

# THE JEWISH OBSERVER

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בעזרת ייבך שמו

בהתאסף ראשי עם יחד שבטי ישראל בימי  
אלול תרפ"ט בעיר וינא אל הכנסיה המזולה  
השניה של אגדת ישראל החליטה מועצת גדולי  
התורה בהסכמתם של צירי הכנסיה הגדולה לנכד  
את אחד מחולליה ומנהיגיה של אגדת ישראל  
העולמית איש חי ירב פעלים גדול התורה  
והמדע לוחם מלחמות ה' בעוז

**מר יעקב ראזענהיים שליטא**

מפראנקפורט דמיין

בתואר מורנו הרב

השית יאריך ימיו ושנותיו ויחדש כחתיו בעבודתו  
עבודת הקודש מתוך נחת רוח ושלות הגוף עד  
שנוכה לביאת נואלטי הצדק אמן!

אבעה בשם מועצת גדולי התורה

ישראל, יעקב ראזענהיים שליטא, מנהיג וחסיד אגדת ישראל

בשם הכנסיה המזולה העיר  
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Entering Our  
Third Year

Communicating  
Torah

Kollel: U. S. A.

**MOREINU**

**YAAKOV**

**ROSENHEIM**

זכר צדיק לברכה

# THE JEWISH OBSERVER

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A HISTORIC DOCUMENT—conferring upon Yaakov Rosenheim the unprecedented title, *Moreinu Horav*. It bears the signatures of the Chofetz Chaim, the late Gerer Rebbe, the Tchortkover Rebbe and Reb Chaim Ozer Grodzenski. (See page 12.)

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DEC. 1965 VOL. III, No. 1



# Entering Our Third Year

## *A Restatement of Objectives and Reaction to Our Critics*

WITH THIS ISSUE, WE ENTER THE THIRD YEAR OF publication of THE JEWISH OBSERVER, and again we feel the need to restate and examine our goals and objectives.

A publication is not born full-grown. Its parents may have many plans and hopes for their infant child, but only a constant willingness to look at one's child can help to determine where the child is going and what we may expect of him. The hopes that are vague at birth begin to crystalize when we have had time to observe the youngster's performance and estimate more accurately its potential.

When the Jew enters a *Bais Haknesses* he recites the words of the prophet Bilam: *Mah tovu oholecha Yaakov*, "How goodly are your tents, O Yaakov." Often these words are engraved on the wall of the Schul. We all want to see the goodness of our own people just as we want the world to recognize the goodness of G-d's Chosen People.

But another prophet spoke to the Jewish people in less endearing terms, and perhaps these words too should be engraved on the walls of our Houses of Worship:

*Woe to those that call evil good and good evil; that would have us believe that darkness is light, and light darkness. They would make bitter out to be sweet and sweet to be bitter.*

The warm words of *Mah Tov* were spoken by a non-Jewish prophet who spoke them with great reluctance, almost wishing they were not so. The harsh words directed against those who distorted the realities of Jewish life many centuries ago were spoken by Isaiah and are words motivated by love of G-d, devotion to His Torah, and love for and concern with the Jewish people. Certainly both of these prophetic statements have their place in Jewish tradition and the concepts they embody are vital stimulants to Jewish thinking.

As one looks at the Jewish scene in America today there is much to justify the words "How goodly" and also much that makes the words of Isaiah as current as the morning newspaper. A mature approach to Jewish life must be based on the realization that just as confusion and distortion do not cancel out the good, so too, is the confusion and distortion not canceled out by the good.

In the early stages of THE JEWISH OBSERVER, we have felt the need to state for the record in firm tones

the thinking of an independent Orthodoxy, in the hope that we could clarify for our readers in a reasoned manner the boundaries which our time has forced upon the entire community of Jews. Our critics have suggested that we have been too negative, even destructive at times, but negativism and even destructiveness are relative terms and cannot *ipso facto* be labeled wrong. For example, to destroy something on Shabbos is not deemed to be an act of *m'lochoh* (work) and by Torah law is considered *kilkul*—not a constructive act and therefore not a desecration of Shabbos. But . . . if the aim of the destructive act is to make it possible to build, it becomes *m'leches machseves*, a constructive act, and therefore is forbidden on Shabbos. If we have been critical, negative, it has been in this spirit of striking out at the negativism of those "who would make bitter out to be sweet and sweet to be bitter."

### *Our Editorial Consensus*

THE JEWISH OBSERVER is not a newspaper coldly reporting the facts. We are not objective; we are a journal of opinion. Most periodicals, even those which give the widest latitude to their writers, confine themselves to a clearly-defined editorial consensus. A left-wing journal is not likely to open its columns to right-wingers; a right-wing publication will not play host to left-wing thinkers. Even a middle-of-the road journal will not veer too sharply from the middle of the road.

What is our editorial frame of reference? We believe that the Almighty revealed His Torah to the Jewish people who were chosen to carry G-d's light to the world. We believe that the Torah scholars of each generation, imbued with knowledge of Torah and love for Torah, are the sole arbiters of authentic Jewish thinking on all matters relating to religious practice and religious thinking.

We claim no special privileges for living in accordance with this belief; we do feel privileged to have survived as believing Jews in a world which grows ever more hostile to traditional beliefs.

To some this smacks of snobbishness or even conceit. We, however, feel most humble in our belief and hardly adequate to be the spokesmen for this belief. But believe we do and it has fallen to our lot to speak these beliefs—and speak we must.

Some have said to us: "You fellows think you have all the answers." We don't have all the answers, but

there are some questions we *can* answer. We know that belief in Torah and dedication to its teaching is the basic ingredient of Jewishness and Jewish life. We do not have solutions to all the problems that beset the Jewish people, but we do know—this is a function of our firm belief—that any solution which does not proceed from the centrality of Torah as revealed on Sinai, while it may appear to be momentarily effective, can have no lasting value.

We may at times choose to defend our belief in *Torah MiSinai*; we may at times attempt to refute the argumentation of those who believe that Jewishness and Jewish life are possible without Sinai—but essentially our belief needs no defense—like our fathers and grandfathers before us we have staked our lives on this belief which we must constantly strengthen rather than defend.

It is this belief which provides the only key to Jewish survival; it is given certainty by Jewish historical experience. Even those who deny this, should realize that this belief—which is much more intense than political, social or economic beliefs, merits at least the respect of any such partisan belief, by those who disagree with these beliefs. We resent those who would dismiss us by the reckless device of labeling us “fanatics,” “fundamentalists,” or “ultra-Orthodox.” If one must use labels we might choose to be known as “life-and-death Jews.” We are prepared to make every sacrifice to live as Jews; we are ready to accept death in the face of any attempt to forcibly separate us from our Torah.

If we are at times harsh with those Jewish leaders who would repeal the eternal truths for which many of our ancestors gave their lives willingly, it stems from our belief that these leaders thereby discredit our sainted martyrs and jeopardize the souls of those they lead, together with all Jews.

### *An Angry Reader*

In October we received a letter from an angry reader which opened with these words:

“Directly before Yom Kippur, I received the Elul issue of THE JEWISH OBSERVER and was appalled at the bitterness and the vicious hatred which spewed from your article on the eve of the Holy Day. . . .

“To declare, as you do, that the non-Orthodox are the ‘enemies of Torah,’ is to demonstrate not only your lack of understanding of Jewish learning and your complete abandonment of the true principles of Jewish unity, but to set yourself tragically, and all who think like you, in the ranks of those whom History will forget—as others were forgotten—whose energies were devoted to destroying the concept of *כלל ישראל*.”

We are ready to stand accused of “lack of understanding of Jewish learning,” but if we stand so accused

the charges must also be brought against other Jews who are no longer among the living. We must call to the bar of justice *Moshe Rabeinu* who taught that the Torah which he received from Sinai is an eternal Law for Israel, not a single word or letter of which could ever be changed; we must call the Sages of the Talmud whose teachings were based on their immutable belief that they were the instruments of G-d when they expounded the laws and beliefs of the Torah. Our reader’s accusation must be hurled at the *Rambam* (Maimonides) who taught that a Jew must be capable of declaring: “I believe with complete faith that this Torah [received on Sinai] will never be replaced; that there will never be another Torah emanating from the Creator, may His Name be blessed.” And we must make this charge against Saadia Gaon who proclaimed that “The Jewish people is a people *only* by virtue of its Torah.”

### *“Principles of Jewish Unity”*

And what are these “true principles of Jewish unity”? When and where in Jewish history, which our angry reader calls to witness, have Jewish leaders ever proclaimed that *Klal Yisroel* must recognize the legitimacy of those who deny the Divinity of Torah and thereby themselves create the most dangerous breach in the ranks of *Klal Yisroel*? The anarchist who rejects the validity of a human society and seeks to undermine it, has no cause for complaint when that society rejects his bid for leadership. It is even simpler than that—our reader might do well to glance at a fifth-grade textbook of the ‘New-Math.’ *Klal Yisroel* historically is a set of human beings who stood at Sinai and accepted the Torah. One may choose to be a member of another set of Jews who reject Sinai, but he is then mathematically excluded from the other set and no appeal to History or “true principles of Jewish unity” can gain him admission to the set—only a commitment to *Torah MiSinai* can open the door to the set which is *Klal Yisroel*.

