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And Aspects of the Life of
Michael B. Weissmandl

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the cover

A portrait of Rabbi Michael B. Weissmandl

Human Law and Torah Law

A Comparison of Purposes

The following paper was prepared for a symposium on *Law in a Troubled World* sponsored by Western Reserve University in Cleveland, Ohio. Rabbi Gifter is *Rosh Hayeshiva* of the Telshe Yeshiva in Wickliffe, Ohio.

The purpose of the Law, as civilized society understands it, is to bring order into the lives and affairs of men, to guarantee—to use a Mishnaic phrase—that “men shall not swallow themselves alive.” Where order exists in society human kind can develop to the fullest extent its capacities for progress under freedom and liberty. A society governed by the Law is therefore given a guarantee against anarchy, against chaos and disintegration.

Though this be the purpose of the Law, yet the Law itself can become cold and sometimes even cruel if it is designed only to meet the requisites of an ordered society. Indeed, there is a law even among barbarians. The cruelty and tyranny of the dictator is also framed in the order of law. One is reminded of the words of the Psalmist (94:20) who, in speaking of the tyrant, describes him as being one “who frames violence by statute.”

The development of civilized law knows, therefore, also of the development of equity in the law. Equity has served, we might say, as a guardian over the law, seeking to keep it in line with ethical norms.

It has not been the purpose of the law, however, even when joined with equity, to develop the moral and ethical standards of society and of the individual. This has been the domain of philosophy and of religion. These values nurtured by philosophy, religion, and other kindred branches of ethical and moral teachings became the norms within which the law developed and fructified.

Talmudic jurisprudence is unique in that the very purpose of the law itself is the development of Man's moral and ethical personality. The ambit of Talmudic Law is a very wide one indeed, the widest one can imagine, for its scope embraces every facet of human living. It is, by no means, limited to that body of legal matter encompassed by the term “law” as we know it in modern society; namely, that which concerns itself only with those affairs of man *vis-a-vis* his fellow man. Since the purpose of modern law is order in society,

it deals with man as part of society, its ambit being the world of human relations. Man, the individual, *per se*, is not the object of the law. Certainly the conscience of the individual is outside the scope of the law.

Not so with Talmudic jurisprudence. The very same law which deals with torts, bailments, contracts, and criminal offenses deals also with Man's duties of prayer, of ritual and ceremonial, yea, even with problems of faith in the Divine Creator. Just as the Rabbinic Court was bid to enforce a contract, so was it bid to enforce the observance of the building of the Sukkah on the Feast of Tabernacles. Idolatry in Talmudic law is of the same degree as the criminal offense of murder, subject to the death penalty.

The gamut of the Beth-Din Hagadol, the High Court, the supreme authority of the law, included such diverse matters as the case of the false prophet, the High Priest who had committed a capital offense, the decision to declare war, extending the boundaries of Jerusalem and of the Temple courts, appointing district courts and decisions involving interpretation of the law. The law embraced all of life, public as well as private, individual as well as social in character.

The ultimate authority for Talmudic law is the Torah, (the Five Books of Moses) containing the Commandments of the Lord revealed at Sinai, and thereafter, through Moses. Since the ultimate authority of the law is the Commandment of G-d, there is no room left for man outside the framework of the law. All is open before Him “who tests the hearts of men.”

Revelation of the Divine

The law, therefore, in the Talmudic sense, is the revelation of the Divine Commandment, of the demands made upon man to raise himself above the level of the beast. It is the law which says to man: *See, I set before thee life and good and death and evil, and thou shalt choose life.* It is the law which posits the freedom of Man to choose the path to nobility and human dignity, the freedom of the individual to determine and direct his destiny, that freedom which is the primary source and the ultimate goal of the sovereignty of the people revolting against the yokes of all forms of tyranny. Maimonides terms this freedom “the pillar of the Law and the Commandment.” But yet the law, in stating this great human principle, bids and com-

mands Man as to the direction of his choice. Within this commandment, *Thou shalt choose life*, therein is contained the entire body of the law, embracing all which is life.

The law is so many times identified, in the language of the Torah, with righteousness—*righteous statutes and judgments*—for its purpose is to make of Man a righteous being, who has chosen freely to be governed by moral and ethical values. The basic premise of the law is the never-ceasing consciousness that one stands always in the presence of his Creator. In order to insure this goal the law sees the necessity for a complete system regulating the conduct of Man, not merely in dealing with his fellow-man, but, also, *in dealing with himself*. For he who attempts to achieve moral and ethical perfection and integrity in himself will, of necessity, deal in kind with his fellow-man. Society is molded of the individuals who build it. *An ordered and disciplined personality in the individual guarantees a well-balanced and harmonious society.*

How striking are the words of the Torah when commanding the judge to be completely impartial and objective, not to be influenced by the fear of men. Why? *For justice is of G-d.* The court is but the instrument of the will and of the commandment of Him who has created the judge, the plaintiff, and the defendant. How ennobling for all concerned to feel that they stand in the presence of G-d when seeking justice in the court of law!

To Understand the Will of G-d

The student of the Talmud is acquainted with the phrases *Rahmana amar, Rahmana katab*, "the Merciful One has said, the Merciful One has written." The law is an expression of Divine mercy evidenced in the desire, apparent in the Commandment, to raise and elevate Man to the level of that law designed for Man. And oftimes our opinion would dictate a more stringent liability, but *Rahmana has alei*—"the Merciful One has eased the penalty." Laws in civil liabilities become lessons in Divine mercy. Is this not a unique approach to law?

That great pillar of Talmudic jurisprudence, Maimonides, created the greatest comprehensive codification of Talmudic law. It seems apparent that he considered his Code as an elaborate commentary upon the six hundred and thirteen commandments of the Torah. He first created his *Sefer Hamitzvot*, the Book of Commandments, containing the cardinal principles in determining the essence of a Commandment of the Torah, and thereupon enumerating the six hundred and thirteen Commandments based upon these principles. He then proceeded to elaborate upon this work by codifying the entire body of Talmudic law. Every division in his Code, therefore, is introduced with an enumeration of the Mitzvot, the Commandments, dealt

with in the respective division of the Code. This is indicative of the Talmudic approach to the law. The law is the Commandment of G-d revealed in the Torah, developed and expostulated down through the ages. *A discussion of the law in the Talmudic academies of learning is an attempt to understand the will of G-d in directing the conduct and affairs of Man. . . .*

Problems in civil law also represent human striving to dignity and nobility, a desire to attune human conduct to the will of G-d. This is the basis of the principle posited by the great Medieval Talmudic jurist, R. Solomon Ibn Adret (*Rashba, Baba Kama, 3b*), who states that questions involving doubts of interpretation of the basic law in injuries are governed by the principle used in resolving doubts relating to money values.

The effort expended in trying to solve a legal problem is, from the viewpoint of Talmudic law, an attempt to discern the intent of the Divine Commandment, so that men may govern themselves in accordance with that Divine Will and Authority.

We find a most interesting and unique feature in Talmudic law. We read in the Talmud (*Baba Metzia 83a*): "Rabba Bar Bar-Hana had a barrel of wine broken through the negligence of laborers hired to transport the wine. Rabba thereupon seized the laborers' cloaks as a lien for damages, something permissible by law. The laborers complained to the great master, Rav, who directed Rabba to return the cloaks. Rabba asked Rav: 'Is this then the law?' And Rav answered: 'Yes, for it is written, *That thou shalt walk in the path of the virtuous.*' Rabba returned the cloaks. The laborers then said to Rav: 'We are poor, we have labored all day and we are hungry, but we have not the means to purchase food.' Rav, thereupon, said to Rabba: 'Pay them their hire.' Rabba asked: 'Is this the law?' And Rav answered: 'Yes, for it is written, *And the paths of the righteous shalt thou keep.*'"

The ruling of the court in this case was not prompted by the recognition of the equity and justice in the claim of the plaintiffs for, indeed, they had no claim at all. Rather was it prompted by the realization that the ultimate purpose of the law is to develop a disciplined personality, fully imbued with personal morals and ethics. No doubt, the ruling was delivered by Rav because the defendant was Rabba Bar Bar-Hana, an individual who had proved himself worthy of higher moral demands and standards. The ruling of the court took into consideration the ethical norms of the individuals involved. This is the general principle known as *Lifnim Mishurat Hadin*—going beyond the line of the law, which, in our case, was equated by Rav with *Din*—the line of the law itself.

It is quite apparent that this is not a question of an equity which seeks to have the law meet ethical norms, but rather reveals a desire on the part of the law to inject its inner spirit and purpose into the ruling of the court. It is a part of that body of law which

describes a law suit in terms of *unto the Lord shall their dispute come*.

Delicate as a Rose

All which we have attempted to say is so beautifully presented in the poetic language of the Midrash. Solomon, in his Song of Songs (7:3) speaks of the people of Israel as being like unto a *heap of wheat set about with a hedge of roses*. The Rabbis of the Midrash comment thereon: The hedge of roses, these are the words of the Torah, which are as delicate as the rose. Said Rabbi Levi:

A tempting dish is brought before a person. He prepares to partake of it with great relish. He is told tallow [*chailev*] has fallen into the food and he refrains even from tasting it. Who has caused this restraint? What serpent has bitten him? What scorpion has stung him to keep him from drawing near to the food to taste of it? Only the words of the Torah, delicate as the rose, for it is written: *Ye shall not eat the fat*.

And yet another illustration.

A person was walking along a country road. He passed a fruit orchard and the fragrance of the fully ripened first fruits of the season attracted him. He stretched forth his hand to pick a fruit from the tree. He was reminded: These fruits have an owner. He drew back his hand in restraint. What has caused this restraint? What stands between him and the fruit? Only the words of the Torah, delicate as the rose, for it is written: *Thou shalt not rob*.

For the aesthete who has developed an appreciation for the beauty and delicacy of the rose, a hedge of roses is stronger than a wall of iron. He needs but the rose itself to serve as a barrier against trespass. For one reared and nurtured in the law, transgression is trespass.

Man is Inherently Good

Man, created in the image of G-d, is inherently good and noble, striving to fulfill the Divine will which inheres within him. That world of passion, lust and temptation which makes goodness and nobility so difficult to realize, must find its remedy in the law. Man is called upon to develop within himself, through the law, an aesthetic appreciation of moral and ethical values—an ever present G-d consciousness. The word of the law is the gentle reminder to refrain from trespass in the human soul, handiwork of Almighty G-d.

But certainly a code of law designed to be studied only by lawyers cannot achieve the purpose of which we speak. The law cannot lead men to the lofty heights of moral and ethics, nor can it serve as a guide for the disciplined conduct of the individual, if it remains be-

yond the reach of the individual. The loftiest principle, therefore, of Talmudic law is the exhortation to study the law, an exhortation directed toward every individual, not only to these who seek their profession in the law.

It is of interest, in this connection, to quote from Josephus in his work, *Against Apion*.

Moses did not suffer the guilt of ignorance to go on without punishment, but demonstrated the law to be the best and most necessary instruction of all others, permitting the people to leave off their other employments and to assemble together for the hearing of the law and learning it exactly. And this not once or twice, or oftener, but every week, which thing all the other legislators seem to have neglected. And indeed, the greatest part of Mankind are so far from living according to their own laws, that they hardly know them; but when they have sinned they learn from others that they have transgressed the law. Those also who are in the highest and principal posts of the government confess they are not acquainted with those laws and are obliged to take such persons for their assessors in public administrations as profess to have skill in those laws. But for our people, if anybody do but ask anyone of them about our laws, he will more readily tell them all than he will tell his own name. And this in consequence of our having learned them immediately, as soon as ever we became sensible of anything, and of having them as it were engraven on our souls.

So wrote a historian recording Jewish life at about the beginning of the common era.

A Jew Must Know the Law

Maimonides, in his Code, has a division devoted to the laws of Torah study. Therein he postulates: *Every male person in Israel is obligated to study Torah, be he poor or rich, healthy or subject to suffering, young or so old that his strength is ebbing; even if he be burdened with wife and children, he is obligated to set aside a specific time by day and by night to study Torah, for it is written: Thou shalt study it by day and by night*.

This Commandment, this law to study the law, is the quintessential of Talmudic jurisprudence. We quote from Talmudic literature:

What were the beginnings of R. Akiba? It is said: When he was forty years of age he had not yet studied Talmud. Once he stood by the mouth of a well. There he noticed a well-stone. 'Who has hollowed out the stone?' he asked. He was told it was the water which fell upon it every day continually. He wondered at this. It was said to him: 'Akiba, has thou not read: *The waters wear*

away the stones? Thereupon R. Akiba drew the implication for himself. 'If what is soft wears down the hard, all the more shall the words of the Torah, which are as hard as iron, hollow out my heart which is but flesh and blood!' With this he dedicated himself to the study of Torah. (*Avos de R. Noson* VI, 2)

The law, through continuous, endless study, can make of Man's heart a receptacle for the living waters of moral and ethical perfection. For, and we quote from Maimonides' Code:

It is characteristic of every human being that, when his interest is engaged in the ways of wisdom and righteousness, he yearns for those ways and is eager to follow them.

