, "an angry Orthodoxy will muster its own resources" and establish a news agency that will present an accurate news picture, weakens the effect of the entire article.

It seems to me that when the Orthodox Jew is being maligned and bloodied, when the concept of "a nation by virtue of its Torah" is supplanted by a mythical nationalism which supercedes Torah . . . an Orthodox news agency is an imperative.

Every Orthodox organization be it lay or rabbinic must contribute a portion of its public relations budget toward the establishment and maintenance of an Orthodox news agency so that the record can be set straight as to what is a Jew, who are his leaders and what is being done to perpetuate Judaism in its traditional form.

AVRAHAM Y. GREENHAUS
Brooklyn, N. Y.

* * *

To the Editor:

The dialogue in your last issue (March, 1964) between Rabbi Bulman and Rabbi Kaplan of Colchester on "Separatism" is a masterpiece and should be reprinted and widely distributed in a special pamphlet.

Many rabbis and laymen who still advocate a continuation of Orthodox participation in the Synagogue Council of America and the New York Board of Rabbis are simply unaware of the true nature of these organizations, and cannot understand why the *Roshai Yeshivos* issued such an emphatic ban against these "mixed-groups." Rabbi Bulman's reply gives a logical explanation of the true nature of these "mixed-groups" and represents a devastating refutation of all claims that the Synagogue Council and the New York Board of Rabbis limit their activities to "external

matters vis-a-vis the non-Jewish community."

Furthermore, now that all Reform and Conservative rabbinic and synagogue groups joined in the "seven organization" declaration encouraging missionary activity, and even stooped to *mesirah* (as your lead article *The Lines Are Drawn* relates)—there can no longer be any thought of continued Orthodox participation with those elements who are destroying *Yiddishkeit* in the name of Judaism.

HERMAN ADLER
Brooklyn, N. Y.

Former Catholic Likes Observer

To the Editor:

I hope it is not too late to take advantage of your charter subscription price. Someone kindly sent me the first five issues of THE JEWISH OBSERVER and to say that I am impressed is an understatement. Please begin my subscription with the March-Nisan issue — I don't want to miss a word.

In your magazine I have heard again the voice of truth that commanded me to come and bring my four children to stand at Sinai and accept the Torah. There are now two more entrusted by the Almighty to my care. Oh, if I could only write everything which is in my heart (but if I did, I could never get ready for Pesach). Please keep crying in the wilderness of *Golus* for the necessity of Torah-true education—so that none may ever be persuaded to forsake this pure goal for our children for the so-called "necessities" of American life.

My three eldest are in day-schools and who can understand what this means until they have almost lost it? The so-plausible arguments against the day-schools are insidious . . . but they are the arguments

of the prophets of Baal and can lead only to the destruction of all that is meaningful in our lives—our Jewishness. In the learning of our children is our redemption — our whole salvation.

As a former Catholic whose familiarity and study of the Torah was achieved in Jerome's Vulgate Latin, I cannot overstress the necessity of learning the Hebrew text. (English translations are almost as evil as the first Greek translations which rightly are mourned on

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were only the Hebrew text given on Sinai—it would have remained a purely Jewish tradition because the Christian interpretations do not exist in the original. In my own study of Hebrew I discovered this and there remained no alternative to acceptance of the true Torah given to *Moshe*.

My road to Sinia has not been easy. I feel that only the miraculous intervention of a Mighty Hand from Heaven has made it possible. But most of the anguish and sorrow which I have experienced has been due to my failure to live up to that commitment made on Yom Kippur afternoon, 5721, and ratified before the Bais Din after Pesach of the same year. And I believe that my failures are the result of lack of intensity in my studies which I hope to continue to remedy.

The Torah remains in heaven

unless we accept it and live it—and we cannot live it unless we learn it—not once or twice a week but every moment—when we lie down, even to dream of it—when we rise up, to stand for it, in our hearts and before the whole world.

SARAH ROSENZWEIG
Chicago, Ill.

AGUDAH CAMP REGISTRATION

The eight-week season of Camp Agudah, for boys, and Camp Bnos, for girls, will open on Wednesday, July 1st. A broad renovation and expansion program is already in full swing at both camps in preparation for the opening of the new season, which will be divided into two trips of four weeks each.

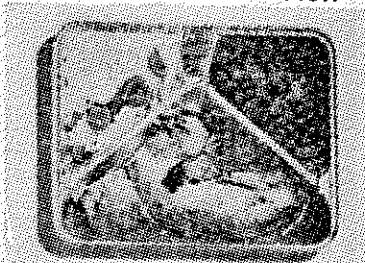
Camp Agudah, located in Ferndale, New York, and Camp Bnos — in Liberty, New York — are non-profit projects sponsored by Agudath

Israel of America as a public service. With over two decades of experience in Orthodox camping, they have accomplished wonders for children from the ages of six to fourteen during the crucial summer vacation months.