Most non-Orthodox Jews—and some who are Orthodox—fail completely to keep in mind that it is the Reformers and the “Conservers” who breached the walls of Jewish unity. Who ever heard in the past of a Jew without Shabbos, of a Jew who could attend a “Jewish Dinner” and eat shrimp cocktail and baked ham? Yet when we refuse to accept the warm hand of friendship which bids us enter that new set of Jews, it is we who are deemed to be destroyers of Jewish unity. We find it intriguing that Jews who would have nothing to do with the John Birch Society because it is opposed to basic American beliefs, expect Orthodox Jews to join hands with those who reject the most basic Jewish beliefs. Pretending, as some are fond of doing, that what divides us is not nearly so important as what

unites us, is to play a dangerous game in which neither side can win.

A serious breach exists among American Jews and for everyone's sake we must recognize it. Take this case in point. Last October was celebrated by Hadasah, the women's Zionist organization, as "Youth Aliyah Month." Thousands of Jewish women throughout America attended luncheons and dinners sponsored by their local chapters telling them how wonderful they are for supporting the work of Youth Aliyah which has brought thousands of Jewish children to Israel from lands where their lives were endangered. No doubt many a tear was wrung from the hearts of good Jewish mothers whose compassion for a Jewish child welled up within them.

Yet, for an Orthodox Jew, the words Youth Aliyah bring a chill to his spine—if it brings a tear to his eye it is for a different reason. The words remind him of the thousands of Jewish children whose fathers and mothers suffered to raise them as G-d fearing Jews, and who were told by Youth Aliyah officials that when they touch down on the holy soil of Eretz Yisroel, they no longer need observe mitzvohs, they no longer need be the kind of Jews their parents insisted they be in the dark lands of the Gola.

### *Jewish "Journalism"*

Were any of the ladies sipping tea at a Hadassah luncheon told about *these* children? We think that if they were told—they would care, and they would cry together with the Orthodox Jew—and we want to tell them. Another case in point. When the *Tchebiner Rav* (see page 15) one of the most important men of our generation died in Jerusalem, the Jewish Telegraphic Agency did not see fit to refer to his death in their news bulletin. This means that the entire network of English-Jewish newspapers published in America, which depends entirely on JTA to fill their news columns, carried no reference to the passing of this great Jew. We can think of no parallel in American secular life for such an omission—and this is typical of Jewish "journalism."

It is not here our purpose to discuss all of the causes of this breach in American Jewish life, but it will not go away if we pretend that it isn't there.

Some of our readers who are more sympathetic to the basic positions of THE JEWISH OBSERVER, have asked why we continue to harp on these differences, why in almost every issue we have some harsh words to say about our non-Orthodox brothers. If one reads the vast amount of newspapers, magazines, bulletins, releases and other printed matter produced by those who are unfriendly to Orthodoxy—we do—it would be clear that Orthodoxy is the target of a vast offensive against all that is holy to us. Each issue of THE OB-

SERVER could be easily filled if we attempted to react to every instance in which we are being shot at; it seems only proper that we make some attempt to reply so that our readers at least, should be made aware of the Orthodox positions.

In the two years we have been publishing, the response of our readers, the reactions of our critics and the realities of Jewish life, have reinforced our belief that there is a need for THE JEWISH OBSERVER, so that the one-sided picture which even many Orthodox Jews are exposed to should be counteracted in some measure.

### *Our Purposes*

But the purposes of THE JEWISH OBSERVER go beyond simply counteracting the negativism and hostility of forces in Jewry which are opposed to the centrality of Torah in Jewish life. We feel that in the two years of our existence we have reflected our abiding interest in the following major themes of a vibrant Orthodoxy.

- The growth of Torah institutions and a growing appreciation for study of Torah as a constant obligation and need of every adult Jew, going beyond the sometimes frivolous and shallow activity which passes as "Adult Education."

- The importance of individual growth in the realm of the *neshomo*, and the basic nature of that body of Torah law which governs man's relationships with his fellow man.

- The importance of an organized Orthodoxy which can meet the daily challenges thrust at Torah in an effective manner.

- The need for Orthodoxy to react to legislative and governmental matters from a Torah perspective, independently of those groups who are not motivated by Torah concerns in making their claims and presentations to official government agencies.

- The importance of reacting to the problems of relationships with the non-Jewish world from the perspective of Torah and the experiences and teachings of the past.

- The realization that the upheavals the Jewish people have experienced and the tensions and fears which plague all mankind point strongly to the imminence of the coming of *Moshiach*—a realization which must influence our thinking in all areas of Jewish life.

- The willingness to examine the weaknesses of the Torah community as a means of strengthening every force which has the capacity to contribute to the growth of Torah and Yiddishkeit among the masses of American Jews.

We can best sum up these themes as being the

present-day re-enactment of *Kabolas Hatorah*; of creating within ourselves and all Jews who seek the Truth of Torah, the willingness to accept the Torah and to permit it to be our guide in our own lives and in the life of *Klal Yisroel*.

In many old *siddurim* there is a תפלה קודם התפלה, a prayer to be read before praying (which is unfortunately omitted from most new editions). The Jew

asks of G-d that He assist him in formulating his petitions and that his intentions should be properly articulated. In this spirit we pray to the Almighty that He will guide us in making our publication a medium for creating closeness to G-d and to His Torah; that we may be spared from misuse of the instrument of the written word and that we may merit the achievement of those goals and objectives which we earnestly seek.

Yaakov Jacobs

# Communicating Torah

*Behold days are coming, says the Lord G-d, when I will send a hunger in the land; not a hunger for bread nor a thirst for water, but to hear the words of G-d. AMOS 8:11*

*And you shall write upon the stones all the words of the Torah, clearly explained. DEUT. 27:8*

*. . . in seventy languages. SOTAH 36a*

PERHAPS NO GREATER CHALLENGE FACES AMERICAN Orthodoxy than to communicate the words of the Torah to the many American Jews who have been disinherited from Torah, and whose souls thirst for the refreshing waters of Torah.

The Torah itself provides the most effective means for communicating Torah: *Limud Hatorah*, the study of Torah, which is the obligation of every Jew in every time and at all times. Study of Torah places the Jew in direct communication with G-d, teaching him the Divine Will and helping him to come closer to his G-d. But *Limud Hatorah* requires that the Jew must first understand that his life depends on Torah study, and he must then have access to the original works of Torah.

The vast majority of Jews in America—while their souls thirst for Torah—are not consciously aware of their need for Torah. A smaller group, whose need for Torah learning has already entered their consciousness, is unable to satisfy this need in any significant way, or is being misled to believe that their need is being met.

IT IS A TRUISM THAT TRANSLATING THE TORAH INTO a foreign tongue is not adequate to communicating Torah. Yet for many years to come it will be necessary to communicate with our disinherited brothers in the English language.

The problem of translating, or in the modern idiom, communicating thoughts originally expressed in one language, in another language, is of course not unique to Torah—except in one sense. A. F. Tytler in his

classic "Essay on the Principles of Translation" suggests this criteria for adequate translation: "*That the merit of the original work is so completely transfused into another language, as to be as distinctly apprehended, and as strongly felt, by a native of the country to which that language belongs, as it is by those who speak the language of the original work.*" From this general rule he concludes that a translation should give a complete transcript of the ideas of the original work; that the style of writing should be of the same character as the original, and that the translation should have all the ease of the original composition. This is a challenge to any translator, but ever more so to one who wishes to communicate the teachings of Torah.

But perhaps the most rigorous demand that Tytler makes upon the would-be translator is expressed in his formulation that: "*The genius of the translator should be akin to that of the original author.*" While he was not discussing the problem of communicating Torah, Tytler interestingly points up the most difficult obstacle in bringing the words of Torah to one who has no access to the original, when he insists that the ability of the translator must be *akin* to that of the author of the original. It is for this reason that Judaism has accepted as authentic only those translations done by men who were gifted with *Ruach Hakodesh*, with a genius "*akin*" to that of the Author of the original work. It is for this reason too that Judaism rejects the efforts of any Torah translator who is not firmly convinced that the author of the original is the Almighty Himself.

## Life . . . or Death

It is not often appreciated that proper translation can at times be a matter of life . . . or death. This year the world marked the twentieth anniversary of the explosion of an atomic bomb over Japan. In the many articles published on that occasion, there was no mention of the possibility that the dropping of the bomb—with tragic implications for millions beyond its immediate victims—may have been due to . . . a faulty translation . . . In *THE TREASURE OF OUR TONGUE* by Lincoln Barnett (Alfred A. Knopf / New York / 1964) the author notes:

There is evidence that an error in translation of a message sent by the Japanese government in the closing hours of World War II might have been responsible for the holocaust of Hiroshima. Had the translator rendered one word differently, the atomic bomb might never have been released. The word *mokusatsu*, used by the Japanese cabinet in their reply to the Potsdam surrender ultimatum, was given out by the Domei news agency as “ignore” rather than correctly, as “withholding comment (pending decision).” Unaware that the Japanese were still considering the ultimatum, believing indeed that it had been rejected, the Allies proceeded to open the atomic age.

If this theory is correct, the mistranslation of a single word brought a threat to the world which hangs over all of us and will hang over our children's children—if not (G-d forbid) lead to their destruction. Could one more clearly demonstrate the crucial nature of communication in our time?

To the Jew, a similar breakdown in communication can have ominous consequences; it can cut off his soul from Torah and cause him to be deprived of the *Morasha Kehiles Yaakov*, the heritage of the Jewish people.

The problem is even more acute; even in the English language itself, which most of us believe we understand, variations of usage and changes of meaning can bring about misunderstanding and controversy. A simple example: If a group of English-speaking people should meet for some common purpose, and a member of the group should make a motion to “table” a question, it could lead to a sharp division of “opinion” when both sides actually agree. To the American “to table a question” means, of course, to set it aside for future consideration; to the Englishman it means precisely the opposite: to bring it to the table, i.e. to take it up for immediate discussion.