Talmudic law is common law in the sense that its knowledge is common for all men and not the domain of the professional student of the law. The law is therefore truly a Torah—a system of instruction to the people embracing all the problems of life, seeking to make the people worthy of the great heritage of humanity—Man created in the image of G-d.

Yaakov Jacobs

HOW MANY MILLIONS?

demography n. science dealing with statistics of births, deaths, etc. of a community

Demography is a cold science; it records births and deaths, often in round figures; it is unemotional, leaving to others the evaluation of its calculations. The demography of the Jewish people in this country has always been a confused field in the absence of any valid census figures.

One of the techniques sociologists have used in order to arrive at some estimate of the Jewish population of a community is known as the "Yom Kippur method." It is based on the assumption that almost every Jewish child stays home from school on Yom Kippur. Comparing attendance figures on that day with average attendance figures, the researcher arrives at an approximate count of Jewish children which he then multiplies on the basis of the average number of children in each family, thereby arriving at an estimate of the total Jewish population.

Using this technique, The Jewish Communal Register of New York City (1917-18) published by the Kehillah of New York City, came to the conclusion, "that will cause astonishment to many," that the Jewish population of New York at that time was "1,527,778, or approximately 1,500,000." While assimilation and intermarriage are normally thought of as being prevalent in what provincial New Yorkers like to call "out-of-town," the present two million population would indicate heavy losses, particularly since a good number of the Jews in New York City today came here after World War II.

The lack of statistics, and the many variables which prevent even an educated guess, will forever keep from us the figures on the number of American Jews who have left our ranks, particularly in smaller communities

far removed from metropolitan centers of Jewish life, where entire families fell victim to assimilation and intermarriage. Yet even without accurate demography, it is clear—when we are willing to face it—that hundreds of thousands, perhaps millions of *Yiddishe neshomos* have been lost.

Perhaps we can gain a keener realization of our losses by looking at it the other way around. Ludwig Lewisohn, addressing himself to Jews who speak of their Jewishness as an "accident of birth," has this to say:

... If you are known as a Jew and know yourself to be a Jew, you have two Jewish parents and four Jewish grandparents and eight Jewish great-grandparents and sixteen Jewish great-great-grandparents. Around the year 1700 you had 512 Jewish ancestors and around the year 1670 you had 1,024. . . .

... At any point the ancestral chain could have been broken by apostasy or by intermarriage or by both. But had the chain been broken in your case, had a single one of your direct ancestors abandoned the community of Israel, you would no more be a Jew nor would you be known as a Jew nor know yourself to be one. . . . (WHAT IS THIS JEWISH HERITAGE?)

The Jew who came to this country and settled in Arizona or New Mexico and lost his identity, or even the Jew who lost himself in Brooklyn or the Bronx, took with him his children, his grandchildren and all succeeding generations. He broke the chain and his progeny are no longer Jewish "by accident of birth." Who can say what the Jewish population of this country would be today above the 5½ to 6 million we number, had we not suffered these losses.

But who are these six million? Half of them have absolutely no religious affiliation, but in the words of Professor Milton M. Gordon (*ASSIMILATION IN AMERICAN LIFE/Oxford University Press/1964*) "consider themselves members of the religio-ethnic group and are so regarded by the rest of the American people." Of the other fifty percent, a vast majority have only a formal association with Jewish life as contributors to the United Jewish Appeal and/or local Jewish federations, or nominal membership in a congregation merely to conform with the behavioral patterns of their non-Jewish neighbors. These words are written out of deep anguish, for who can say how many millions were lost in the American holocaust and whether it was a smaller number or a larger number than those of our brothers and sisters lost in the Nazi Holocaust.

Several questions come to mind: How and why did this happen? and: What can we do to save those who seem destined to share the fate of the "how many millions"?

To set the scene for an inquiry into the true situation of American Jewry calls for a brief look at the history of the Jewish community in this country.

300 Years in U.S.A. ?

In 1954 Jewry in the United States celebrated its tercentenary, "300 years of Jewish life in America." But the careful observer can hardly take seriously the claim that Jewish life did indeed begin on these shores when twenty-three Portuguese Jews landed in New Amsterdam and were begrudgingly granted permission to stay. These and other Spanish and Portuguese Jews who came to America in the 17th and 18th centuries, apart from their small numbers, were very poorly equipped to build a real Jewish community. They made a feeble attempt at building synagogues and a semblance of communal life. They printed prayer-books for their own use, often with English translations, but had no semblance of Torah scholarship, and the off-set edition of *Shas* published during World War I was the first such effort by Jews on American soil.

As late as the year 1820 it is estimated that the total Jewish population of the United States was hardly more than 5,000. It was not until the late nineteenth century and the early twentieth century that Jewish population grew to the extent where one could seriously speak of an American Jewish Community. In 1880 Jews in this country numbered 250,000, about one-half of one percent of the total population. By 1920 Jews accounted for close to 3½ per cent of the population, numbering about 3,500,000 souls, as a result of the mass-immigration of East-European Jewry.

Most of these Jews came to these shores from communities where Torah was the guiding force in their personal and communal lives, but they came here ill-

equipped to re-create the communal and educational structures that they had left behind them. There were few rabbis, teachers and scholars among them; without these they could not adequately train a new generation in the Torah values which *they* frantically clung to by virtue of their own training.

The "Melting-Pot"

A tremendous gap soon developed between the immigrant parents and their first-generation children. Often preoccupied with the pressures of earning a livelihood, and driven into the sweat-shops of the times, they had little opportunity to guide their youngsters in the ways of Torah. Yeshivos were non-existent, afternoon Talmud Torahs were not adequate to the task of reinforcing the new generation against the pressures of a hostile culture. The "melting-pot" philosophy which demanded that immigrants become acculturated and assimilated into American society claimed many immigrants, and ever larger numbers of their children and grandchildren. Jews who desired to maintain their ties with Torah stood by helplessly as their children were cast into the furnaces of "Americanization."

The desire to save their children from the economic hardships they had suffered, prompted the immigrant parents to send their children to the public schools, a most effective ally of the "melting-pot" forces, and to institutions of higher-learning—hot-beds of radicalism and atheism—in the hope that they could enter the professions and "earn a decent living." Shabbos was one of the first victims of the economic and social pressures and with it, sensitivity to Torah and Mitzvos began to disappear. Jews who were the recipients of G-d's Law could think of no higher aspiration but that they should have "a son, a lawyer" and Jews who had been the Chosen People of the *Rofai Chol Bosor*, were prepared to barter their heritage to have "a son, a doctor."

In this climate of economic pressure and religious illiteracy, the non-Orthodox camp was able to capture entire communities and thousands of *neshomos*. The illiteracy which was destroying *Yiddishkeit* was legitimized and the gullible were led to believe that Jewish life as they knew it in the past was out-moded and had been replaced by a modern, American "Judaism." Those who escaped the full fury of the "melting-pot" were gobbled up by the distorters of Torah. Schuls became desolate as Jewish parents found increasing difficulties in communicating with their children.

Prophets of doom who foresaw the liquidation of American Orthodoxy had good reason to make such predictions. Most Orthodox congregations became completely unable to reach the youth, and were frequented by elderly Jews who felt that *Yiddishkeit* had

It is estimated that there are 6 million Jews in the United States today. Approximately half of this number are children of school age. Yet the number of children being given even a modicum of Jewish education is quite small.

Here are the figures:

| Type of school | Number of students |
|-----------------------------|--------------------|
| Sundays only | 300,000 |
| Afternoons (weekdays) | 239,000 |
| Day Schools | 61,000 |

come to the end of the line. Marshall Sklare, in his masterful study, *Conservative Judaism* puts it this way:

Elderly individuals who have been successful economically but whose main socialization took place in another culture (and thus upon whom the American acculturative process has less impact), as well as those who are left behind in the mobility process, become the chief reservoirs from which Orthodoxy must draw its followers.

Dealing with Illiteracy

In spite of the fact that most polemics and argumentation between Orthodoxy and non-Orthodoxy concerned themselves with such peripheral matters as mixed-seating, wearing the yarmulka, and the use of organ music in the "service," the real difference, which the last several decades have demonstrated, lies in the question of how one deals with illiteracy. Many modern states have had to face the problem of mass illiteracy among their citizens. Some chose to use pictures, cartoons and symbols to replace the printed word, but they quickly found this approach to be inadequate and embarked upon mass campaigns to wipe out illiteracy by the simple expedient of teaching people how to read.

It was only when the first yeshivos were opened in America, followed by the spread of day schools throughout the country, that the lines were finally drawn between those who had legitimized Jewish illiteracy and those who chose to fight this plague with the only weapon proven effective, the literacy of Torah. (We recently heard about a first-grader in a day-school who attended services at a non-Orthodox congregation, and was asked if he could sing the Adon Olom. He said he could if he were given a siddur. When they placed before him an English transliteration of Adon Olom, he said he couldn't read English that well, would they please give him a real siddur.) This effort has reclaimed individual *neshomos*, whole families and entire communities. It has created a self-respecting dynamic Orthodoxy, which it is not our purpose here to chronicle. But . . . it has hardly touched the hun-

dreds of thousands . . . the millions of American Jews who are so alienated from Torah and any semblance of real Jewishness, and it is these Jews that must become the concern of those who are slowly turning the tempestuous tides of illiteracy.

American Orthodoxy, now coming into its own has not been indifferent to these lost millions. Almost at the same time that yeshivos began to appear, some far-sighted Jews saw the advantages of adopting certain American techniques for winning alienated Jewish youth back to Torah. Most successful were the youth club and the summer camp which have managed to salvage hundreds . . . perhaps thousands of youngsters, when utilized as a weapon for Torah. Too often, such groups have suffered from success and now concern themselves with the ever-growing numbers of yeshivoh students, almost to the total exclusion of the non-Orthodox and the non-affiliated. Here too the balance sheet must show only a small fraction of the Jewish population being touched by positive salvage efforts.

It has been suggested that one way to the hearts of the lost millions is by maintaining Orthodox ties with non-Orthodox religious bodies. Any tangible results of this approach, which has been proscribed by Torah authorities, have yet to be demonstrated, yet examples of the damage incurred abound.

It is interesting to note that the Union of Orthodox Congregations, which has espoused the togetherness approach, has been most successful in the work of their National Conference of Synagogue Youth, where the line is clearly drawn between Orthodoxy and non-Orthodoxy, and where there has been a stubborn adherence to Torah standards.

Yet others have maintained that in the holocaust of American Jewry we must concentrate our limited manpower and resources on rescuing those who are most salvageable, and bite our lips as we see hundreds of thousands of Jewish youngsters deprived of their Torah heritage and torn from the bosom of *Klal Yisrael*. This position is not so easily disputed; it has a starkness about it that smacks of Jewish realism; yet it seems hardly faithful to the *Netzach Yisrael* to write off so many Yiddishe *neshomos*.

Coupled with the "save-what-we-can" philosophy is the notion that the Torah Jew must isolate himself from the hostile influences which are brought to bear when we leave our own pale of settlement and venture into the outside world. This argument too is difficult to slough off, especially when we contemplate the stark fact that intermarriage among college youth is considerably higher than among the general population and we are reaching the point where college-attendance by Jewish youth will be almost 100%.

Perhaps one of the most effective approaches to the problem of the alienated Jew is represented by the efforts of the individual congregational rabbi (and lay-

men as well) in singling out young people in his congregation who can be convinced—together with their parents who are usually more difficult—to leave their homes to study at yeshivos where their survival-capacity can be raised. But here again, the numbers involved are so small that the demographer can easily round them off into zero.

When we add to the statistics available to us the realization that even those Jews who identify in a positive way with the Jewish community and resist assimilation and intermarriage, are yet far removed from the *Yiddishkeit* of their fathers and grandfathers, the problem assumes horrible proportions and the various efforts to stem the tide seem ever more feeble.

The reader who has come this far will be disappointed; we have no solutions, pat or otherwise, to propose. We have attempted in these lines to state

the problem, in the hope that continued awareness of the state of affairs will keep alive our hope and stimulate our efforts.

Perhaps the problem is akin to that of the individual and his relationship to his G-d. The responsibilities of Torah and *Emunah* seem endless; the distractions seem to grow stronger and our ability to resist grows weaker. Yet we strive for greater efforts in study of Torah and observing mitzvohs, hoping and knowing that somehow our struggle will bring results. So too, the responsibility which we must feel to the millions of our alienated and lost brothers is overwhelming; alienation grows stronger and our ability to cope with it becomes weaker, but struggle we must. In the words of *Chazal*: לא עליך המלאכה לגמור, ולא אתה בן חורין להבטל ממנה "It is not for you to complete the task, but you dare not stop trying."