A highly trained and experienced staff of counselors will conduct the unique program of the camps. Due to the fact that the campers hail from every part of the United States, on the recommendation of local rabbis and educators, only a limited number of vacancies are still open. Registration is taking place daily at the city office of the camps at 5 Beekman Street, New York City. A free illustrated brochure is available on request.

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42nd Anniversary Dinner Calls for Torah Mobilization



TELZER ROSH YESHIVA HONORED: *Harav Chaim Mordecai Katz, Rosh Yeshiva of the Telshe Yeshiva in Wickliffe, addressing the 42nd Anniversary Dinner of Agudath Israel of America. Seated to his right are Rabbi Yaakov Ruderman, Rabbi Moshe Feinstein, Bostoner Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem Porush and Rabbi Moshe Sherer. On the right, Rabbi Yaakov Kaminetsky.*

An overflow audience at the 42nd Annual Dinner of Agudath Israel of America heard an impassioned plea to American Orthodoxy to mobilize all its resources for a strong counter-offensive against the anti-religious forces which have recently united in unprecedented fashion. This plea was the central theme of the various addresses heard at the event, whose speakers declared that the leaders of Agudath Israel long ago foresaw these developments and worked for five decades towards uniting Torah Jews from every part of the world for this all-out struggle.

The dinner, which took place on March 15th in the grand ballroom of the Hotel New Yorker, honored the world-renowned *Rosh Yeshiva* of Telshe, *Harav Chaim Mordechai Katz*, for his pioneering Torah work. *Harav Yaakov Kaminetsky, Rosh Yeshiva* of Torah Vodaath extended greetings in behalf of all the *Roshai Yeshivos* present. The distinguished roster of *Roshai Yeshivos* who participated included *Harav Moshe Feinstein* of Tifereth Jerusalem, *Harav Yaakov I. Ruderman* of Ner Israel, Baltimore, and *Harav Shneur Kotler* of Beth Medrosh Govoha, Lakewood. *Harav Boruch Sorotzkin, Rosh Yeshiva* at Telshe, headed a delegation from Cleveland.

William K. Friedman, prominent Agudah activist, chaired the Din-

ner, which was marked by its enthusiasm and warm Agudist spirit. *Harav Moshe Horowitz, Bostoner Rebbe*, a Presidium member and Chairman of the Executive of Agudath Israel, extended greetings in behalf of the American Agudath Israel organization. Rabbi Moshe

Sherer, Executive Vice-President of the organization, reported on the marked progress made by Agudath Israel during the past year in all its local and international activities.

A fitting musical program was rendered by Cantor David Werdyger of "Gerer records" fame.

K'NESSIA REGISTRATION

Registration for the 5th Knessiah Gedolah, the International Congress of Orthodox Jewry sponsored by the Agudath Israel World Organization, has already begun and is proceeding at a rapid pace. Fifteen low-priced official Knessiah Gedolah group flights have been organized for this historic gathering, providing a wide selection of arrival and departure dates.

The Knessiah Gedolah will open in Jerusalem on Wednesday, July 22nd, and will last for ten days. It will be attended by Torah-Jews from every part of the globe, including the foremost Torah-authorities of this generation.

Those who register for the official Knessiah Gedolah group flights will enjoy a variety of special benefits, including the chance for two free round-trip bonuses, free admission cards to the Knessiah Gedolah, low-cost housing in Jerusalem, free housing for Yeshiva students, a free tour of holy places, and more. *This*

special offer is limited to those who register without delay.

At the same time, an intensive national campaign has been launched to sell the *Sela*, a one dollar ticket symbolizing the identification of the purchaser with the Torah ideals of the Knessiah Gedolah. Purchasers of the *Sela* are automatically privileged to a chance for a free round-trip bonus flight to *Eretz Yisroel* with one of the Knessiah Gedolah groups. (See Back Cover)

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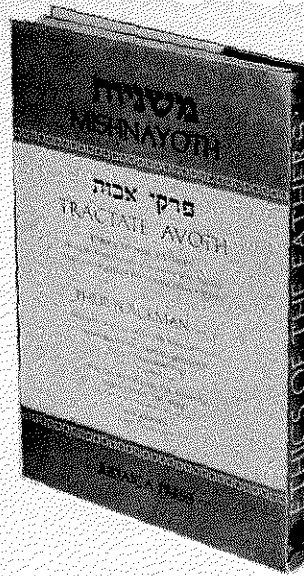
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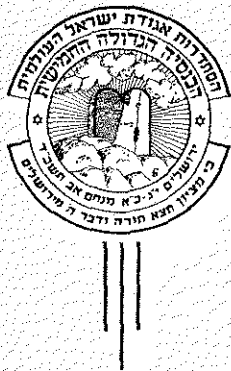
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