For the Jew the English language as a tool for communicating Torah presents many more problems. Perhaps the greatest single influence on the language has come from the King James translation of the Bible. The language is shot through with Christological nu-

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□ One cannot expect to make converts or sell a religion in terms and ceremonies a people cannot understand; no business could succeed on such a principle.

*Linguistics, Language and Religion*  
Hawthorn Books / New York / 1965

□ One of the major problems of communication today is illustrated in the translation by George Orwell of a passage in *Koheles* into modern gobbledygook. While the meaning is all there, the painfulness of the translation is made even more obvious by the more traditional translation which follows.

□ “Objective consideration of contemporary phenomena compels the conclusion that success or failure in competitive activities exhibits no tendency to be commensurate with innate capacity, but that a considerable element of the unpredictable must inevitably be taken into account.”

□ “I returned, and saw under the sun, that the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, neither yet riches to men of understanding, nor yet favor to men of skill; but time and chance happeneth to them all.”

Quoted in *The Elements of Style*  
Macmillan / New York

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ances and shadings so that the most seemingly harmless rendering of a Hebrew word or Torah concept into English will so change the concept involved as to make it no longer Jewish.

*T'filoh* is a most complex human act; it consists of *Shevach*, praise of G-d, *Bakashoh*, supplication, and *Hodohoh*, an expression of thanks to the Almighty. The word *t'filoh* itself derives from the Hebrew root “to judge” indicating that in the process of *t'filoh* one must judge himself and attempt to establish the worthiness of his supplication to G-d. When all this is rendered by the weak-livered, terribly inadequate word “prayer” we have indeed suffered more than the usual loss in translation.

The expression “religious service” as it is commonly used brings to mind an ordered presentation with the worshiper often acting as a spectator. The concept of *TFILOH B'TZIBUR*, *t'filoh* (in the singular) a highly personal process with total involvement of the individual, carried out in the company of others (*tzibur*) is hardly done justice to when rendered “service,” or even the more religious-sounding “worship.”

The concept *Tzedokoh*, an act of righteousness suffers horrible distortion when it is equated with “charity.”

We wonder who it was who first spoke of the *Yamim Noroim* as the “High Holy Days” thereby giving verbal

legitimacy to the false notion that the "High Holy Days" tower above—in their religious significance—the Holy Shabbos and Yom Tov?

Even the sensitivity to this problem leads us into further breakdowns in communicating Torah. In attempting to avoid words that have a Christological ring, there is the perhaps greater danger of omitting basic Torah concepts from the vocabulary of the English-speaking Jew. We find it difficult to speak of something as being "holy"—it brings to mind "the holy Joe," the religious fanatic (fanatic is a word which deserves a paragraph all its own) who is "holier than thou." But the Jew *must* speak of *Kedushoh*, if he is to be a Jew, and if the word does not come easily to his lips or if he does not understand it, then we must speak to him of "holiness."

The word "sin" frightens many a Jew—and many a rabbi preaching a sermon; it is too reminiscent of the street-corner preacher whom one can hardly take seriously. But the Jew is capable of *chet*, and so we must speak of "sin" and risk the possibility of sounding like fundamentalists.

### "Heaven and Hell"

And what of "heaven and hell"; is not the belief in Reward and Punishment basic to Torah? And if the word "heaven" is not adequate to the task of rendering *Olam Haboh*—it certainly is not—dare we remove this concept from our everyday speech where it belongs?

The average American (Jew) is struck each day by a tidal wave of words, perhaps more words than our grandfathers had thrown at them in a year. Words which were once rich with meaning and inspiration are debased and become less than meaningless. It used to be a distinction . . . *no good, distinction brings to mind someone holding a whiskey glass* . . . it used to be most dignified . . . *no good either, funeral directors have taken over the word dignified* . . . at any rate it was once complimentary to describe someone as "a thinking man" but today it only means he smokes a certain brand of cigarettes. There was a time, not so long ago, when one could shout out with deep religious fervor, "CHOOSE LIFE"; today the listener would interpret such a call as a suggestion to read a certain magazine; drink a certain soft-drink, or any one of a number of meanings requiring that one go to a shop and make a purchase.

Most of us think of language as a means of expressing some idea which already exists in our minds and has only to be communicated to someone else. B. L. Whorf, the famous linguist maintains that linguistic analysis has shown "that the background linguistic system . . . of each language is not merely (our emphasis) *a reproducing instrument for voicing ideas but rather is itself the shaper of ideas*" (Quoted in LINGUISTICS, LANGUAGE AND RELIGION (Hawthorn Books,

New York). This idea was demonstrated, in less scholarly terms, by a woman who was asked by a poll-taker her opinion on some matter. When her answer turned out to be too long and the interviewer said, "Madam, we only want a yes-or-no reply," she looked at him indignantly and said, "*How can I know what I think until I hear what I say?*"

How can a culture of any sort survive when its language becomes an instrument for the manipulation of man's minds in order to move merchandise from a factory to a shop and from there to the consumer's home? How can Torah be communicated in a language which is becoming increasingly materialistic and, as a 'shaper of ideas', creating new modes of irreligious thought in the minds of those who use the language?

For the Jew there can be only one answer to the question: Jewish souls are at stake—a way must be found. But we must first, as is always the case, recognize and describe the problem.

One of the greatest weaknesses of American Orthodoxy is the abysmal lack of authentic Torah writings in the English language. We were recently asked to compile a bibliography of such works and only an attempt to do so can demonstrate the frustrations of such a task. With some exceptions, Orthodoxy has not recognized the need for and the power of the printed word as a weapon against Torah illiteracy and the assimilation which such illiteracy brings with it.

We stated at the outset that study of Torah in its fullest sense is the most adequate, Divinely-prescribed means of communicating Torah. But even here, and even at the elementary level, there is a danger of failure in communication. The child who is being taught a *posuk* of *Chumosh* or *Tenach* should not be left in the dark about a single word. A *taitch-vort* is often deemed to be a lower form of Torah learning when in fact it is the basic building-block of Torah. A friend once told us of his *rebbe* who would say when confronted with a word he could not translate: "*Siz a paire voss vagst in Eretz Yisroel*" ("it's some sort of fruit that grows in Eretz Yisroel"). At the very beginning a child must be taught to respect every word of Torah and to strive to know its meaning. (If that word—or any other single word—is left out of a *Seifer Torah* it is *posul*.)

Certainly a youngster who goes through a yeshiva program should come out of it willing and *equipped* to communicate Torah concepts to those Jews with whom he will have personal contact—as a neighbor, business associate, or casual acquaintance; and certainly as a member of his class or congregation. We are not discussing sermonics or homiletics but the simple ability to communicate authentically the Torah that has been accumulated in years of study.

American Orthodoxy, while resisting the pressures of an alien culture, has nevertheless adapted a number



of purely American educational techniques with remarkable success. The summer camp, for example—as far as we know—is certainly not a Jewish invention, yet it has been the instrument for communicating Torah to thousands of youngsters who have gone on to study in yeshivos and to become Torah Jews. So too, Orthodoxy must seek out and study those techniques of communication which can be adapted to the dissemination of Torah. The field of communication has grown in such proportions in recent years, that unless we take advantage of the new tools and insights provided by this growth, we will fall sadly behind in the struggle for Jewish souls, with its vast pressures from without and from within Jewry. We can only touch briefly on several of these techniques.

Every year hundreds of thousands of Americans study law, business administration, crafts, and even professions, without leaving their homes. The correspondence course, a tried and proved technique offers a great potential for reaching out to Jews who are isolated from Jewish population centers and would yet welcome an opportunity to study Torah.

Programmed learning and teaching machines are among the most recent developments in teaching which can readily be applied to teaching Torah to those who cannot attend formal classroom sessions, and even to those who have access to schools and classes who might be more easily enticed by these new methods of learning.

Of course, the printed word, in spite of the many

more sophisticated methods of instruction, is still, and will continue to be a powerful weapon in communicating Torah knowledge. But it must be utilized on a more serious level and not on the semi-amateurish level which has been the hallmark of Orthodox Jewish publications.

To make some of these endeavors practical, Orthodoxy must develop from the growing ranks of *B'nai Torah*, a corps of individuals trained in the art and science of communication to assure that the Torah which we communicate to our brothers is authentic, in spite of the modern garb in which it may be cloaked. It requires also the wisdom of Jewish leaders to recognize the urgent need for Torah communication to the vast majority of American Jews who have been deprived of their heritage of Torah learning. And as all such worthy endeavors, it will require the foresight of those who will be called upon to provide the funds for a vast OPERATION: TORAH COMMUNICATION.

Jews throughout the centuries of Jewish existence have managed to adapt to all sorts of adversity; we have managed to communicate Torah to our children—and to the children of those parents who failed to give their children the chance to study Torah. In this age of technology and automation we must once again demonstrate our ability to offer Torah to our people, even if it must be dispensed from a machine, until such time as “the Earth will be filled with the knowledge of the Lord” and all Jews will once again drink directly from the fresh waters of Torah.

*H. D. Wolpin*

## KOLLEL: U.S.A.

### *A Look Inside a New-Old Torah Institution*

THE SMALL, ROUND-SHOULDERED FIGURE IN CHASSIDIC garb gesticulates wildly as he makes his point. His strapping, sports-coated companion tops it in Yiddish with a decided Mid-Western accent. Both smile broadly as the swinging door of the Kollel closes behind them. The scene is one of understated beauty. Here a forsythia blooms, there stands an apple tree sugared with blossoms. Screened from the road by trees is a modest structure of no architectural significance. Other figures are entering the building now, for the learning *seder* is beginning. Soon the voice of Torah resounds over the secluded lawns. The cadences

are familiar — timeless. *Omar Abaya*. . . . The accents are varied but the voices are vigorous.