Biographical Fragments and Aspects of the Life of Michael B. Weissmandl

Sigmund Forst

Biographies are moving increasingly into the forefront of literature today. The reason for this seems to be, the lateness in age of our culture and the complexity of our civilization. The immensity of the problems of today's world has lessened the opportunity of the average man to play a part in it. Overwhelmed by anxieties, he has apathetically handed over his problems to the professional in order to be relieved from a responsibility he can no longer endure. Hence, man has become unable to confront the steadily widening periphery of his dilemma and to react to it as an individual. Our media of communication, unprecedented in scope and intensity, spread manufactured, ready-made opinion, conditioning man to an "outer-directed" mass-product.

Man has lost significance in his own eyes and that is why biographical literature has become so interesting and important to us. Our time is hungry for the individual it can no longer produce and has to search for him and to dig him out of the past. The biographical hero in literature has to be isolated from his time and disjoined from the world around him, his experiences

and conflicts with life are set into a sharp contour of individualization, and the more this is the case, the more fascinating and interesting is the esthetic enjoyment.

It is however not in a biographical sense in which a study of the personality of Michael Ber Weissmandl ז"ל is attempted here. In the world of authentic Jewish ideas, biography as an literary exercise has no place. Here, the aim is not the isolation of the hero from his time and people; on the contrary, the interest in a hero is proportionate to the degree of intensity in which his life demonstrates and reflects the very essence of his people. His experience with life is our concern only insofar as it widens the scope of our own confrontation with the world. Our biographical dealing with a man of extraordinary caliber is therefore, not an esthetic but rather an eminently religious experience.

With the growing distance of time, Michael Ber Weissmandl is emerging with increasing clarity as a unique historical figure. In the post-war literature dealing with the fate of Central European, especially the Slovakian and Hungarian Jews, as well as in the major war-crime trials, the name of Michael Ber Weissmandl appears again and again. Especially the Kasztner and

SIGMUND FORST'S *Who's Afraid—Me?* in our April 1965 issue was greeted most enthusiastically by readers of THE JEWISH OBSERVER.

Eichmann trials in Jerusalem in 1955 and 1961, during which letters, telegrams, and memoranda written by Rabbi Weissmandl and sent to the free world between 1942 and 1945, have been read in court. The sensational testimonies have revealed as a fact that Rabbi Weissmandl opened possibilities to rescue hundreds of thousands of Jews. Michael Ber Weissmandl was the one who got into contact with two Slovakian Jews who escaped from Auschwitz, and gave the first eyewitness description of the systematic extermination which was until then only a vague rumor and not really believed by anyone. Michael Ber Weissmandl was the one who sent a detailed map of the camp together with the sworn testimony of the two men to the outside world. Michael Ber Weissmandl was the one who probed the Nazi mind with a point blank offer of money. Nobody would have believed it—for \$50,000 Wisliceny, Eichmann's deputy, stopped the deportations for a long period of time. This was what encouraged Rabbi Weissmandl to suggest a bold proposition—the so-called "Europa Plan," which provided to bring to a halt all deportations from all of Europe for the payment of a huge sum of money. Wisliceny himself went to Berlin and personally submitted the plan.

Responsibility for the failure of those negotiations, Michael Ber Weissmandl was convinced, rests upon the assimilated Jews in the West who contended themselves with public speeches and demonstrations. He recalled, that after such a demonstration in New York, Wisliceny told him that Hitler was incensed and determined to intensify the persecution. Above all, Michael Ber Weissmandl accused the Zionist Jewish Agency in Palestine and Turkey of having frustrated his efforts. There are letters Weissmandl had the opportunity to see after the war, which give evidence—undisputable historical evidence—not only of a fatal blunder, but of delibetate and cynical frustration of his frantic appeals for money.



A German soldier guards "the enemy."

Brothers, children of Israel, have you all become insane? Don't you know in what hell we are living? For whom do you keep your money. Do you really want to wait until we send a special messenger to plead with you, to give us what is coming to us? To you, all our pleas don't even seem to have the effect as that of a beggar at the door; after so much urging you have thrown pennies at our feet. You are murderers! You madmen! Who is the one who gives? You who are throwing pennies, looking at us from the heights of your eminence, or we, who give blood and tears from the depths of our hearts?

And you, our Jewish brothers in all the free countries; and you, leaders of nations: How could you be silent in the face of this great murder? In it, about 600,000 Jews have already been put to death, and every day now, tens of thousands are being murdered. With their devastated hearts those murdered Jews cry to you: 'You are cruel murderers yourselves, because of your cruel silence. You have the means in your hands to avert and to stop these happenings at this very moment. For the sake of the blood of millions and the tears of hundreds of thousands, we ask you, we beg you, we demand, that you should act right now!'

(Selections from letters written by Rabbi M. B. Weissmandel during the war years and cited at the trial proceedings Grunwald-Kasztner in Jerusalem. (from Shalom Rosenfeld's *Criminal File No. 124* / Tel-Aviv, 1955)

One such letter decried his constant asking for money, with the argument that one cannot ask the Western Powers to accede to the transfer of money to the Nazis, when Allied blood was being shed in the struggle against them. "We also have to shed blood," the letter argues, "because it is necessary for the establishment of the Jewish Homeland—*Only with blood will the Land be redeemed.*"

"One cow in Palestine is worth more than all the Jews in Europe"—was the immortal statement of Yitzchak Grunbaum, one of the leading figures in the Jewish Agency at that time.

One must understand the motive and the nature of M. B. Weissmandl's statements and vehement accusations. Though he addressed himself to a political group, dealing with practical issues of enormous dimensions, his motivation was not "political"—it was basically religious, because M. B. W. was a religious man par excellence. He conceived Jewish Nationalism as the great sin of assimilation in a national disguise, as a

“Allied bombers did successfully strafe the oil fields of Ploesti, Rumania, but they let the trains to Auschwitz roll undisturbed until the last minute, a fact which the Nazis amusedly interpreted in their own way.”



German rail transports which carried Jews to their death.

substitution for a universal religion which, like all religions has the purpose to give sense to one's life and solve the personal and collective dilemma of man in this world. One has to understand what went on in the mind of this man who stood in the midst of the fire,

waiting day after day, month after month with terrible anxiety for that answer to his hundreds of frantic letters, telegrams and messages. He could not comprehend what had happened only until it was all over. It was only after the war when the crushing realization dawned

German soldiers mock a Jew.



upon him that a group of people, having lost their roots, in possession of power and influence, commanding publicity, journalists, politicians and professional pulpit-eers, with almost irrational delusion had substituted an ideal after their own image, for the most basic, the most elementary and vital Jewish command of that hour—to save Jewish lives.

Rabbi Weissmandl's book *Min Hametzar* contains a wealth of letters and documents which by themselves tell the story of Jewry in Slovakia and of their frantic attempts to wrestle themselves out of the iron clamp of destruction. There is nothing written by a Jew during that time which is comparable to these letters.

One has to picture in one's mind the ghastly situation in which those letters were written; the intricate and round-about ways—and the danger involved—in hiring diplomatic couriers to deliver them and the large sums of money paid to the messengers. These attempts to arouse the free world, were repeated again and again

with increased anxiety and despair. One also has to imagine the consternation, and the abyss which opened itself before the eyes when the messengers came back first empty handed, later with short notes from which it became clear that the reports simply were not believed and besides, that no money is available anyway.

How far this unbelievable conspiracy has captured the Jewish masses, and how impossible it is for any different thought to penetrate their minds, even to the point of mere evaluation, can be seen in the starry-eyed vehemence of the reaction to any reproach. With blinded eyes and closed ears, any voice raised in protest and accusation is immediately suppressed and deafened by the thousandfold cry: "Traitor," "Enemy of the Jewish People."

These facts are read with consternation and unbearable shame. How can it be explained that at a time during the last phase of the war, when the Nazis were willing to barter Jews for money, partly because of personal greed, partly because of their desire to establish contact with the Western powers which, they believed, were under Jewish influence, how was it possible, one asks, that the Jewish leaders did not move heaven and earth to save the last remnant of their brothers?

Weissmandl gives us the answer. And the answer does not deal with missed opportunities, errors of judgement, etc. as the main keys to the question. The entire wrong approach, the delusions, the horrible failure, are only results; results of the un-Jewish mentality of those Jews who had the money, the power and the apparatus in their hands. They have shunned the "old-fashioned" methods of clandestine operations and bribes as not glamorous and heroic. Demonstrations and rallies in Madison Square Garden yield incomparably more publicity—and of course there was the aim of the "Jewish Homeland" which must not be compromised by undue demands from the Allies.

All problems, including that of saving Jewish lives had to be subordinated to that one and only goal. It was M.B.W.'s unshakable belief, for which he claimed to have ten-fold proof, that the few avenues of rescue which opened themselves during the holocaust, were deliberately ignored by the Zionist leadership, because those avenues of rescue were leading to places other than Palestine, and any undertaking along that line might thwart the expectations towards the establishment of the Jewish State. This attitude of a multitude of arrogant busybodies, the self-appointed leaders and spokesman for world Jewry during the most tragic time in our history, has put into focus the great dilemma in which the Jewish people find itself *even today*. An intelligentsia which has become estranged from historical and authentic Judaism, has formed itself into a latter-day secularistic national-political movement, which is

interpreting Judaism and has usurped its representation with skill and effectiveness, utilizing Jewish suffering and persecution to intensify the notion, that only a Jewish State will "normalize" the Jewish people and solve the "Jewish question," once and for all.

Michael B. Weissmandl came to America after the war, completely broken in body and in spirit, and the establishment of the State of Israel was on the agenda of the United Nations. With incessant compulsion, he hunted for documents and rummaged the libraries and archives among the mounds of material which had been collected after the war. He was tracing his own letters and communications, some of which found their way to the highest authorities, like his proposal to bomb the rails leading to Auschwitz. *Allied bombers did successfully strafe the oilfields of Ploesti, Rumania, but they let the trains to Auschwitz roll undisturbed until the last minute, a fact which the Nazis amusedly interpreted in their own way.*

The more the condemning evidence mounted, that the free world stood idly by while the Jews were systematically slaughtered, the more the mystery took shape with impressive contours. When it became clear that the few diplomatic and military gestures which were made before the very end of the war by the Pope and President Roosevelt to the Regent of Hungary, and also to Tiso of Slovakia, could have saved untold lives if they were made earlier, in addition to the fatal stupidities of the Jewish leaders, the phenomenon widened to a dimension which reaches beyond ordinary comprehension. Blames and recriminations become pedestrian and somehow meaningless.

To M. B. Weissmandl, the entire catastrophe represented a phenomenon of the highest religious validity. It is precisely this reaction of M.B.W. as he emerged after the war and which marked his personality, which is of importance to us in a biographical study because it is a *religious* experience of singular significance.

We have to put M. B. Weissmandl against the background of the catastrophic years 1941-1945, as this was the turning point in his life, and regard his remaining years in the U.S.A. as the framework of his reaction to the war experience. The personality of M.B.W. as he emerged after the war, appears under a twofold aspect. One is the aspect of his personal tragedy which he shared with many who suffered as he had. The second aspect is the collective tragedy which was so emphatically pronounced by his total personality, an aspect which he shared with nobody. *He could not forget.* Particularly this is what interests us here. *Is this reaction to a tragedy an incidental matter of an individual temperament, or does it have significance of a higher order of eminently Jewish religious validity?*

The question implies more than the investigation of

a theoretical concept; it reaches deep into the "either-or" realms of our lives.

Here lies perhaps one of the most baffling phenomena in the history of Jews. It is the fact that they have entirely forgotten to ask the question "WHY?" Speaking about Jews in this context, does not mean individuals or groups who have come to conclusions and solutions which lie outside the authentic mainstream of the Jewish people, like assimilation in its liberalistic-humanitarian, or nationalistic manifestations. What we mean here is the Jew as the *homo religiosus* par excellence. How was it possible for him to forget so completely what had happened? The trials which are occasionally held, still force the evading memory into some form of historical consciousness, just as the plays performed and the books written, have added to art and literature. But what has all this to do with the question, "WHY?" which was not asked. How could we so surefootedly step back into a reality which not long ago vanished into a phantastic nightmare? Where is the restlessness of our soul and mind?

The question "WHY?" presupposes an eminently religious outlook. It presupposes a given order in the world and sense in life; it implies want for moral justification, and it creates an intimate mutuality and reciprocity between man and event, man and nature and ultimately man and G-d. Seen with the eyes of the religious, man is not a product of nature, but nature is a product of man. The question "WHY?" is basically different from the question "HOW?" The question "HOW?" is the question of the scientist whose interest lies not in the event but rather in the law which is either confirmed or upset by it. The answer to the question "HOW?" is always mechanistic and casual, it does not take human consciousness into account and is therefore basically amoral. The scientific approach, since it has shrunk from universalism to specialization, is today less capable than ever, to grasp a phenomenon in its totality.