The world is broad and its peoples are many. In spring the appealing freshness of the earth is companion to many of man's activities. To baseball games and picnics, horseracing and roller skating — the earth lends its pliable presence. Here, in this miniscule speck of the world, and in other similar specks, the harmony of nature's beauty serves as a background for the most glittering spiritual beauty. *“The mountains and the hills open before you in song and all the trees of the field clap their hands.”*

What brings together young men of diverse backgrounds for the purpose of *Limud Hatorah*? Throughout the nation, higher education is being embraced as

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MRS. WOLPIN writes whereof she knows: her husband is a member of a Kollel in Monsey, New York. This is her second appearance in THE JEWISH OBSERVER.

never before in history. College is fast becoming the goal of all; M.A.'s and even Ph.d.'s may soon be commonplace. The flushed, triumphant graduate, tassled mortarboard cocked over one ear, is the picture of enlightened scholarship as he steps forth to receive his diploma before the eyes of his beaming parents. His clear-eyed dedication shows that he has escaped the pitfalls of beatnikism and cynicism. The scene is guaranteed to send a quiver of respect through even the most hardened observer. "*Mens sana in corpore sano*" has ostensibly been achieved; to what end will this mind and body now be bent?

### *What Brings Them to Kollel?*

Polls taken among graduate students reveal that the "meaning-of-life" to them is personal happiness. The runner-up "meaning-of-life" is financial security. A lifetime of acquired facts, ideas and intellectual polish is now being used primarily to ensure the greatest possible happiness and comfort to an individual. What about the soaring intellectual freedom of the college motto? It must be plummeting downward, for the tangible goodies on earth have a strong magnetic pull.

Not all the brilliant Jewish minds are grist for the lawyer mills and science factories, however. There are some young men who turn away from the drive for financial success to devote themselves entirely to learning *l'shmoh, a la* Kaminetz, Mir, Slobodka *et al.* The words are easily read but the heroism is not so easily perceived. These young men are only loosely insulated from a culture where altruism stops short at the pocket-book. They are not naive, for they know that status is afforded to the rich — not to the scholarly; obviously they don't enter the Kollel for honor. With their intellectual capacities they could rapidly climb to the head of any profession, so they don't enter Kollel because they are not fitted for anything else. With the energy they invest in learning, they could hustle as much business as any competitor, so they don't enter Kollel because they are lazy. Their capacious minds and physical exuberance are harnessed and disciplined to be poured into the *Gemorrah*, making it once more a living, fire-breathing Jewish possession. In this society, it isn't easy.

Some Jewish youths join the Peace Corps. Some join civil rights movements. These young men are only displaying their natural heritage of concern for the welfare of the masses. Such concern has traditionally outweighed preoccupation with self. Thus in each generation has the Jew ever been drawn upward to greatness.

How odd, the reader wonders, to compare the Peace Corps, with its primitive living conditions, with Kollel life in America, the land of plenty! It is true that Kollel members fare on ordinary food, and are

not reduced to eating the local roots and berries. Many, however, might have supped on the local wild vegetation at one time or another were it not for the enlightened cooperation of a few Orthodox businessmen who permit the Kollel members to trade with them on credit. This becomes necessary whenever the executive director cannot gather enough funds to distribute the scholarship checks on time. If every Jew were cognizant of his obligation to either learn Torah daily or support a Torah scholar who does, the sport of budget-juggling would not figure so markedly in Kollel life. No one can truly savor the zest of this sport until he faces his day with a quarter in the drawer and a bank balance of \$ .81.

Through many keenly-felt miracles of *hashgochah protis*, the young scholar escapes a life of deprivation. His wife prepares sumptuous Shabbos meals, cooks and bakes superbly, and always has enough for guests. The Kollel wives are indeed worthy of being *Neshei Talmidei Chachomim*. As a group they are intelligent and amazingly level-headed. The practicality of these latter-day *Rachels* will no doubt serve them well in the lives they have chosen. Often they hold down teaching jobs while caring for their own small youngsters. Yet the way they manage would put the professional whiners to shame. The distaff side of Kollel may be characterized by one thing; they are non-complainers.

Most people can become acquainted with the trials of the Kollel students and maintain perfect equanimity. There are a few exceptions, such as the student's parents, and the parents of his future *eyzer k'negdo*, his helpmate. When Yisroel Kramer, a fictitious typical example, had chosen to forego college, his parents were slightly uneasy. When Yisroel, considering marriage, announces that he may be accepted into Kollel, something akin to dismay sets in as questions and doubts assail the parents. Must Yisroel become a rabbi—or a yeshiva teacher who is hard-pressed for the necessities of life?

*"How does it look for the neighbors to have a married son not working?"*

The parents have always been proud of Yisroel's *frumkeit* . . . Now it seems they have grasped a tiger by the tail. Trying to swallow their misgivings, straining to see with the eyes of their son, the Kramers visit the quiet Kollel hamlet on a fine spring morning. There they shall attempt to discern if anything other than romantic, martyred seclusion is to be found there.

The apartments of the Kollel students are usually located off campus grounds, in private two-family dwellings. The focal point of the modest, but neat and well-furnished apartment is the *seforim shrank*. The students have little spare time, for the *seder* begins at nine-fifteen and ends at seven. The evening *seder* soon follows at eight-fifteen. There is no need to have



Photo by courtesy of Beth Medrash Govoha

anyone check attendance, for these young men are here because their souls thirst for Torah. Kollel is a world apart, as the Kramers now perceive. Here the *Ben Torah* tastes the *ta'am* of *Olam Habah* in the freedom to devote all his time to learning and developing *shlaimus*, completeness. This freedom, plus a unique respect for his individual insights into the Torah, help the scholar grow in stature as a *Talmid Chachom*. No two members of the Kollel are alike in their approach to learning, their philosophies or their interpretations. Yet all seem to be bound together by ties of *yiras shomayim*, mutual respect and affection. The young *Bnei Torah* learn solely for the *mitzvoh* of learning for its own sake, and never in anticipation of any future job. As the parents inquire about former Kollel members, however, they slowly begin to trust that the future will be bright. With trepidation, the die is cast; Yisroel enters the Kollel.

Supremacy of the mind that is molded by the Torah word achieves a unique fellowship among the like-minded. Kollel life might well be the ideal basis for a marriage founded on the spiritual. The purposeful negation of most of the frills modern newlyweds dote on provides a steady rock of values on which to build. All of their future actions and decisions will be colored with the hue of Kollel.

### *A Gift From Klal Yisroel*

Scholars consider their three years of learning as a gift of great value from *Klal Yisroel*. They do not consider this time to be in the nature of a sacrifice. In the pioneer days of fifteen to twenty years ago, when conditions were very uncertain, entering Kollel meant stretching to the utmost every fiber of *bitochon*.

Now that Kollel is solidly rooted as an institution vital to the perpetuation of Torah, conditions have eased somewhat. In fact, in spite of formidable obstacles, there are at present more qualified scholars waiting to be accepted into Kollel than there are funds available to accommodate them! Many Kollelim occupy cramped, outmoded quarters. Apparently, the public-at-large does not fully appreciate the importance of supporting Kollel, possibly because it appeals not to the sympathies but rather to the intellect. Yet even if all the students on the waiting list could be admitted at once, the number would still be infinitesimal in proportion to the future Torah leaders needed!

As the Kollel *yungerman* strides down the street, he is set apart by a singular air of detachment, a detachment from the follies and foibles of other young men. A sort of forcible refinement, which a total immersion in Torah brings about, is visible in his eyes to the perceptive.

Two American tourists in Jerusalem once observed a Chasid visibly wilting in the blistering Israeli heat.

"Look at him," muttered one to the other, "still clinging to those long, black robes in this climate. Doesn't he understand that times have changed?"

The second tourist said, "Just think; maybe it's because of the supreme devotion of that man and others like him that the Jewish people still exist, and that we have the privilege of standing on Jewish soil today. In a way, he's wearing those hot clothes for you and me!"

Each Kollel *yungerman* is learning for hundreds of thousands of his fellow Jews who do not learn. Without Torah study the world could not exist. The Kollel scholar is indeed learning for himself and for all of us.



# Moreinu Yaakov Rosenheim

זכר צדיק לברכה

**M**OREINU YAAKOV ROSENHEIM is no longer with us. For six decades he served in the front lines fighting for the strengthening of Torah in Jewish life and fending off attacks from without and within world Jewry.

Yaakov Rosenheim was scholar and journalist, ideologist and master orator, and confidant of several generations of *Gedolei Yisroel*. He made an indelible impress on *Klal Yisroel* as a founder and world leader of Agudath Israel. The title *Moreinu*—a rare honor—was bestowed upon him by such *Gedolei Torah* as the Chofetz Chaim, the late Gerer Rebbe, the Tchortkover Rebbe and Reb Chaim Ozer Grodzenski זכרונם לברכה.

Born on the 16th of Cheshvan in the year 5631 (1870) into an aristocratic family which was part of the Orthodox *kehila* of Frankfort, Germany, Yaakov Rosenheim was from his earliest years exposed to the teachings and leadership of Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch, the uncompromising leader of German Orthodoxy.