The question "WHY?" is a profoundly religious question and *the Jewish Question* par excellence. It establishes relationship between the event and man's consciousness—and that is what counts—not the answer.

What makes the life of Michael Ber Weissmandl *בן* significant and important for us? In what way does it reach beyond the personal and enter the wide scope of norm-giving Jewish authenticity? To put it in the most simple and unmistakable terms—*was Michael Ber Weissmandl as he came out after the tragedy, acting "normally?" Or is it we, who have reconciled ourselves with the order of things, who represent "normality?"* This radical question, as simple as it is, is the eminently decisive question for our lives.

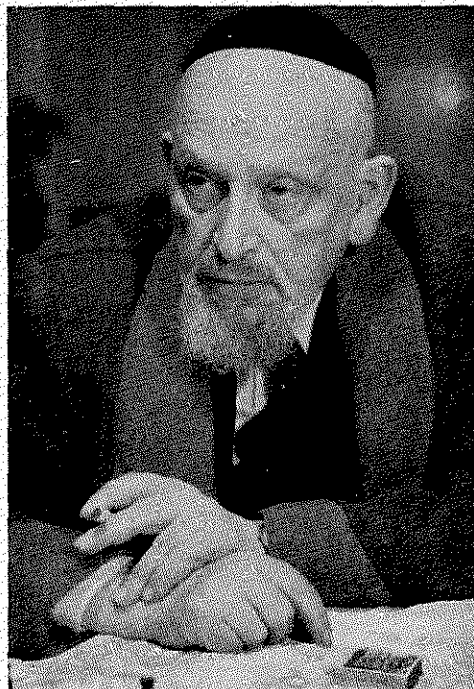
זכר צדיק לברכה

Rabbi Dr. Salomon Ehrmann

An Appreciation

With the passing of Rabbi Dr. Salomon Ehrmann זצ"ל, a dominant figure has left the scene of Jewish World Orthodoxy. He was widely known and respected as a leader of Agudath Israel from its inception at Homburg and Kattowitz through all the following *Kenessios*. Agudath Israel, which he helped form and develop with his abundant intellectual and organizational talents, meant more to him than a political movement. To him, whose soul burned for our sacred life ideals and whose heart embraced warmly all who considered themselves part of the Nation of G-d, Agudath Israel was an essential ingredient of Jewish life. To its growth and prosperity he devoted his energy and strength and inspired his fellow Agudists with the persuasive power of his speech and pen.

His eventful life, with its share of tragedy, was permeated by unshakeable, childlike *Emunah* and an inborn optimism and joyfulness which sustained him even in darkest times. The Frankfurt Yeshiva which counted him among its early students formed his Jewish personality. His great teacher, *Rav* Salomon Breuer זצ"ל, and through him, *Rabb. Hirsch* זצ"ל, found in him their most faithful disciple. An extraordinary mind, he was incessantly occupied with deepening his Torah knowledge and at the height of his life he achieved the title of a Torah leader in Israel. Almost casually he completed his academic training and the professional dentist always took second place behind the scholar and Torah leader.



Dr. Ehrmann

After the first World War — much of which he spent as a soldier at the front — he returned to Frankfurt, a matured personality. He became one of the most active supporters of his Yeshiva. An intimate, life-long friendship bound him to my brother Isaac זצ"ל whose greatness he recognized in boundless admiration and selfless devotion.

The mortal storm brought him briefly to Paris as practicing rabbi. After numerous wanderings which he withstood, together with his wife רב"ע, with unshakeable trust in the Divine Providence, he found a permanent home in his native Switzerland. He remained the old Ehrmann whose irrepressible humor and optimism overcame all tribulations. With youthful energy he resumed his Agudistic work and became the teacher and leader of many disciples whom he inspired with the brilliance of his mind and personality.

The untimely passing of his faithful life-companion gradually weakened his vast energies. At the venerable age of eighty he had fulfilled his life's work. Not having been blessed with children, he took leave of this world in the firm knowledge that his life spent in the service of G-d and our Divine Judaism secured for him a place in the proximity of G-d, in accordance with the prophecy of Isaiah (56:5) *better than sons and daughters, an immortal name which never fades away.*

RAV DR. JOSEPH BREUER

A CASE HISTORY

Science Fiction — Or Fictitious Science

THERE IS A GREAT INTELLECTUAL FERMENT ABROAD. Many of our young people are being swept up in the great wave of a new system of thought and belief. This philosophy gains strength because it is quite revolutionary; yet it claims sanction in ancient roots, and bases itself on traditions of a bygone era.

Although this movement has been almost clandestine until now, the time has come to bring it into focus in the clear light of truth. There is danger even in acknowledging the existence of this movement, for we will surely expose many innocents to its warped viewpoint; yet the challenge can not forever go unanswered.

At first it may appear strange that this movement centers about an ethnically-related group, and is based entirely on its ancient traditions. Close examination reveals, however, that only because this group has kept separate for so long a time, has it been able to grow so large a body of myth from such puny seedlings of truth.

As long as this group kept its beliefs private, our society was not faced with danger. But now, these twisted views glamorized as "philosophy," as "history," and as "religious" are being spread by its members.

This is dangerous, and must be exposed.

THEY BELIEVE, THESE DESCENDANTS OF AN ANCIENT tribe that lived in what was North America, that there was once a virgin continent, lush and fruitful, uninhabited except by some red-feathered aborigines. They believe that their hero-fathers fled from a *Supreme Tyrant*, crossed a boundless Ocean, and after fearful battle with Wind and Water, caused a rock, called *Plymouth*, to shelter them and permit a fortuitous landing upon that Shore. They believe that this happy event signalled a feast to their deity *Freedom*—whose worship was forbidden by the *Supreme Tyrant*, and for whose sake the arduous trip was undertaken. They called this feast *Thanksgiving* and large fowl called *Turkey* were sacrificed and eaten. They believe that their fathers prospered, founded thirteen nation-states, and in 1776 were able to overcome the *Supreme Tyrant*, whose generic name was *III George*, under a hero-father *Washington George*, who assumed the dynastic name of *President*, borne by all succeeding rulers. This climactic event they believe to have been the

result of a *Revolutionary War*, where much human blood was spilled for the sake of *Freedom*, on the one side, and the *Tyrant*, on the other. They believe that shortly thereafter, the Fathers, with inspired wisdom, set down several documents which served as Law unto a *United Rulership*, which enjoyed divine protection and prospered and expanded, and in a short period of two hundred years was said to have attained a population of 200,000,000, and exercised leadership over the earth for many years. They believe that the nations of the world honored and loved the *Freedom* Worshipers, welcomed their soldiery and their diplomacy, and that this Divine Freedom granted their fathers the Dignity of Man.

They believe that then their fathers waxed fat and satisfied, forgot the *Freedom* of their ancestors, and fell upon evil ways, lasting millennias, even unto this day. And they believe that *Freedom* waits to be resurrected. And that there is more than the Here and Now, and Existence. So they strive not for the Here and Now, but preach Freedom and Rebellion as did their forefathers. These, in essence, are their beliefs. WE SHALL ATTEMPT IN THIS PAPER TO ANALYZE THEM critically, using unimpeachable methodology of scholarship as our only guide. We shall divide our critique into two subdivisions: the *A*, Historical, and the *B*, Religious, Scientific and Philosophical.

A—HISTORICAL Much scholarly speculation has been spent in trying to accurately fix a historical date for the Exodus from the rule of the *Tyrant*. It is abundantly clear that no written record of such an exodus exists in the Royal Annals of Great Britain, and therefore the event must have occurred in an earlier, pre-literate stage of development. Linking the sea voyage to the story of the red-feathered aborigines, whose guile and cunning were almost supernatural, also indicates its very early origin. The root of this folk-tale relates, no doubt, to the totemic *wooden indian*, fierce in mien, used by later generations to promote the trade in tobacco.¹ Later a medal was struck to commemorate this mythical "red-indian" creature which was used to operate mechanical devices. Of equal interest is the

1. TOBACCO: an indigenous herb leaf, variously prepared for ritual use, being either chewed, fingered, or incinerated. Thought to have magical properties, both for good (assuring success with the opposite sex) and for evil (resulting in early and tortured death).

JACK KLAUSNER served as an editor of the *Orthodox Tribune* which was published during the years 1939-1948. He is now an executive with a life-insurance agency in Queens.

fact that on the obverse side of this medal appeared a likeness of another obviously mythological beast, the *buffalo*, whose remains remain undiscovered, and who, it was later admitted, was "extinct."

A curious numerological note creeps into the story here. The Hero-Fathers founded "thirteen" nation-states: not twelve, not fourteen. Later generations of this tribe attached great magical significance to the number *thirteen*. There is frequent reference to *Fried-day the thirteenth*—obviously an unpropitious number. It is therefore clear why continuing redaction of these early folk-tales always pushed the number of these states higher and higher—the last available tradition putting the number at fifty.

A different story, altogether, is presented by another number of great significance.

It is the year of momentous events, the year 1776. The magical significance of the number *seven* is well documented, and here the *thrice-blessed seven* easily appears when we add the first "one" to the last "six" thus: $1 + 6 = 7$; $1776 = 777$.

THE TRADITION OF THE REVOLUTIONARY WAR IS ALSO a dubious one. Quite clearly, a war is not a revolution; neither is a revolution a war. This, then, is no doubt a tribal memory of several separate events, minor in nature; one possibly related to the *Whiskey rebellion* of a later date.

An early hero of this tribe, one *Washington George*, led his people to victory over the *Tyrant III George*. Here is an oft-repeated theme of folk-tales. The hero magically assumed the powers of the conquered, and even assumed his person, by assuming his name. Thus the vanquished *III George*, becomes the victorious *Washington George*.

Of course, this entire hero-tale is spun almost of whole cloth, since we know that Washington was a metropolis on the river Potomac, and not a historical person. This city, as reconstructed by the archeologists, certainly dates at least a millennia later than the *Revolutionary War*,² since it is built hard by the most important shrine extant: the Pentagon, or *five-sided* seat of *world power*. Now, it is obvious that the *Revolutionary War* occurred while the *seven*³ day division of the week was thought proper, but that later a calendar reform was instituted to placate the urgent demands for a week of *five* days to confirm with the change in religious practice brought about by the priestly *Adman* tribe.⁴

A REFLECTION OF THE STRUGGLE BETWEEN THE TWO religions in the change-over era is contained in another folk-tale whose meaning, until recently, remained veiled, and was even taken by some at face value. Evidence

2. For date of this event, see above.

3. See significance of the number *seven* to these primitives, above.

4. See below as to change from the *Sun/Freedom* Worship to the new *Teevee* cult.

has come to light of an annual *Cherry Tree Blossom Festival* and *Pilgrimage of Children* as part of the new, ascendant cult. This new cult was strongly opposed by the older traditionalists, who therefore fabricated an anti-cherry tree tale, and sought to give it meaning by ascribing it to the composite folk-hero *Washington George*, who, they said, destroyed these trees with an axe. The newer cultists at first replied by casting aspersions on the character of this hero, implied that his dentures did not fit properly, and that he was of a mean disposition. Once victorious, however, the new *cultists* reestablished the heroic *Father of his Country*, burying the older version under the *I-can-not-tell-a-lie* overlay. Eventually, they even changed the order of his name, calling him *George Washington*.

Their "history" continues, and their penchant for exaggeration is so well documented, that we must realistically look at the facts. It is clear that there probably were never more than fifteen (15) nation-states in all, and certainly not the fifty (50) claimed by these people, since it is easy to confuse the two ciphers in the sound of the language they used. And, of course, since we know that the average-size *family* consisted of less than five (5) people, it is easy to see that in a mere two hundred (200) years, a small group of terrified refugees from another continent could not grow to two hundred million (200,000,000). The figure is more likely to be twenty million (20,000,000) or two million (2,000,000) or even two hundred thousand (200,000) and possibly as little as twenty thousand (20,000). Some competent scientists doubt they ever existed, and attribute the entire fable to an earlier, more complex society, which flourished and later expired. We ourselves are inclined to this more conservative view.

So much for a historical critique. Now, let us examine:

B—the PRIMITIVE RELIGIOUS, PHILOSOPHICAL, and SCIENTIFIC views held by this tribe through the ages.

There is no doubt at all that the early form of tribal belief was a sun-cult, taken over in its entirety from the more advanced Egyptian civilization. The worship of *Freedom/Aton* (sun-god of *Thebes*) is evident in all of the locale names of the early mythology of the tribe. One has but to consider the names of the *Battle of Lexing(a)ton*, the *Bos(a)ton Tee Party*,⁵ the *Crossing* (sic) at *Tren(a)ton*, or even the very name of *Washing(a)ton*; such place names as *Sun Valley*, the *Sun-Kissed Orange*⁶ and the use of *Sun(a)tan* lotion.⁷ All this evidence clearly shows the religious bias of

5. The *Tee* of this party later to be joined to the *Vee-for-Victory* concept in the religious reform that led to the *Teevee* cult, see below.