At the age of thirty he was already active in the Frankfort *kehila*. At thirty-five he was already a powerful voice in the Free Union for the Interests of Orthodox Judaism founded by Rabbi Hirsch, and editor of *Der Israelit*, the leading Orthodox journal of the day. These experiences were to serve him well in his work on the world scene for which he was destined.

When a conference of *Gedolei Yisroel* was called to meet in Bad-Homburg to lay the groundwork for the creation of Agudath Israel, Rosenheim, together with the sainted R' Yitzchok Isaac Halevi זצ"ל, was given the responsibility of organizing the conference. When Agudath Israel was founded in Kattowitz in 1912, R'

Yaakov Rosenheim was designated leader of the World Organization of Agudath Israel, a position he held until his death in Jerusalem.

R' Yaakov Rosenheim was unique as a Jewish leader, and his life as a leader was also unique, spanning sixty years of Jewish history which saw transformations and upheavals of monumental importance. No leader in contemporary Jewish life so personified a movement as did Rosenheim—the very mention of his name will forever bring to mind Agudath Israel.

Leadership of Agudath Israel, unlike leadership in other movements, presents a unique challenge. It demands forcefulness, clarity of purpose, earning the loyalty of the group, and at the same time submerging one's own personality and thinking in order to transmit to the movement the thinking of the *Gedolei Yisroel* who are the supreme authority of the movement. This awesome responsibility Rosenheim carried in a masterful manner; speaking for the *Gedolei Yisroel* yet exercising effective and dynamic leadership in his own right.

Before the founding of Agudath Israel, East and West European Jewry each lived separately in their own world; their ways of life, their values, even their dress and physical appearance were literally "distant as East from West." It was perhaps the crowning achievement of Yaakov Rosenheim that he brought about a meeting of the minds in which East met West with the realization that the common denominator of Torah was so strong a binding force that all differences *had* to be overcome. His ability to do this was a result of the synthesis of the best of East and West in his own life. Born and raised in Germany, he was able to perceive that West European Jewry could not sur-

vive without the resources of the East which was the repository of Torah learning and vibrant Jewish living.

R' Yaakov Rosenheim did more than contribute his organizational genius to Agudath Israel; he convinced all of *Klal Yisroel* that in the contemporary world in which we live, the individual Jew can best serve the Almighty and His Torah by assuming responsibility for the collective, and in so doing Rosenheim breathed new life into the age-old concept of *Klal Yisroel*. He saw no contradiction between the needs of the single Jew and the Jewish people; on the contrary he demonstrated that only through working for the *klal* can the individual Jew find his greatest fulfillment in Torah and Mitzvoahs.

His personal life was the finest example of the search for individual enrichment and concern with the collective. The burdens of communal responsibility never kept him from his appointed hours of Torah study. One would often find him in the late hours of the night, holding in hand a tear-stained *Tehilim* or *Musar Seifer*. The scholarship of his early years was not sacrificed on the altar of public service—it grew with him, and was not a small factor in his achievement of the title *Moreinu*.

The personality of Yaakov Rosenheim was a *Torah* personality; his relationships in his communal work were *Torah* relationships, marked by humility and self-effacement, and free from the conceit and self-aggrandizement which are the occupational hazards of leadership. His deep personal piety was evident—but subdued. He merited the praise of the Psalms, as a man of “clean hands” and a “man of heart,” never allowing his communal work to negate his obligations to his fellow man on the most personal level.

Even as the leader of a dynamic, independent Orthodoxy, asserting itself in every area of Jewish life, and

Yaakov Rosenheim at the first Knessiah Gedola



frequently in conflict with the non-Orthodox, R' Yaakov Rosenheim nevertheless gained their admiration for the strength, the courage and warmth with which he expounded Torah ideology.

R' Yaakov Rosenheim is no longer among us, but his name and his works will forever evoke the ideals of a strong Torah collective, which was the substance of his life. In the difficult times which lie ahead for *Klal Yisroel*, and even above the harsh sounds of battle, his fiery—yet loving—voice will be heard, projecting *Klal Yisroel* closer and ever closer to the glorious days of the coming of the *Geula* and *Moshiach Tzidkenu*.

*In tribute to the memory of R' Yaakov Rosenheim זכר צדיק לברכה, we are pleased to publish several selections from his voluminous writings, in English transla-*

*tion, in the hope that a new generation which does not have access to his works, will better appreciate the profundity and the depth of this fallen leader of Israel.*

## *Tisho B'Av... A Festival?*

AMONG THE VARIOUS REGULATIONS FOR THE LITURGY of *Tisho B'Av*, distinguished by their simplicity and far-reaching effects, every one of us has certainly noticed the amazing provision that on the Ninth of Av the day of the deepest national mourning, *Tachnun* is omitted, in astonishing similarity to festivals and days of happy memories. One might perhaps think that this amazing fact could be explained in a similar way to a reverse provision that, for example, during the days of *Chol Hamoed* no wedding should take place, so that the national joy of the festival should not be diluted by a personal *simcha*. In a similar way, one

might think, the sad feelings expressed by *Tachnun*, based in their major part on the consciousness of sin and moral incapability of the *individual*, should not mingle with the huge stream of *national* mourning. However, the Talmud and Midrash in no way explains the omission of *Tachnun* on the Ninth of Av by some principle like *אין מערבין אבל באבל* but they quote a verse from Jeremiah's Lamentations in which he classifies the day of our national disaster as a *moed*, i.e., a festival, *קרא עלי מועד לשבור בחורי*, “He hath called a ‘solemn assembly’ (*moed*) against me to crush my young men.” It is therefore a festival that this black

day of annual national mourning is called—this day which weeks before makes every sound of joy die on our lips; which quenches the lights in our homes and houses of worship, and makes us sit down on the ground, bewailing our lost pride.

A simple linguistic consideration might perhaps offer a solution to this puzzle of calling *Tisho B'Av* a festival. The word מועד the root of which is יעד determining assembling; finding each other, as demonstrated by Rabbi S. R. Hirsch זצ"ל, means simply a place or time in which "G-d finds Himself together with His people." Thus every day bringing us that sense of nearness to G-d, making us feel His presence coming out to us from behind its cloak of natural laws and accident, is a מועד, a day of Divine presence in our life, and therefore—a festival.

Had accident governed the history of Israel, had the reason for the breakdown of Judea and its *Bais Hamikdosh* been rooted in the fact that in nature the materially weaker is subdued by the stronger, then the day on which we renew our awareness of that historical event with all its dreadful consequences, would be filled with the thought of the abandonment of the individual and the nations to the malice of a blind fate. No glimmer of festivity could then have fallen into the darkness of such a thought.

It is, however, because Divine Providence, deciding

our fate, is expressed also in His wrath; because the Ninth of Av had already been determined as a fateful day for all time, as early as a thousand years ahead, before Israel's tribes had ever entered the Holy Land; because in the repetition of all great catastrophies in Jewish history on that same day, there lies the strongest negation of all "accidental occurrence," and the strongest proclamation is voiced of our profound security in the reign of our G-d—it is thus that the Ninth of Av is promoted to the degree of a *moed*, a day of Divine presence, and, all mourning notwithstanding, it becomes a festival.

An echo of this concept can be detected in a profound saying of our Sages in *Midrash Eicho*, commenting on the verse השביעני במרורים הרוני לענה, "He has filled me with bitter herbs, he has sated me with wormwood." The first part of this verse is interpreted as relating to the night of Pesach (bitter herbs) while the second part is connected with night of *Tisho B'Av*. On that first ליל שמורים, the outstretched arm of G-d was raised in punishment over Egypt and in salvation over the Jewish people; in both cases demonstrating His nearness. In the same way, we feel in the punitive verdict of the Ninth of Av, the eternal Providence of G-d, the same concept makes the mourning of the Ninth of Av become a supporting staff for the Jewish people in its long journey through the *Golus*.

## War and Eternal Love

IT IS A PROCESS OF PERPETUAL CHANGE THAT THE ideals of the generations continuously mature and wither. Men of vision and men of art, philosophers and heroes, become at one point or another, focal points around which the entire striving of the era is concentrated. It is out of adoration for these great personalities that this climate of consensus—hardly to be described in words—arises, which represents the real content, the true character of a cultural era. The exploration of the creation of such consensus may well be considered as the noblest task of modern historical studies.

However, far beyond all that continuous change of history, our Jewish lore is for us a treasure of eternally living ideas. Whatever gushes into life from the original source of its truth, may be broken by the variety of life's events into a seven-colored light, but in its true being it remains only one: a revelation of the One and Only.

*"The Lord will wage war with Amalek from generation to generation. The Lord is a Man of War, The Lord is His Name."*

These words have resounded in our ears from the very outset of Jewish nationhood, and are still resounding in Jewish prayer-houses, just at the time when the

first messengers of spring are announcing the redemption to come, and also when the soul of the individual, still frozen and stiff from winter's frost, is ready to open up to receive the message of love from the month of Nissan.

Indeed, the would-be-sages of various nations are here to add also the warlike mood of the day of *zachor* to their cunningly invented fiction of the martial "National Divinity" of the Jews '*ad majorem gloriam*' of their own saviour. To them, of course, it is a "self-evident" truth that the G-d of the 'Old'—maybe too old 'Testament'—is a "Man of War."

They have no idea of the plentitude of visions facing the knowing Jew through the very name of G-d. No idea of the unlimited strength of the glory of love poured into the heart of the Jewish individual through the four-lettered Divine Name of the "attribute of mercy" מדה הרחמים. Not only through its traditional interpretation, but also through a thousand unequivocal Biblical passages, this name of the Almighty has acquired significance as the symbol of the highest love, which has become a principle of the world. It was not in vain that this very name, the "feared and dreaded," brought to the erring, sinning, home-longing son of man, at the most magnificent moment of the Jewish

year, the message of salvation by the never-lost love of G-d.

Thus, it is the strongest antithesis one could think of when "ד" is hailed by the Torah as a "Man of War," and when, for His name's sake, the call of war is voiced. It seems that this very position of battle and war within the realms of Jewish life, is an important token for their Divine truth.

From the aberrations of many a hypothesis of science, some lasting truth is certainly emerging, and much of what in its day had been a threat to the teachings of religion, will at long last prove to be a bridge to truth.

One of these ideas, is the evaluation of war as a means of moral elevation, not war for its own sake, but war against the evil which is endeavoring to penetrate everywhere, and the victory over which is the highest moral goal.

A world-outlook based on science is, of course, unable to find the dividing line between the profligate struggle for power and pleasure, and the moral battle against the immoral, against the enemy of life.

This is only in the power of Him who holds the blueprints of the world's dynamics in His Hand, who puts the sword into the hand of His people where and when the moral purposes of the world's progress demand it, and who, nonetheless, at the same time, excludes every resemblance to the sword from His sanctuary, where the very stones of the altar—unhewn and untouched by iron-tools—give evidence against the work of the sword.

The G-d of Love is a "Man of War," and out of the roar of the battles filling the history of the world, a

complete Divine Throne is being built, on which eternal love reigns.

Until such time, however, only the call of G-d can decide for the Jew whether battle or love is imperative. Also in the battle of ideas—which are still a thousand times mightier than all economic or material factors of history—bleeding wounds are opening, and it is often difficult to use the sword when duty calls for fight. Still "to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken—than the fat of rams." And yet "rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as idolatry and madness."

THEREFORE, WHEN THE GREAT EXULTING OVERTURE of the Jewish spring is accompanied by the rough flourish of war against Amalek—this contradiction should not perplex us. No revealing poet has ever created the conditions of life by which we could be carried through our existence. It is not with illusions that we should frolic over the abysses of life. He whose Seal is Truth, who has created both spring and winter, life and death, harmony and discord, bright clarity and insoluble mysteries of the universe, He is also the Creator of that microcosm which we call His Torah. It is in the light of that Torah that this battle finds its justified place and—its end in world history. To the mind of him who is awakened by Torah, a bright day in the future is shining, when "the Name will be complete and the Throne will be complete," when over the world which will have achieved the moral perfection of being a Divine Throne, the pure Divine love will shine in endless, everlasting power.

## The Tchebiner Rav

זכר צדיק לברכה

MANY WERE THE TITLES bestowed upon him throughout his lifetime until the 10th of Cheshvan when he was called to the *Yeshivoh Shel Maloh. Gaon, Chosid*, living embodiment of purity of character and refinement of soul, *Rabbon Shel Yisroel*, one of the greatest disseminators of Torah in our time—all of these distinctions—most men are worthy of only one or two—were all fitting descriptions of the late and sainted *Tchebiner Rav*, R' Dov Ber Weidenfeld. זכר צדיק לברכה.

It is said that Torah invariably finds its way back home. The *Tchebiner's* father R' Yaakov Weidenfeld, זצ"ל at the age of thirty was already known as one of the great *poskim* of Galicia, with a reputation for the

speed with which he replied to questions put to him. "I stand with one foot on the ground, the other on a coach," he writes in one *i'shuva*, and in another, "Your letter has just this moment arrived." Of the thousands of responsa he wrote on every branch of Torah, only a small number were published after his death at the age of fifty-four.

R' Dov Ber was thirteen years old at his father's death, but he had absorbed a great deal of his learning and many saw in him the sharpness and broad scope of his father, which together with his phenomenal memory, already showed promise for greatness.

For over twenty years he stubbornly refused to accept a communal position, and dedicated all of his



R' Dov Ber Wiedefeld

time to study of Torah. His wife provided the family's livelihood by operating the coal business which had been left to her by her father. Although the *Tchebiner* was officially registered as a "businessman" it was well known that his real "business" was study of Torah. When he was thirty years old he was asked to resolve an important halachic question and he wrote in reply, "While the needs of my business really do not permit me to study the matter, I have nevertheless stolen some time to do so," and thus the "businessman" replies to a *shaylah*.

"Whoever runs away from honor," the Sages tell us, "will find that honor pursues him." In one of the responsa of the famous R' Moshe Arik ז"ל, he makes his decision conditional on the agreement of the "*Gaon MiTchebin*," who was not yet officially rabbi of Tchebin. Already, outstanding young *B'nai Torah* from all parts of Galicia were coming to Tchebin to hear Torah from R' Dov Ber. (In Galicia there were no formal yeshivos; in each community young men studied in the various *Botai Midrashim*. Where there was a rabbi who was an outstanding scholar, he would take these young men under his wing and lecture in Talmud for them. The local students lived at home; out-of-towners "ate days," i.e. they would take their meals at the homes of various townspeople who were proud to have a *ben Torah* at their table. R' Dov Ber gave all of his spare moments to these young men, a number of whom grew to be *Gedolim* in their own right.

The end of the first World War found Galicia desolated and the Haskalah making greater inroads in Jewish life, and when the leaders of Tchebin urged him to become their *rav*, R' Dov Ber saw an obligation and an opportunity to strengthen Torah. From the day he became the *rav* of the city, Tchebin came to be an important outpost of Torah in the post-war period. The yeshiva entered a new phase and from this point onward was one of the great Torah institutions which thrived in Eastern Europe between the two world wars.

### *Outstanding Authority*

Rabbis and scholars who could not find the answers to questions put to them, would turn to the *Tchebiner*. The coming of the age of technology brought with it many questions which required great dexterity in treating fine points of *Halochah*, and the *Tchebiner* in his time became the outstanding authority in responding to Jews loyal to Torah who turned to him for enlightenment. Where others failed to find precedent in the Talmud or Shulchan Aruch for questions that appeared to be entirely novel, the *Tchebiner's* ability to plumb the depths of a *gemmorah*, a *Rashi*, or a *Tosphos*, or to relate one section of the *gemmorah* to another seemingly unrelated, made it possible for him to arrive at a solution to the problem with such clarity that none could dispute his conclusion.

The *Tchebiner* had his own unique approach to learning. He sought understanding in depth of the particular *Gemmorah* being studied, together with the comments of *Rashi* and *Tosphos*, other *Rishonim*, and *Achronim*. In addition to this concentration on the specific text, he felt it necessary to relate the text to citations from other sections of *Gemmorah* in the spirit of the axiom: "The words of Torah are 'poor' in one place and 'rich' in another;" that is, one text may treat a subject superficially and another text will treat it in more detail. This methodology had a two-fold purpose: to contribute to the development of the talmudic mind and to round out the learning process by arriving at a determination of the *halochah* in the question being studied.

From all over Poland and Galicia and even from Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Rumania, students came to the yeshiva. The town of Tchebin could not absorb more than a hundred students, but they were a most select group—highly intelligent and with a rich background of study in their youth. The *Tchebiner* was not only deeply concerned with their progress in Torah learning, but equally so with their behavior in their relationship with their fellow men. By his own personal example he drove into their hearts the recognition that a *ben Torah* must be an example for others and bring about *Kiddush Hashem* not only in his Torah study but also by his conduct in his home and in public.



Even as Rosh Yeshiva and *Rav* of Tchebin, R' Dov Ber still tried to curtail his communal responsibilities, but responsibilities somehow were thrust upon him, and when, for example, the famous R' Meir Shapiro ז"ל passed away, he agreed to take a hand in the administration of Yeshivas Chachmei Lublin and often traveled to the yeshiva to assist in setting up the study programs.

In Tchebin itself the yeshiva was growing, though it still had no central building and no office. Only in the years before the Holocaust did the need become evident for a dormitory to house the many students who came from outside Tchebin. In 1935 plans were drawn for a yeshiva building which would include dormitory rooms, and dining facilities. These plans never materialized; the Holocaust wiped out Tchebin, and among those who died were the *Rav's* two sons and their families.

R' Dov Ber managed to make his way to Siberia where he spent a year, and then to Bukkara, where he continued to be *Marbitz Torah* for three and a half years. When the borders were opened he went immediately to Eretz Yisroel.

Even in Eretz Yisroel, the *Tchebiner* retained his reluctance to take part in communal matters, but the Torah yishuv soon recognized him (together with the *Chazon Ish* and the *Brisker Rav*) as one of the great *poskim* of our day.

The *Tchebiner* was an active participant in the *Moetzes Gedolei Hatorah*. When the holiness of the Jewish people was threatened, as in the attempt to conscript women into the military, the *Tchebiner* let his voice and strong influence be heard. At all opportunities he emphasized the need for organized efforts to defend the glory of Israel.

Shortly after his arrival in Eretz Yisroel, the *Tchebiner* acceded to many requests that he reopen his famed yeshiva in Jerusalem, which he called *Kochav MiYaakov* in tribute to his father. After humble beginnings the yeshiva has grown in its facilities and in the number of students.

Following the death of the *Chazon Ish* and the *Brisker Gaon*, the *Tchebiner* became the foremost authority in Torah life, and the *rabbon* of all Jewry. In spite of his sensitive soul and soft nature, he was a mighty warrior in the battle against those forces which threaten Torah.

As in Tchebin, so in Eretz Yisroel, his days and nights were spent in the *Daled Amos Halochoh*. Eighty-five years of his life—from the day he reached understanding until his last breath—were dedicated to study of Torah.