6. Probably a total name for East, West, and South Orange, although other scholars claim this to be an exotic fruit endowed with magical, health-giving properties.

7. A ritual ointment used prior to genuflexion and prostration before the Sun-god at such mass-worship places as *Brigh(a)ton Beach*, etc.

this time. Of course, later redaction by the priests of the newer religion eradicated the *a* from all of these proper names, in order to help sever the ties with the old beliefs.

But during the transition period, strife was rampant, and again much blood was shed. Most scholars see the so-called *Civil War* as the tribal memory of what must have been a protracted series of local religious wars, with many massacres and atrocities. At length however, the new cult replaced the old; not, however, without incorporating many of the older forms of worship. A priesthood of *Admen* or *Ad'man* seemed to gain control over most of the affairs of the tribe—religious, economic, and political. *M'Adaton Avenue*⁸ became the sacred precinct of the new cult.

The worship of *Freedom/Aton* was changed to *Freedom of Worship*, ascribed, with the newer *Freedom of Press*, to the mythical Founding Hero-Fathers in a document called the *William of Rights*.⁹ The supernatural nature of the *Sun/Freedom/Aton* was discredited, and the *Admen* suggested that natural causes could account for all phenomena. A Commission for this purpose was established and this really marked the end of the old beliefs. It was called the *Atonic Energizing Commission*.

IT MUST BE NOTED THAT THE ATONIC VIEW OF NATURE relates not only to the religion of Egyptian Thebes, but in another, more subtle way, to the scientific views of Ancient Greece. Already then, Democritus espoused the *Atonic Theory*; we can therefore see that this uncouth people invented no new religion, developed no new science, but rather borrowed without scruple, and copied without shame.

Of course, basically, an *Atonic* outlook, both religious and scientific, is uno-deistic in nature. This could not suit the *Admen* Tribe, since their progress to power depended upon division and strife, both in ideas and in fact. They, therefore began a clever campaign to divide the religious from the scientific, and then to isolate the scientists and sever their normal ties to every-day life. They did, however, use the scientists and science, to discredit the old-established views, and to shake belief in the old *Sun/Aton Worship*.

They therefore had the scientists build *Aton-Smashers*, and other high energy machines which "proved" that the old *Aton* was not really one, but was truly poly-deistic. There were Electroms, Protoms, nesoems, and many, many, others. The complexities of the scientists isolated them from the ordinary people, and rendered them useful, but harmless.

The *Admen* were then easily able to establish the *Teevee* cult. This fetish gained acceptance quickly, and

8. An other example of cultural overlay: the *aton* of the old is joined— but follows—the *Ad* of the new priesthood.
9. A study of the connection between *William of Orange*, a possible minor diety in the *Sun/Aton* religion, and the *William of Rights* will shortly be undertaken.

was worshipped in each home. Its Shrine consisted, at first, of a small front-blunted glassine tube, encased in a cabinet. These were soon enlarged to 10, 17, or 21 or more *inches*. The worship took place in an area of the abode called *living* (sic) but was later transferred to a *dhen* or *d'en*, and consisted of ritual imbibing of quantities of fermented and non-fermented beverages, and the sacred eating of specially prepared and ritually prepared foods. There are found references, in this era, of a *Teevee Dinner* and *Teevee Snacks*, although what these were, is difficult to determine. The *Admen* proclaimed that the fetish would appear to the faithful, and so the rich sought to gain favor by the multiplicity of their shrines, and the elaborateness of the worship areas. The gullible masses believed that the fetish *did* appear, even, to some more favored, in live color. It is clear, however, that this was all accomplished by a skillful manipulation of mirrors, and was done for the economic motives which lurked behind all *M'Adaton Avenue's* machinations.

The political side of life came also into the hands of this priestly tribe, and they used the *Teevee* fetish as an instrument to *cast-fore* or *forecast* the successions of the Presidents, and to manipulate the favor of the heirs-apparent.

Having thus gained control, the *Admen* continued to wield power. Soon, however, their system succumbed to the inherent weaknesses of their teaching. On the one hand, the *Teevee* fetish fostered a lack of intelligence and original thinking. On the other hand, the isolated scientific community, a servant of the governing tribe, soon lost its constructive abilities. Whatever moral fiber these people possessed was therefore, soon undermined. This led to easy conquest from without, and gradual deterioration of this civilization from within.

And so they have remained, a miserable minority among nations, until recently, when their small remnant has taken to refurbishing their fables and preaching a new hope for rebirth.

And therefore our warning: Let no one be led astray by these fabrications, for: THE TRUTH IS TRULY STRANGER THAN FICTION.

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The Relevance of Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch In Our Time

"HOW RELEVANT IS RABBI SAMSON RAPHAEL HIRSCH today?" is a question which is being asked not only by his critics of the right and of the left, but also in his own German-Jewish communities. The mere question is a symptom of the suspicion that historical and geographic changes may have made much that is Hirschian obsolete. As one who does not belong to any of the three groups mentioned, the present writer disagrees.

Critics of the right have always maintained that Rav Hirsch's method was an emergency measure ("*horaas shaah*") suited to the special circumstances of a Jewry which was not only on the threshold of Reform and assimilation, but also culturally and geographically isolated from the mainstream of Torah-true population. What was appropriate to the West was deemed a threat to Eastern Jewry. Classical Orthodoxy in the East had to be shielded from the influence of a modified, relaxed Orthodoxy. So ran the argument.

To our everlasting sorrow, the East no longer exists. *Eretz Yisroel* is only geographically in the Middle East; culturally it is no less Western than the United States and Great Britain. Nevertheless, the spiritual heirs of the East maintain that the growth of the Yeshivos in the large, concentrated, and successful Orthodox populations of the present-day West makes the temporary solution of *Torah im Derech Eretz* no longer necessary. Yeshiva growth has reduced that concept to an anachronism, an heroic chapter in the history of Jewish survival, a glowing tribute to a great and saintly leader. Western Orthodoxy has developed Jewishly; matured to the point where it can dispense with Hirschianism and embrace the full Orthodoxy of the East. Thus argue the critics of the right today.

The critics of the left agree on the anachronistic nature of Hirschian thought in relation to a maturing Western Orthodoxy, but for opposite reasons. For them Hirsch's *Torah im Derech Eretz* was merely a transitional stage between the old ghetto and the total involvement in present-day life, which is, or should be, the goal of modern Orthodoxy. Hirsch advocated familiarity and contact with Western culture, but an acceptance of only those aspects which met the standard

of an unchanging Divine Torah. There was a dichotomy between an unchanging Torah and a dynamic, changing culture. What is required today, according to the vanguard of the left-wing, is complete immersion in modern society, sociologically, psychologically, and philosophically. Dichotomy must give way to an organic interplay between *Torah* and *Derech Eretz*—a dialogue. Through this confrontation a mutual influence will ensue that will *creatively* affect Torah values in relation to culture. No longer would an absolute preexisting rule or concept be applied to a societal circumstance. Instead these would, by confrontation, join together to create a new legal or conceptual standard. These critics of the left say they accept the divine origin of the Torah—for they consider themselves Orthodox—but their concept of halakhic development is not one of *application* of the received corpus of *Torah Shebeal Peh* to new circumstances, but rather evolution of the corpus itself in law and in concept. Since they nevertheless call themselves Orthodox and halakhic, it should come as no surprise that they also invoke the Hirschian motto of *Torah im Derech Eretz*.

In the German-Jewish communities the response to new conditions has varied. Some maintain *Torah im Derech Eretz* unchanged from the dominant form it took in the past among the majority of its adherents in Europe. Some have gravitated towards the left. Others, impressed by the success of the Yeshivos, their intensive study methods, and by the external signs of Chasidic piety or the spiritual depth of Lithuanian *Musar*, have joined the critics of the right. The weaknesses of their own Western tradition are magnified, its strengths minimized, while the process is reversed with regard to the newly-adopted position.

There is no intention here to enter into an ideological controversy with the critics of the right, whom we love and respect, and who, following eminent authorities of the East, reject *for themselves* the principle of *Torah im Derech Eretz*. *In relation to ourselves*, however, we say as did the *Ramo* to the *Maharshal*, when the former was criticized for his philosophical studies: "It is an old difference of opinion among the authorities" (*mahalokes yeshanah bein hahakhamim*) — SHEELOS UTHESHUVOS RAMO, 7. Let it be clear that the Hirschi-

RABBI SHELOMOH ELIEZER DANZIGER is a *Rebbe* at the Mesivta Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch.

an approach has historic-halakhic precedent. We too: *Yesh lanu al mi lismoch*. But putting this basic ideological difference aside, there are certain facts which must be recognized before there can be any appraisal of the relevance of R. Hirsch today.

The first of these facts is that Rav Hirsch did not conceive of his system as a temporary, emergency measure. Any objective reader of R. Hirsch's manifold works realizes that they contain, not a "horaas shaah," but a serious attempt of a spiritual giant to formulate Torah Judaism comprehensively. To Rav Hirsch ל"צ, his conception was not a modified or relaxed Orthodoxy, but a return to the fullness and breadth of Classical Orthodoxy.

The second basic fact to be stressed, because much confusion results from ignoring it, is that the *Torah im Derech Eretz* principle must be applied to the context of today's *Derech Eretz*. To freeze the principle in a particular mold of the past is inherently contradictory and antithetical to its underlying concept. In the words of Lithuanian-born Rabbi Yaakov Yehiel Weinberg of Montreaux (educated in Slabodka, former head of the Rabbinical Seminary of Berlin, author of *Sheelos Utheshuvos Seridei Esh*):

The present-day Jew—to the extent that he is not devoted to *Limud haTorah* and to the life of the Yeshiva—is bound by a thousand ties to modern culture. He is bound through business, industry, and communal affairs, as well as through education and professional training in the schools and universities. Words, sighs, and tears will not change this fact. The solutions being suggested by the small-minded and the short-sighted will not save a confused generation. My advice is that we learn from a great teacher in Israel who faced the challenge very successfully. Certainly his educational method and approach require a new formulation which is better suited to the conditions of the day and to the spiritual needs of Jews who today strive for full mastery and profound knowledge of the Torah sources. But the direction and the goal set by the great teacher remain valid"

(*Torath Hahayyim, in the anthology, HARAV S. R. HIRSCH, MISHNATHO VESHITTATHO, Ezra, Jerusalem, 5722*).

The present writer has shown elsewhere (CLARIFICATION OF R. HIRSCH'S CONCEPTS, *Tradition*, Vol. 6, No. 2) that it is not R. Hirsch's theoretical educational program as expressed in his writings that requires a new formulation, but the way the program had to be carried out in practice out of sheer necessity. However, Rabbi Weinberg is right in pointing out that one of the salient features of our changed Jewish milieu is the ability and the desire of the youth of today's mature Western Orthodoxy by themselves to "go back to the sources of Judaism—*Tenach, Shas, Midrash*," as R. Hirsch demanded in his Eighteenth Letter. Originally this was not possible for R. Hirsch's community, nor for other Western Communities. Intensive Talmudic study has finally come to the United States only after seventy-five years of preparatory ground-work. In Germany the

Frankfurt Yeshiva brought about an intensification of Talmudic study. Slowly more and more sons of Hirschian disciples desired intensive Talmudic training, but with tragic results for Rav Hirsch's concept.

Because of the lack of Talmudic training of his *baale batim*, Rav Hirsch acquainted his followers, especially through his Torah Commentary, with manifold halakhic concepts of the Talmud and *Rishonim*. These were supplemented by an analysis of the underlying spiritual concepts. This was done so masterfully and comprehensively that one who studies the Commentary carefully almost gains, through this secondary source, a Talmudic education. *Almost!*

Imagine a dynamic rabbi today zealously winning back a semi-assimilated, Jewishly-isolated community to full Torah observance and commitment. He would, of course, stress *Torah Shebikhesav* as his basic text. He would introduce the concepts and rules of *Torah Shebbeal Peh* only in conjunction with the former. This is the necessary method of rebuilding. The extent to which Rav Hirsch did this was massive, but he could do no more. Intensive study of *Gemara* takes a long time to develop in a renewed community.

However, Classical Orthodoxy, without neglecting other areas of Torah study, demands intensive study of Talmud as the main preoccupation of an educated Jew, at least in his leisure time (*Rambam, Talmud Torah I, 12*). This is the ideal, which is not attained by all, but which must remain the ideal. Any Orthodoxy which modifies this ideal has ipso facto modified its Orthodoxy. Before the Hirschian community had reached the educational level that made intensive study of Talmud possible, a kind of *Torah im Derech Eretz* had already grown up which had, to some extent, dispensed with the above-mentioned ideal not only in practice, but as an ideal.

... at the end of the nineteenth century the word Yeshiva, to the average Orthodox German Jew, denoted something that belonged to past history. When Rabbi Hirsch's successor, Rabbi Salomon Breuer, soon after taking office in the Spring of 5650, called for the establishment of a Yeshiva—this call was by no means received with enthusiasm in all quarters. Some of the loyal adherents of Rabbi Hirsch misunderstood the teachings and principles of their spiritual mentor and saw in a Yeshiva an unknown institution, the founding of which would be something of an 'East European development' quite foreign to them. (THE FRANKFURT YESHIVA, Dayan Dr. E. Posen, RABBI DR. JOSEPH BREUER JUBILEE VOLUME, Feldheim, New York 1962).

The fact also produced inevitable side-effects, despite the amazing renewal of Orthodoxy in Germany. All this was in no way related to the fundamental concepts of Rav Hirsch concerning Torah Judaism. Unfortunately, however, the illusion had already been created that intensive Talmudic study was not in harmony with Rav Hirsch's concepts, and that to be consistent such study had to be pursued only by adopting the basic outlook of

“... anyone who walks uprightly as G-d made him, who throws off the yoke of the manifold calculations which the sons of men have invented . . . he comes sanctified as most holy.”

the East and by rejecting the fundamental concepts of Rav Hirsch. Thus those who could have brought the *Torah im Derech Eretz* of Rav Hirsch to its highest fulfillment, tragically—and needlessly—abandoned their great Rav and his concept.

The confusion persists to this day, and herein lie the challenge and the relevance of Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch today. Conditions are now favorable for a *Torah im Derech Eretz* practised by *talmidei chachamim* capable of and committed to intensive Talmudic preoccupation, at least in leisure time. Some fruit of this excellent vineyard is already visible; it compares favorably in various ways with the fruit from other vineyards.

The ideal program of such a *Torah im Derech Eretz* until the end of secondary school would be *intensive* Talmudic training, without, however, neglecting *Torah, Neviim Ukesuvim*, and related areas of Torah study. There would be *the most effective* instruction in general knowledge by *the most economical means* by Orthodox, *Torah-oriented* teachers, who would teach in harmony with the Torah and *from the context of its all-encompassing view*. *Limud HaTorah* would be clearly *ikkar*, with general knowledge auxiliary and secondary, but *effectively* taught.

After this secondary school education, many would choose to go on to business or to the professions, and *Talmudic preoccupation* would be left for their free time. Before pursuing their professional training, they would probably devote a year or two exclusively to improving their Talmudic competence. In guiding our youth, we would point out that this is the general course, “for not all can ascend to the high level of *exclusive* preoccupation with the Torah,— and this is covered by the statement of *Berachos* 35b: *Many did as Rabbi Shimeon ben Yohai, but did not achieve success, which implies only when done by the many*” (*Beur Halachoh* to *Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim*, 156, wherein it is stated: “Afterwards one should engage in his worldly occupations, for all Torah study without worldly occupation must in the end fail and become the cause of sin; for impoverishment will lead one to transgress G-d’s Will.”).

On the other hand, some would make the Torah their profession—*Torasan ummanusan*—“for there can at all times be found *individuals* who successfully carry out such a program. In this vein the *Rambam* writes in Chapter 13 of *Shemittah and Yovel*: ‘Not only the tribe of Levi, but anyone in the world whose inclination and mind lead him to separate himself [from worldly occupations] and to stand before *Hashem*, to serve Him and to know Him; anyone who walks up-

rightly as G-d made him, who throws off the yoke of the manifold calculations which the sons of men have invented—any such man becomes sanctified as most holy. *Hashem* will be his portion and inheritance in the eternal world, and will grant him in this world a measure sufficient for his needs, as He granted the *Kohanim* and *Levites*” (*Beur Halachoh, ibid.*). For those who choose this path, higher institutions of learning would be established to teach Talmud on the highest qualitative and quantitative level. In loyalty to the *Torah im Derech Eretz* ideal they would still maintain an interest in general thought and affairs, and *relate* to them. They would do the same after becoming the recognized Torah authorities.

In choosing the path best suited to them, our youth would not be coerced by authority, philosophical outlook, or the personal inclination of others into any decision. They would choose according to their own inclination, personality, ability, and opportunity, under expert guidance. There would be no sense of compromise in choosing the general course, as there often is today among non-Hirschians. A sense of compromise vitiates one’s Torah outlook and breeds further compromises. All would strive to serve the Divine purpose faithfully; all would help build a healthy Torah community, which has always been based on many and varied occupations. *But intensive* Talmudic preoccupation would be the free time activity of all, and those whose Torah would be *ummanusan* would be considered the most valued resource of the community, members of the highest of all professions.

This mature form of *Torah im Derech Eretz* would perhaps prevent the present trend towards the polarization of Orthodoxy into, on the one hand, a camp that completely rejects modern culture *to the point of no contact and no meaningful interest*, and, on the other, the left-wing’s total immersion in modern life and thought—according to the theory outlined above—which leads only to the rejection of Orthodoxy in its classical sense and halachic concept. The highest calibre of Torah competence and authority coupled with a true conversance with the modern context of life and thought, which would characterize this ideal camp of *Torah im Derech Eretz*, would generate vocal and respected representatives of true Torah Judaism, who would displace the present and the aspiring left-wing usurpers.

This, in one man’s view, is the relevance of Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch today. The goal has not been achieved to date. It is worthy of our utmost effort and strivings.

The Cult of Jewishness

On America's New Fascination with the Jew

SOMETHING STRANGE IS HAPPENING IN THE INTELLECTUAL life of America. In the mad scramble to be "in," to be "with it," which permeates even the thinking and writing of the intelligentsia, the lowly Jew, long the butt of hostile humor and satire, has become a cultural hero. Jews have written many of the best-selling novels which have Jewish themes and Jewish heroes.

Perhaps the best-known and most widely-discussed Jew in America today is Moses Herzog, who doesn't even exist—except between the covers of Saul Bellow's novel *Herzog* (Viking, 1964).

So far has this new cult of Jewishness grown that *Time* magazine devoted its weekly essay on June 25, 1965, to exploring the nature of "The New American Jew" and his growing influence (intrusion?) in America's cultural life. "It is no longer surprising" they write (the essay is unsigned) "to find Jews in the Cabinet, the Supreme Court or the World Series." Poet Robert Lowell, who traces his lineage back to the Early American Lowells, boasts, *Time* tells us, that his saving grave is that he is "one-eighth Jewish."

American Jews are experiencing a new acceptance and even admiration. It is said of a prominent actress whose name and nose testify to her Jewishness, that only a decade ago they would both have had to submit to surgery. The mass media use more and more Yiddish words and Yiddishisms which are constantly flowing into American speech.

WHAT IS THIS NEW FASCINATION WITH THE JEW AND Jewishness and does it have any relevance to Torah Jewishness? One can only speculate, but we do feel it is a phenomenon which we cannot ignore, and which may have deep significance to the Torah Jew, to the alienated Jew, and to the non-Jew who feels he is slowly becoming an outsider in his own cultural milieu.

For two thousand years the Jew has been in *Golus*. Our *Golus* has deep spiritual significance; it is not the exile that has been experienced by other nations and peoples. Nevertheless, exile as a human experience can also be understood in non-theological terms: The man in exile knows he is not in his own home; he is constantly aware that he may be driven out of his temporary dwelling (the symbolism of the *Succoh*); he cannot escape the fear and insecurity which makes uncertain where he will be on the morrow.

WHEN THE FIRST ATOMIC BOMBS EXPLODED OVER Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the Western world was elated that a long and bloody war was over. It was not until

the excitement of peace faded away that the spectre of the mushroom cloud came into clearer focus and refused to let the winds blow it away. Fear and insecurity became the lot of all mankind; the Jew was no longer alone in his *Golus*, all of mankind was not sharing it with him.

In recent years fear and insecurity have become the banner of American youth, expressing themselves in all sorts of aberrations, from drug addiction and sexual promiscuity to extremist political agitation. The rootlessness and the homelessness of the youth,—who have more to fear from "the Bomb"—has worked its way up to the adult population and now hovers over all Americans. It is not the "fear and trembling" of the philosophers, but a fear based on the harsh facts of life in a world with a growing stock-pile of nuclear weapons with increasing chances that they may be used.

Many of the new Jewish writers appear to have lost touch with the G-d of Israel, but they have re-discovered the reality of Jewish homelessness. Often their heroes, or anti-heroes, are Jews groping for roots, puzzled by their continued anxiety over alienation in a society which has granted them freedom and at least superficial acceptance. Mouthing the anxiety of their authors, these fictional Jews appear to have rejected the G-d of their fathers and His Torah. They find Jewish tradition irrelevant and the way of life of the *shetel* they find amusing. Yet at times they seem to sense in their being cut off from this way of life a clue to their anxiety. While they manage to make use of Jewish words and even Torah concepts, they betray an abysmal ignorance of authentic Jewish teachings. Thinking that they are rejecting Torah, they are often rejecting a distorted image of Judaism covered with an overlay of Christological concepts acquired in the universities and in the Christian milieu in which they live and work.

Many of these writers are the sons and grandsons of immigrant Jews who failed to give their children any understanding of Torah, thereby cutting them off from the life-line of Jewish destiny. Modern medicine has found it possible at times to revive a human body which was clinically 'dead,' only to find that the damage to the brain sustained during the brief period when it was cut off from the body's flow of blood has not been undone. The Jew cut off from the life-giving flow of Torah, who then experiences a stirring of Jewish consciousness, is the victim, unbeknown to himself, of damage to his soul and Jewish sensitivity, which, while it is not irreparable, can be restored only through immersion in the

pure waters of Torah, an experience that few are likely to achieve.

PERHAPS TYPICAL OF THE JEWISH INTELLECTUAL'S confusion over his identity and his preoccupation with *Golus*, is a short story, "Eli, the Fanatic," written by Philip Roth (BREAKTHROUGH/McGraw Hill). Jews in an affluent suburban community suddenly find that the Jewishness they left behind them has followed them to Woodenton: A refugee from Nazi persecution has come to town, black *kapota* and all, and has opened a yeshiva.

"A Yeshiva . . . in Woodenton" one of the local Jews cries out in anguish, "If I want to live in Brownsville . . . I'll live in Brownsville." The Jewish attorney who is assigned by his co-religionists to get rid of the yeshiva—its presence is said to violate the zoning laws—has no success. Finally, in desperation, he writes to the headmaster:

Woodenton . . . has long been the home of well-to-do Protestants. It is only since the war that Jews have been able to buy property here and for Jews and Gentiles to live beside each other in amity. For this adjustment to be made both Jews and Gentiles alike have had to give up some of their more extreme practices in order not to threaten or offend the other . . . Perhaps if such conditions had existed in prewar Europe, the persecution of the Jewish people could not have been carried out.

The attorney declares the willingness of his clients to drop the charges of violations of the zoning code if the following conditions are met:

1. *The religious, educational, and social activities of the Yeshiva of Woodenton will be confined to the Yeshiva grounds*
2. *Yeshiva personnel are welcomed in the streets and stores of Woodenton provided they are attired in clothing usually associated with American life in the 20th century.*

Eli, the attorney, receives the following reply:

Mr. Peck:

The suit the gentleman wears is all he's got.

Sincerely,

Leo Tzuref, Headmaster

Eli packs several of his "J. Press" suits and sends them off to Tzuref who puts one on and wanders through the streets of the town. Eli, ridden with guilt, confusion and the many disturbances that Jewish characters are ridden with, puts on Tzuref's black suit and black hat—which Tzuref has sent him in exchange—and in this garb visits his wife at the hospital where their first son has just been born. The story ends as Eli, the fanatic, is subdued by two hospital attendants.

. . . they tore off his jacket—it gave so easily, in one yank. Then a needle slid under his skin. The

drug calmed his soul, but did not touch it down where the blackness had reached.

One cries for Eli, sad, pathetic Eli! and one cries for Roth, sad, pathetic Roth—heirs to the light and the glory of Sinai, and able to see only the blackness of their Jewishness.

NOT ONLY HAVE THE JEWISH NOVELISTS AND CRITICS become American cultural heroes, but they are regarded as spokesmen for Judaism in spite of—perhaps for some because of—their alienation from Jewish belief.

The Gentile fascination for the Jew becomes even more strange then, if our theory has merit. The *goy* is looking for an answer to his own alienation; he seeks instruction in how one lives in *golus*; he hopes that the Jew can push aside for him the clouds that have "eclipsed G-d." But he is like a cat whose eye has caught sight of a fish in a glass bowl and whose nose has caught its scent. But as he presses his nose against the glass he can go no further, and the diffraction of the light hitting the water even distorts the image of his objective.