His memory is forever enshrined in the three volumes of his *Dovev Maishorim* and in the *Tchebiner Yeshiva Kochav MiYaakov*, which assure for him as glorious a share in the future of *Klal Yisroel* as in its past.

## emphasis . . . ours

*Under this heading we will publish from time to time selections from various sources, with little or no comment, which we feel will be of special interest to our readers. Readers of THE JEWISH OBSERVER are invited to send us clippings which are deemed to be appropriate for this section. Where words appear in italic—unless otherwise noted—the emphasis . . . is ours.*

### Another "How To" Book?

. . . Children take to prayer naturally. And adults used to. But nowadays, grown-ups seem terribly self-conscious about the matter of addressing the Almighty.

It is no problem when you davven in Hebrew. You say the words and you don't feel awkward about it all.

But modern Jews do not seem to have the same facility of reciting words of prayer in English. Many a mother professes that she can't comfortably say the words of the prayers. And fathers are even worse.

Fathers have often told their rabbis that they can't conduct a Seder, for example, because they cannot

bring themselves to the mood needed to articulate the liturgical passages in the Haggadah.

So we need badly an adult book on how to pray. Such a volume might point out that praying can be cultivated; you merely have to get used to it . . .

Everyone wishes for something. Everyone knows there is room for improvement. Everyone senses that extra fortitude can be acquired with an effort. That effort is prayer, which can be spoken without bombast, without a special kind of tone, but easily and naturally.

The more you get your feet wet, as it were, the more at home you are in the ocean of prayer. As a starter, you might join your youngsters in a bedtime prayer. I didn't like those I read, so I wrote this one, which you might want to try with your children tonight.

It goes like this: "As I go to sleep tonight. I pray to You with all my might, Help me to be gay and bright, Always be my parents' delight, Teach me to enjoy what's right." Follow that with the Shma . . .

DR. SAMUEL SILVER

The Baltimore Jewish Times


*And shake well!*

# Jew vs. Jew

An air of unreality marked the protest demonstrations that broke out when West Germany Ambassador Pauls presented his credentials in Jerusalem last summer. As Israeli police swung their clubs against the

crowd, one elderly man cried: "Why do you do this? We're Jews, too." Another, struggling with four policemen, lost his yarmulka, or skull cap. A policeman paused, picked it up, replaced it on the demonstrator's head, and then resumed the fight.

THE NEW YORK TIMES MAGAZINE  
October 31, 1965



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# Says Reform and Zionism "In Need of Repentance"

The following is the bulk of a release issued by the American Council for Judaism, reporting an address in which a leading Reform theologian makes some damaging charges against Reform and Zionism. Were there such a creature as Jewish journalism, this release would have been recognized as "hot copy" worthy of a front-page story, no matter how strongly any editor disagreed with what Petuchowski had to say. It is mute testimony to the sterility and inadequacy of the so-called Anglo-Jewish press that—as far as we have been able to determine—not a single newspaper other than the Boston Jewish Advocate carried this story. The Advocate, interestingly, used a digest of the release provided by the Jewish Chronicle News Service of London.

JENKINTOWN, PA.—October 24—A leading Jewish theologian today declared that Zionism and Reform Judaism are both "in need of repentance"—Zionism for substituting nationalism for G-d and Judaism, and the Reform movement for substituting secularism for the "kingdom of priests and the holy nation."

Dr. Jakob J. Petuchowski, professor of rabbinics and Jewish theology at Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, Cincinnati, the Reform rabbinical seminary, examined the "self-definition and commitment" of American Jews. . . .

Eastern Jews who ceased practicing Judaism, said Dr. Petuchowski, constructed "philosophies of Jewish existence which regarded the Jew as a natural entity, on the analogy of the various European nationalisms. . ." Thus, said the speaker, "a radical break had been made with the Jewish past" and "the religious leadership of East European Jewry, as a whole, greeted the rise of modern Zionism with unconcealed hostility." German rabbis also opposed Theodor Herzl, founder of Zionism, said the speaker, noting that in Jerusalem today "it is precisely the ultra-Orthodox Jews who are opposed to the philosophy of Zionism and to the Zionist State."

The Western Jew made his own radical break, said Dr. Petuchowski, when Reform rabbis declared in 1885, "we consider ourselves no longer a nation, but a religious community." Until the eighteenth century, said Dr. Petuchowski, "it would have been unthinkable for any Jew to separate the so-called 'religious' from the so-called 'national' elements of Jewish existence." The Biblical definition, said Dr. Petuchowski, is "a theocracy, with G-d as the true Head of State, and with Israel as a 'kingdom of priests and a holy nation.'"

Both Zionism and Reform Judaism rejected the coming of the Messiah which had been a cardinal dogma of traditional Judaism, said the lecturer. Zionism insisted that man can pull himself up "entirely by his

own bootstraps," while Reform Judaism substituted "the belief in automatic progress and social meliorism," said the theologian, neither assuming that "man's actions are constantly under the judgment of G-d."

If Rabbi Akiba, whom the speaker described as "one of the architects of Classical Judaism," were to return, "he would not know what to make of those—and they are running a supposedly 'Jewish state'—who speak of the Jewish People and of Jewish Culture while denying the existence of G-d and Israel. But he would not be able to understand those others who, avowing Judaism as a religion, see red whenever, in a Sunday School

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See THE SKELETON IN THE CLOSET on page 23.

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textbook or elsewhere, they come across the two words 'Jewish People.'"

. . . For the first time in history, said Dr. Petuchowski, Jews have "the right not to be a Jew." In redefining the manner in which they shall remain Jewish, their Judaism must be "more than the creation of the present moment, and must add the dimensions of time and space to those of the 'here and now.'"

[He] related a conversation with a prominent Reform Jewish layman who felt that an *intensive* Jewish education of *two or three afternoons a week* would "interfere" with his children's recreation. Dr. Petuchowski said that while he was sympathetic to these needs of American Jewish children, he could not "weep for the missed baseball game" but did "weep for the state of mind for which everything else in the world is more important than Judaism." He reminded his audience that "there were times in our history when Jews risked their very lives" for a chance to study the Torah. . . .

Dr. Petuchowski . . . observed that with the wide choice of types of Judaism in America, caution be exercised against the "manufacture" of a new kind of Judaism, which people might term "do-it-yourself" Judaism, because it has little connection with the Judaism of the past. No matter what our self-definition as Jews implies, he went on, some definite commitments are required.

Dr. Petuchowski asserted that Judaism calls for love of our neighbors, for being good citizens, ethical businessmen, and advocates of social justice. *But these important ingredients of Judaism, he pointed out, are not "distinguishing features which make a person a Jew . . . rather than a Christian, a Unitarian, a Stoic, or a Social Democrat."* Judaism is a combination of all of these things fashioned into a pattern which reflects the Jew's basic attitude to life and to G-d. . . .

# "Who Is a Jew"?

JEWISH IDENTITY, compiled by Boruch Litvin, edited by Sidney B. Hoenig / New York 1965 / Philipp Feldheim, \$6.75.

THIS VOLUME BRINGS BACK TO LIFE THE ISRAEL government crisis of 1958 which centered around the question "Who is a Jew?" The facts were simple: The government wanted to introduce regulations according to which children of mixed marriages would be registered as "of Jewish nationality" even though according to Halachah they were not Jews. Religious Jewry violently protested that there existed no Jewish nationality apart from Torah, and that the government sought to give a new, secular meaning to it. In the end the offensive regulations were withdrawn, after the government had taken the unprecedented step of consulting 45 "sages of Israel" who almost all urged acceptance of the Halachic definition of a Jew.

Mr. Litvin, staunch fighter for the interests of Torah Jewry, whose name is inseparably connected with the struggle for the sanctity of the synagogue in this country, perceived the importance of making the letters of these "sages of Israel" available to the public. The result has been this volume before us, produced with great dedication and vast expenditure of energy and money; it is a document of great historical significance—not however, of concern merely to the student of the past but to all of us today.

In the first place, as Dr. Hoenig, editor of the volume reminds us, the controversy over the definition of Jewishness is still simmering in the State of Israel. It may come to a head again at any moment and we should therefore know clearly the implications and dire consequences of the secularist approach—as well as remember that it can be defeated if religious Jewry refuses to compromise. So many Israeli problems could have been resolved in the spirit of the Torah if the Mizrahi had shown the same forthrightness which it displayed in the 1958 crisis.

Beyond this, however, the letters have a great deal to teach us. This is obvious in the case of the *Gedolei Hatorah* who were consulted by Ben-Gurion and responded with clear restatements of the Torah's teachings. But it is also true, in a very different manner, when we turn to the letters of those men who had no claim to being heard on this issue at all. Ben-Gurion's list of "sages of Israel" included leaders of Conservatism and Reform as well as university scholars and journalists, many of them completely unfamiliar with Judaism in its true sense; none of them qualified to

pass on Halachah. Yet their letters too, are instructive.

Their reasoning is often twisted, and their misinterpretations of Jewish history and law ludicrous; what can we do but grimly laugh when we read Dr. Freehof's sober statement that, in Reform Judaism, "*in our reception of converts, we are not content merely with the ceremonies, but take a month or more in instruction.*" (p. 125). Yet, despite all this, we can perceive in most of the letters of these men a spark of loyalty and feeling for time-hallowed teachings, and an awareness that any solution of the crisis contrary to Torah would be utterly destructive to Jewish unity and survival.