Authentic Judaism, Torah, has much to offer the Elis and the Roths; it has much to say to the *goy*—who finds himself in *golus*. But the Roths, the Bellows and the Malamuds are fumbling with their Jewishness and their Gentile readers are buying an adulterated product. More paradox: It is the Christian theologians who are turning to what they call the "Old Testament." In the words of *Time's* perceptive essay:

" . . . some of the same events and trends that have moved Christian scholars back to the Old Testament have moved young Jews back to the Bible—not as something to be reinterpreted and explained (our emphasis) but as the Word of God, to be confronted head on." But the writer quickly slips back to the clichés of modernism: "This confrontation is not primarily with the minutiae of the Law but with the God of the Covenant and with the expectation of the Messiah's coming for the transformation of mankind." He cannot appreciate—one suspects the writer is a Jew—that as matter, and consequently the universe, is composed of the minutiae of the particles of the atom, so too is Jewishness composed of the minutiae of Torah, which one must "confront head on."

It was said of Pascal that sewed inside his coat was a slip of paper which bore the words, "God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob—and not the god of the philosophers." Would that our intellectual brothers would forsake the god of the philosophers—it is this god who is eclipsed—and seek out the G-d of their fathers. This they must struggle for, this they must achieve; else, in the words of critic Stanley Kauffmann, ". . . how, when the time comes, will the Malamud of 2065 know that he is Malamud."

Y. J.

Torah Views History

R. Eliyahu M. Bloch ז"ל



Hagoon R. ELIYAHU MEIER BLOCH, ז"ל, was one of the outstanding Torah leaders and thinkers of our time. For thirty five years, as *Telshe Rosh Yeshiva*, he delivered *Shiurei Daas*, one of which is presented below. This adaptation and translation was made available to us by the Alumni Association of Telshe Yeshiva.

"*Rabi Yitzhok* said: When a man does a mitzvoh, he should do it wholeheartedly. For, had *Reuven* known that the Holy One would write about him: *and Reuven heard and saved him (Yosef) from their hand*, he would have carried him on his shoulder to his father. And, had *Aharon* known that the Holy One would write about him: *Behold he will come out to meet you and when he sees you, he will rejoice in his heart*, he would have gone out to meet him (*Moshe*) with music and dancing. And had *Boaz* known that the Holy One would write about him: *And he reached her (Ruth) parched corn, and she ate and was satisfied*, he would have feasted her with fattened calves. *Rabi Kahan* and

Rabi Yehoshua of Sichnin said in the name of *Rabi Levi*: In the past when a man did a mitzvoh the prophet would record it; now, when someone does a mitzvoh who records it?—*Eliyohu* and *Melech-Hamoshiach* write it down and the Holy One sets His seal to their work. This we find in the verse (*Malachi* 3, 16): *Then they that feared the Lord spoke one with another; and the Lord hearkened, and heard, and a Book of Remembrances was written before Him for them that feared the Lord and that thought upon his name.*" (*Midrash Rus*, Ch. 5).

The Midrash requires some explanation. Is it only for the sake of having one's good deeds recorded in the Torah that a person should do a mitzvoh wholeheartedly? Of course, there is an infinite difference between having one's name written in the Torah which is above time and space, and having it written in a newspaper which after a short while is discarded in a trash pile. However, even the expectation of such a reward should not be a motive in fulfilling the Divine Will. We must also understand the relationship of the reward of having one's deeds perpetuated in the Torah, to the recording in the *Book of Remembrance* mentioned in the concluding part of the Midrash.

It would seem that there is a more profound explanation of the Midrash. When we examine the historical portions of the Torah, we are struck by the fact that certain events in the lives of our patriarchs are related in great detail, whereas whole periods of apparently great historic importance are entirely omitted. For example, the history of *Avraham* begins when he is already 74 years old! The life of *Moshe*, from the age of 13 until the age of 80, is almost a complete blank, despite the fact that there is a tradition that he reigned for forty years as king of Ethiopia.

The truth of the matter is that the Torah's standard of history differs greatly from that of historians. History, as the Torah sees it, is not merely a chronological record of past events. The Torah—which is the Book of Creation—records only those events which bring the world closer to its intended goal. Just as the work of Creation is expressed in the letters of the Torah, so do those acts which influence the world's course toward its ultimate climax, record themselves boldly, regardless of their seeming insignificance, on the Eternal Tablet.

Thus, a person of the stature of *Moshe Rabeinu* rules an empire for forty years and no mention is made of

it in the Torah, because the course of history—history as the Torah sees it—is not affected. However, when Boaz reaches some parched corn to a Moabit beggar woman, he makes his mark on the Divine Record. For, this seemingly trivial act is to lead to that union which will beget the royal line of *Dovid*, and will bring forth *Melech Hamoshiach*. To *Boaz* it seems as if he were doing a simple act of kindness; yet, what world-shaking results it was to produce.

Reuven thought he was but acting the part of a merciful brother and dutiful son in trying to save *Yosef* from the hand of his brothers. But, did he realize the far-reaching effects of the rescue of *Yosef*?

Surely, *Aharon* could not have suspected that his going to greet his brother *Moshe* was anything more than a demonstration of brotherly affection. Little was he aware that, at that time, *Moshe* was beset by serious doubts as to his own capabilities, and that his brother's simple, loving act was to give him the confidence necessary to lead Israel forth from bondage to Mount Sinai and thus bring about the greatest development in world history since the Creation!

Had *Reuven*, *Aharon* or *Boaz* grasped the true historical significance of their individual actions—had they realized that they were *writing passages in the Torah*, how much differently they would have acted!

Thus we see that an apparently insignificant act can alter the course of history. Is it, therefore, possible for a man to say, "That which I am doing is unimportant"? Each mitzvoh should be done wholeheartedly, for, who knows?—perhaps it is worthy of being written in the Torah!

The Midrash thus naturally raises the question: In the past when a man did such a mitzvoh, the prophet recorded it. Now that there is no prophet, has history

come to a stop? Are there then no such deeds in our day worthy of being inscribed in the Eternal Record? The answer is forthcoming. Nay, even in our times the Divine process continues. *Eliyohu*, the messenger of Redemption, and *Melech-Hamoshiach* impatiently await the *End of Days*. They are the scribes who painstakingly record each deed which hastens or delays their mission, and the Almighty, who sees to the end of all times, set His seal to their work.

All this we learn from the closing words of the last of the prophets, Malachi, who, seeing that the age of prophecy was drawing to its close, passed on to succeeding generations the knowledge that, although there would be no prophet to record and reveal them to mankind, men's deeds would nevertheless be recorded—ויקשב ה' וישמע ויכתב ספר זכרון לפניו —the ledger would not be closed!

We live in an age void of prophetic inspiration. We have no divinely-moved scribe to record the deeds and misdeeds of men; there is no one to give men and events their proper perspective. No one would now call *Bilom* a righteous man, or *Yerovom* an inspired religious leader, for they have already been clearly portrayed in the Holy Writings for what they truly were. There is no mistake to be made. Yet, in our day, how many *Biloms* and *Yerovoms* receive the honor due to (*l'havdil*) an *Avrohom Ovinu* or a *Moshe Rabbeinu*?

But the time will yet come, says Malachi, in that great and terrible day which the Almighty has set for His long-awaited Retribution, when the Record will be laid open for all to see.

Then shall ye again discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth G-d and him that serveth Him not.



BOOK REVIEW

THE UNITED STATES AND ISRAEL / *Harvard University Press* / Cambridge, 1963.

RELIGIOUS ISSUES IN ISRAEL'S POLITICAL LIFE / *Mador Dati* / W.Z.O. / Jerusalem, 1964.

A SCHOLARLY THEORY IS ONLY AS RELIABLE AS THE facts on which it is based—and, one may add, as reliable as the understanding that the author can muster for these facts. One is reminded of this when reading "The United States and Israel" (*Harvard University Press*, Cambridge, 1963, \$5.95) by Nadar Safran, born in Egypt, onetime Kibbutznik, later student at Brandeis, and now teaching at Harvard. Safran has a perceptive mind which serves him well—as long as he

does not stop outside his sphere of understanding and first hand observation.

This book is replete with significant insights into the nature of Zionism. "Zionism, while capitalizing on these (essentially religious) links, was not a religious movement. . . . In fact Zionism emerged when . . . Jews themselves were endeavoring for the first time to blur any religious elements that stressed their separateness, so as to be able to merge more easily among the Gentiles. The Zionist program (of seeking national sovereignty) did not seek to reverse this trend but sought rather to provide another way, in its view the only feasible one, to make the Jews in all respects like others" (pp. 2-3). Thus, when educated Jews in Eastern Europe lost their moorings in traditional Judaism, Zionism "provided them with the opportunity to give up Judaism for their preferred philosophies while remaining Jews. Thus grew the multitude of hyphenated Zionist groups with ideologies that were not merely

ideologies but religion—surrogates . . .” (p. 110). At the same time, Zionism made full use of traditional religious fervor. “Its strength lay precisely in the fact that it combined the traditional yearning for Return with considerations of the practical needs of the Jews into a new synthesis in which those needs activated the traditional yearning even as they sheared it of its strictly religious content; while the yearning for Return endowed the practically inspired suggestion of a Jewish State with emotional power . . .” (p. 14). Another point excellently made by the author is that “The Zionist movement was able to mobilize the support of most Jews nearly everywhere for one aspect or another of its many endeavors in Palestine, which the supporting groups viewed as ends in themselves, but which the Zionist viewed as elements of their nation-building goal” (p. 3). “. . . The Zionists were able to enlist the sympathy and support of most of world Jewry through few motives of their own and not on the basis of their complete interpretation of the position and destiny of the Jews in the world. This difference of motive and approach is at the root of the confused ideological wrangles which today characterize the relations between and among the leaders of Israel, the Zionist movement, and spokesmen for Jewish organizations outside Israel” (p. 23). It is obvious, as the author himself points out (p. 149), that in particular the cooperation between those who only used religious yearnings in the service of Zionism and those who really thought of “holy nation” would in due course lead to confusion, controversy, and *Kulturkampf*.

LIKEWISE, THE AUTHOR IS AT HIS BEST IN ANALYZING the political and economic institutions of the country. His chapters on the *Histadrut* and its relation to the government should be made required reading for all those American Jewish businessmen who consider the *Histadrut* their main purpose in life. This necessity (for a through reorganization) has been recognized for some time now by a few of the influential leaders of the Mapai in the government” (p. 144)—but such reform could lead to a split within Mapai, which the author considers disastrous for the relative stability and continuity of government in Israel. Moreover, there lie here the roots of a possible conflict between *Histadrut* and State. “What if Mapai should lose control of either the *Histadrut* or the government? . . . Would the leaders (of the *Histadrut*) then be able to resist the temptation to use their power to unseat the government? Would the government then resist the temptation to have recourse to extraordinary measures to protect itself?” (p. 145-6).

Yet, as pointed out at the beginning, all the trappings of scholarship are of no avail if the subject of inquiry is not understood and the basic facts are not gotten. This is the situation when Safran turns to the subject of religion and the State. His book abounds in errors

of fact and, at the same time, reveals the author's inability to grasp the issues involved. He draws a picture of the religious parties trying to impose far-reaching religious restrictions on the majority of the population and “exact[ing] from the community a very high price for its desire for public peace and national unity” (p. 151). He pictures what he considers the present far-reaching concessions to the religious minority as a result of the government's disinclination in 1948 to rock the boat. He sees the religious parties as striving to enlarge these concessions, while the secular parties try to trim them down where they consider this “essential for national welfare” and in response to a cumulative increase in public irritation and indignation over such matters as the “Yosele Affair.”

Safran's elemental ignorance (he says, for example that *Kohanim* “are enjoined to marry virgins,” p. 159) can be excused, but not his glaring misstatements of facts. He speaks of “a baby refused burial in a cemetery because it was born out of wedlock,” whereas this incident really concerned the refusal to bury a child in a Jewish cemetery because *he was not Jewish*. And while he claims that there were countless grievous occurrences of this sort, he does not mention with one word the pressures exerted upon the religious element—coercion of parents to send their children to secular schools, complete freedom for missionary abuses, enforced autopsies against the will and conviction of the family, and deliberate anti-religious provocations such as organized Shabbos desecration in completely religious neighborhoods. These are manifestations of direct interference with the religious freedom of the traditional Jew—and what, on the other hand, are the concessions that supposedly had to be made in the wartime conditions of 1948?

In the first place, any concessions made were not the result of extortion but of a clear recognition by Zionist leadership (clearer, in this respect, than Safran's) that the religious element in the State far exceeded the 14% polled by the religious parties and that a refusal to arrive at a *modus vivendi* would inevitably split the nation into two. It was for this reason that prior to the establishment of the State, the leaders of the Jewish agency, including the most anti-religious, such as Greenbaum, assured Agudath Israel that certain minimum needs of the religious element, in the areas of Shabbos, personal status and education would be safeguarded in the State.

It should also be clear that such a *modus vivendi* obviously does not imply the establishment of a theocracy. In a book that serves as a corrective to Safran's work, *Religious Issues in Israel's Political Life* (Mador Dati, W.Z.O., Jerusalem, 1964), Eliezer Goldman writes: “One often hears the statement that Israel today has theocratic aspects. This involves a misunderstanding of theocracy. In a theocracy the religious law is in

force, inasmuch as it is a Divine law. . . . In Israel, however, when the Israeli legislator grants force to the religious law, he does so at his own discretion and for reasons of policy. This should be no source of alarm to the secularist and no cause of encouragement to those who favor a true theocracy" (p. 33).

Moreover Goldman points out, that the concessions made to the religious element do not involve religious coercion. They can be summed up under three headings:

1) support for the religious needs of those who choose to be religious (this includes support of religious schools and of synagogues, Kashrus, etc. through the Rabbinat and Religious Councils);

2) public recognition of traditional Jewish attitudes expressed in the official limitations on pig-breeding and in the acceptance of Shabbos and Yomim Tovim as the public days of rest (even the U. S. A. recognizes Sunday and religious holidays!), and protection of this character of theirs by limitations on public transportation and transaction of business;

3) religious marriage and divorce requirements designed to prevent a split in the nation (and it should be noted that, while the U. S. A. has civil marriage, many of its marriage laws have their roots in religious traditions without incurring the wrath of the believers in the separation of Church and State!)

SAFRAN AND GOLDMAN THUS DISAGREE ON WHETHER or not the present *modus vivendi* gives unfair and unsound advantages to the religious segment in Israel (as Safran feels), or represents a neutral compromise that leaves everybody's basic position intact (as Goldman believes); and this reviewer would say that it can at best be said not to make Torah life impossible in Israel. The root of the religious struggle, however, is agreed on by everybody: the fact that the State of Israel is conceived as the embodiment of a national ideal—with secularist and Torah Jew utterly disagreeing what this ideal should be. More important still, it is also possible to agree with both Safran and Goldman that there is a great likelihood of the present *modus vivendi* breaking down in a dramatic manner. "A showdown is due sooner or later" (p. 160), declares Safran, as the extraneous factors weaken which so far controlled the situation. The older generation, even when it gave up Torah observances, still had a sentimental understanding for many of them, imbued with a measure of pioneering idealism, it was prepared to accept certain restrictions for the sake of the greater good even where it did not like them. All this, as Goldman points out, is changing. The younger generation wants its freedom from what it considers alien shackles in order to pursue pleasure or profit or both. As the gap between it and the religious element grows, political manoeuvring and the existence of parliamentary coalitions will not longer be able to bridge it.

IS THERE A SOLUTION? GOLDMAN POINTS TO ONE

possible way—an effort by the religious groups to go on a "spiritual offensive" instead of relying on political means. However, he is sceptical about whether this course will be adopted by a Rabbinat that is devoted to "cultural retrenchment" as he considers it practical in today's Yeshivos in Israel. While this reviewer agrees on the importance of such a spiritual offensive, he categorically disagrees with Goldman's attack on the Yeshivos. That fact is that ultimately the strength of the Torah is conveyed by the return to the sources, the fullest immersion in the wellsprings of Torah-learning. Moreover, this "spiritual offensive," in the true sense of the word, has been going on for years now, as new Yeshivos are created and as children are drawn into them. Vastly more should be done in this direction; but in the best case, there can be no spectacular solution. We can only trust that "the light which is inherent in Torah" will have its effect.

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SECOND LOOKS

at the Jewish Scene

The English-Jewish Press

WE HAVE FREQUENTLY COMMENTED on the weakness of the English-Jewish Press in America and its lack of objectivity, particularly in its treatment of Orthodoxy. We were therefore pleased to read the article by Harold Eidlin, "The English-Jewish Press, A New Survey" which appeared in the May, 1965 issue of *The National Jewish Monthly*, published by B'nai Brith. Commenting on the sterility of the Jewish press, Eidlin writes:

With the exception of a handful of newspapers, controversy in the English-Jewish press is anathema. And with rarely broken uniformity, today's English-Jewish weeklies—some 45 of them in about 40 communities—consistently fail to provide the kind of stimulating and provocative journalism that can attract and hold the intelligent reader.

Reading a "typical" English-Jewish newspaper is often as uninspiring as perusing the local telephone directory. And, indeed, the parallel is often striking, as one goes through the long list of names of committee members, tea-pourers at social events, and the like.

. . . A listing of names, and only in the most favorable light, appears in most cases to be the sole reason for the existence of so many of these newspapers.

Drawing on the replies to a survey he conducted, Eidlin concludes that the "lack of controversy is to avoid incurring the wrath of the 'establishment' — the inevitable influential groups and individuals."

Those who replied to the ques-

tionnaire, Eidlin continues, "raised still another charge—favored news treatment for Israel. 'Israel can do no wrong' is the way one respondent summed up the general view, which holds also that news of Israel and from Israel is frequently over-emphasized."

THE JEWISH OBSERVER has often been taken to task for voicing criticism of Israel. "Don't you ever have anything nice to say about Israel?" is a typical question put to us. Of course we do, but we feel it is our duty to draw attention to the significant weaknesses and grave dangers evident on the Israeli scene which are suppressed or not even understood by the English-Jewish press and the various official media of the State and the Zionist organizations; as Eidlin puts it, they are "frequently over-emphasized." It has been our position, and one of our prime purposes, to reject the notion that "Israel can do no wrong." Our critics would have little respect for an American newspaper or journal that could find nothing wrong with the policies of the administration in Washington; yet they fail to see the need for similar criticism of Israel. A press which closes its eyes to such criticism and "controversy" is not only untrue to itself, but it performs a distinct disservice to the State of Israel. We endorse Mr. Eidlin's conclusion that a press, "to be fully responsive to its readers' needs . . . must throw off the shackles of pressure groups, be fearless, and free to criticize." Such a press may not be any kinder to Orthodoxy, but it will permit Torah positions to compete fairly in the market-place of ideas.

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The German Ambassador

Hitler's Third Reich was notorious for its massive propaganda machine and for its use of the "big lie" technique. The successor to the Third Reich has found greater success in its public relations campaigns by creating a series of myths concerning the culpability of the German people in the slaying of six million Jews.

The first of these myths is that the crematoria and the death camps where a secret closely guarded from the German population; that the extermination program was implemented by a hand-full of hard-core Nazis and that the man in the street was simply not aware that his Jewish neighbors who were carted away were being taken to be murdered.

If one looks at a map of Germany and the occupied territories dotted with indications of death camps, it becomes obvious that their large number and the scope of their ac-

tivities could not have been kept secret from the German populace, and furthermore required the services of large numbers of civilians, not to mention the large number of Germans immediately involved in the murder of Jews.

Having agreed to establish diplomatic relations with the State of Israel, West Germany has seized the opportunity of creating another myth and forcing the State of Israel to endorse its validity.

This new myth concerns the *Wehrmacht*, the sacrosanct German Army which—so the myth goes—served Hitler with great reluctance, only because they were good soldiers of the Reich. Such august gentlemen and officers would certainly have nothing to do with killing Jews; it was the nasty S.S. men and their ilk who did the dirty work, or so the myth goes. And just to prove the innocence of the German

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"As We See Ourselves"

generals, West Germany has chosen to send as their first ambassador to Israel, Dr. Roif Pauls, a former general of Hitler's Reich, so that the Israelis can get to know what a fine chap he is.

Of course it is absurd to believe that, while the Germans with their teutonic thoroughness did have special units for murdering Jews, that the German army was free of guilt and did not participate in the massacres. Yet, this is what the Federal Republic would have us believe. It is contrary to the evidence; it is contrary to reason, and yet the acceptance of one of Hitler's loyal generals as ambassador to Israel will offer strong support to this modern German myth. Bonn's insistence on the acceptance of Pauls over the objections of Israeli officials is ample evidence of the sinister motives of their Israel policy and their desire to wipe out their past with *politik* rather than penance.

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In an article called, "As We See Ourselves," in the Spring issue of *Conservative Judaism*, Samuel Rosenbaum culls some gems from bulletins which he receives from congregations throughout the country. We would like to pass some of them along to our readers.

The spiritual leader of a New England Conservative congregation muses in his column:

... Though many of our members adamantly profess Conservative Judaism in theory, and claim to be Conservative Jews, they are in practice, very good Reform Jews ...

I wonder in my heart how long I should put up with the delusion that the ... Religious School, as it now stands, has a right to continue ...

It is one of the greatest mockeries of Judaism that parents will deliver and pick up their children for Saturday morning services, but will not step into the synagogues for services themselves, salt is rubbed into the wound when they arrive bearing packages from—Street shopping ...

The bulletin of one of the largest Conservative congregations in the country discusses the problem of winning over the child to the three-day Hebrew School program from the one-day program which they find more inviting. After outlining

the institution of a more rigid policy, they conclude:

It is understood that individual problems will arise ... The Educational Office is prepared to ... make necessary adjustments when called for ...

Rosenbaum correctly observes that: "Stripped of its double-talk and translated into plain English, it says that, if a parent insists, 'necessary adjustments' will be made ..."

An announcement from a Conservative Minnesota congregation reads:

"Last call for New Year's Eve. Reservations open to all members and friends. Cafe Internationale in the synagouge social hall. Terrific floor show, complete buffet dinner served until A.M. Largest dance floor of any New Year's Eve Party in town. ..."

"Remember the spirit of the High Holidays," a Cleveland congregation cautions its worshippers, "No Horn Blowing" (on the parking lot).

"A Baltimore Sisterhood features a fashion show and skit, 'Flora Dora Daze to the Mambo Craze' for its meeting, to be followed by the rabbi's talk, entitled 'Time for Torah' ..."

It is good that our Conservative brothers should try to see themselves; it is truly 'Time for Torah.'

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Letters to the Editor

We Must Challenge

To the Editor:

We agree heartily with most of the views expressed by Reuben Gross in his "A New Look at Humane Slaughter" in your last issue of THE OBSERVER. It has been evident throughout history that those who claim they are placing the animal kingdom on a level with mankind are really putting human beings on a plane below that of animals.

It is time to take an offensive! If the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals and other humane societies are truly so concerned and so sincere regarding humane treatment to living creatures they should work persistently, by might and main, to pass

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a bill—state-wide or nation-wide—to outlaw the so-called sports of hunting and fishing, which are contrary to our teaching of Torah.

It is in these very activities that pain and cruelty to the animal are at their peak; waste and useless destruction of G-d's creatures are at their greatest, and satisfaction of man's primitive instincts of aggressiveness and sadism, is at its safest and its most callous. This wanton, purposeless killing is deliberately sought for the "sport," for the "fun of it." And this is what Judaism specifically forbids!

In view of the above, only when these humane societies show deep interest in these aspects should we put any credence or trust in their expressed words or goals!

Until then we must be on the offensive. We must challenge!

DR. BENJAMIN GOODNICK
Philadelphia, Pa.

Likes Wein

To the Editor:

I would like to compliment THE OBSERVER and Rabbi Berel Wein for a most sensitive article on the American Rabbinate. I was most interested in seeing Rabbi Wein revisit the scene of the American Rabbinate and put down his observations as seen from the inside. Also, congratulations to him and much success in his new position in Miami.

With best wishes for your continued success . . .

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Der Israelit

To the Editor:

Meyer Levi's recent essay on *The Origins of the Orthodox Jewish Press* (May, 1965) gives a brief history of Torah Journalism during the last three centuries.

While the article by Meyer Levi only conveyed some basic factual information, the few lines dedicated to *Der Israelit* are incomplete, if not inaccurate.

After the death of Rabbi Dr. Markus Lehmann in 1890 this weekly was continued by his son, Oscar Lehmann, until the year 5665 (1905). When it appeared that *Der Israelit* would have to cease publication, a group led by Jacob Rosenheim acquired the title and assets for a sum of 20,000 Marks.

Ever since *Der Israelit* had been synonymous with the name of Jacob Rosenheim, who was its owner and editor-in-chief for over 30 years. Zelig Schachnowitz was later named *de jure* editor and contributed his incomparable historical sketches of our *Gedolim*, as well as other educational and entertaining material, while the editorial policies and all editorials were, with few exceptions, written and dictated by *Moreinu* Jacob Rosenheim.

In the interest of historical truth, therefore, any mention of *Der Israelit* and its importance to the forming of Agudath Israel, should have certainly included the name of *Moreinu* Jacob Rosenheim, who has dedicated the best years of his life to *Der Israelit*, Agudath Israel and Klal Yisroel.

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