There were of course many logical reasons, non-religious in nature, clearly spelled out in this volume, in favor of the Halachic definition of Jewish identity: (1) Israeli constitutional law assigns all authority in religious matters to the religious courts, and any effort by the government to define "Jewishness" is therefore unconstitutional; (2) such an effort, moreover, represents government interference in religion, which is illegal; (3) no question of "freedom of religion" arises, for you cannot claim the privilege of belonging to a religion unless you abide by its provisions; (4) religious affiliation is not something which the political authorities should grant as a reward or a device for national interests; (5) ultimately, no favor is done to those who are wrongly registered as Jews if the religious community will not accept them and the religious courts will not marry them.

All these considerations, however, were not strong enough to sway the advocates of a secular "Jewishness"—and it is therefore apparent that the majority of the non-Orthodox, in supporting the Halachic definition of Jewishness, were moved to some degree by a residual sensitivity to traditional teachings and to the dangers inherent in their rejection in this case. This is a fact of great importance, for it demonstrates that Torah Jewry must continue to press its teachings as forcefully and as widely as at all possible—its words will be heard because of the nagging sense of uncertainty that hangs over those that are alienated from Torah. It is only when we abdicate our claims or, worse still, when we extend recognition to a Torah-less Jewry that they take over leadership.

There are, of course, some letters—a small minority—that oppose the Halachic solution to the question of Jewish identity. Even these letters teach us something. They are mostly written with a great deal of venom against "the Rabbis" and an utter disregard

for the consequences of their rash recommendations—and their authors are Israelis. The views of Supreme Court Justice Hayim Cohn are of course well known, as well as the reason for his hatred of the Rabbis—the fact that he himself entered into a marriage forbidden by Israeli law and for which he and his wife-to-be had to travel to Cyprus. Yet his derogatory remarks about rabbinic law and his distortions of Torah teachings are paralleled—to a lesser degree—in some other letters and we are forced to conclude that Israeli conditions have bred in some circles a particularly virulent spirit of rebellion against our past which poses immense dangers and against which more and new approaches are necessary.

It is of course clear that, despite these lessons to be learnt from the varied letters in this volume, it is a source of the deepest regret to us that Ben-Gurion should have submitted an enquiry about a fundamental question of Torah and Jewish survival to “non-religious persons, leaders of the Reform movement, who are self-styled rabbis” (p. 73 from the letter of Rabbi S. R. Pereira). This was sharply protested by all the *Rabbonim* involved: “*We [cannot] pass over in silence an action hitherto unknown in Jewish history, that you have deemed it proper to submit what is patently a basic Halachic question also to persons who are neither qualified nor competent to pronounce on matters of Jewish law, and some of whom do not owe allegiance to traditional Judaism*” (pp. 67-8, from the reply of the British Chief Rabbinate).

Rabbi Maimon curtly remarked that “*I have no connection with many of these sages and place no store about their wisdom*” (p. 20) whilst Chief Rabbi Toaft of Rome protested “*against a scandalous state of affairs . . . that the arguing regarding a fundamental problem of Jewish law is addressed to persons lacking the slightest competence to render legal decisions, individuals deemed Jewish sages by your Excellency, among whom are included even desecrators of the Sabbath*” (p. 79).

This point, upon which also Rabbi Aaron Kotler concluded his letter, is surely a fundamental one. It is therefore a great surprise to this reviewer to see the editor of this volume completely insensitive to it. The book’s dust jacket proclaims proudly that “*every wing of Judaism is represented*” and the editor’s introduction calls this volume “*an encyclopedia of ‘thinking in Jewish values’ as pronounced by the greatest contemporaries and keenest minds in the present world. . . .*” (p. 9). It “*contains the opinion of the greatest minds—rabbinic sages and academic scholars—in contemporary Jewry. It is the first time in Jewish history that such a ‘living anthology’, stemming from a live question has come forth. This fact, in itself, is of historic value*” (p. 6).

In 1819 forty *Rabbonim*, headed by Rabbi Akiva

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## Eternal Existence

**“It is only through Halakah that we can preserve the purity of our people and its uniqueness, its perfection, its unity, and the promise for its eternal existence.”**

**Rabbi Joseph Kahaneman**

**“The Chief Rabbinate is not a legislative body for new religious law. This is not within its power. Rather, it determines what the Halakah says, and it is authorized to promulgate the Halakic solution to any particular problem.”**

**Rabbi S. T. Zevin**

## Voice From Another Camp

**“It is true that with the incomparably refined instruments at our disposal today, it is possible to arrive at results more quickly than did preceding generations. However, this applies naturally to those branches of life in which experimental material serves as the basis. But in the solution of spiritual problems it is thought rather than experience that is decisive. An instrument that is capable of accelerating human thought is not in existence at present; nor is it probable that it ever will be . . .**

**“There will be those who argue that the notions accepted by the Ancients are not in conformity with the spirit of our time. Again, there is no need for profound investigation to become convinced that our times are among the darkest, and most probably the darkest ever of human history, an era when the sins of mankind brought the entire human race to the brink of destruction . . . Can anyone argue seriously that the Torah, bearing the imprint of divinity, should be adapted precisely to the spirit of such an era?”**

**Y. Schachter**

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Eger, Rabbi Mordechai Benet, and the *Chasam Sofer*, published *Ele Diverei Habris*, a collection of responsa against the spreading Reform movement. Wherein, then, lies the historic first that the editor speaks of? In the uncritical lumping together of Torah scholars and Reform rabbis? Unfortunately this false note is echoed repeatedly in the volume; thus an article by Arye Newman speaks of “*the considered thought of thinking Jews, each one of them a leading personality and mind, on the fundamental problem of what constitutes Jewish identity.*”

There are a number of other articles appended to the forty-three ‘responsa,’ some of them of considerable interest and value (such as the exchange of letters between Rabbi Simon Dolgin of Los Angeles and Ben-Gurion), others that could well have profited from pruning (such as the official Mizrahi account of the



# second looks at the jewish scene

## *The Skeleton in the Closet*

WITH ALL OF THE CROSSCURRENTS and wide divergence of opinion in American Jewish life, the American Council for Judaism enjoys the most universal condemnation. It is not our intention to shed any tears for the Council; certainly not to rise to its defense. The Council has a most vocal public relations program, especially considering the small number of Jews they speak for.

However, we have often wondered why the Council—given its radical position—is always the target of massive criticism, and alternately, the victim of deadening silence. We think we may have found the reason.

One of the great Jewish characteristics which is sadly lacking—but not too evidently missed—in Jewish life today is the capacity for straight thinking. Clear thought is the main road to understanding of Torah, and muddled thinking is a major roadblock.

We have constantly questioned the logic of reformers, secularists and nationalists who ask so much of Jews, for which their own ideologies offer no basis. Why, for example, the great concern by Jewish nationalists and secularists over inter-marriage and assimilation? We rarely hear Americans of French or British or Russian descent bemoaning the increase of marriage of their offspring outside their ethnic group.

Here, we think, lies the cause for the dread that the Council for Judaism engenders in the hearts of those Jews who have tried to create a Jewishness not based on Torah. The Council stands accused of an act of *reductio ad absurdum*; they have

naively followed the path of reform and secularism to the very end of the line and in so doing betray the absurdity of Jews and Jewishness without Torah.

For example, in reacting against the extreme nationalism of the Zionists and supporters of Israel, they ask in the September issue of the monthly newsletter issued by their Religious Development Department:

“Does it not make more sense to our young people when we teach the declaration adopted by Reform rabbis at Philadelphia in 1869:

The Messianic aim of Israel is not the restoration of the old Jewish state . . . but the union of all children of God so as to realize the unity of all rational creatures and their call to moral sanctification.

“It is patently self-defeating for educators in Judaism to look upon young American Jews as prospec-

tive manpower for a political state which is foreign to them.”

Having compromised the purity of their Philadelphia program by accepting Zionist nationalism, Reformers make a ready target for the discomfiting logic of the Council. And it is difficult to disagree with the Council when they contrast the High Holiday “call” issued by the Zionist Organization, which makes no reference, they claim, to Rosh Hashonoh or Yom Kippur, with their own group’s statement which quotes “some profound spiritual truths in the Talmud.”

Of course the beautiful logical construct of the Council suffers from one fallacy: The Jews are a people by virtue of their unique relationship with their G-d, and Eretz Yisroel is their land because He gave it to them. The American Council for Judaism is American Jewry’s “skeleton in the closet,” because by its absurdity it focuses on the absurdity of Jews without Torah.

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## "I'm Afraid to Look"

SHORTLY BEFORE HIS DEATH, GEORGE Bernard Shaw was asked his opinion of television. "I have none," was his reply, "I'm afraid to look." His fears were well founded; television in America has been described by its less-severe critics as "a great wasteland." While psychologists and educators are divided on TV's ill effects on children—whether or not it induces delinquency and anti-social behavior—there is more or less common agreement that the "idiot box" has lowered our cultural level and leveled our cultural norms. (It would be a most severe indictment of American culture to believe that TV accurately mirrors the state of our cultural life.)

Although the airways which carry TV into American homes are policed by the federal government, they have been mercilessly exploited for commercial gain. The promise held out of television being a great potential for education, has long

been forgotten and those channels that attempt to use the airways for constructive purposes are the tiniest minority and have been reduced to passing the hat to meet their budgets.

With this experience in mind, one might think that the State of Israel, which has some serious social and cultural problems unique to its own circumstances, would be reluctant to introduce yet another irritant; yet it appears that Israel will soon have its own television network. Its pro-

ponents argue that TV is needed to weld the multi-cultured nation into one people, but given the strong American cultural influence in Israel, TV is likely to create a common bond of mediocrity.

TV's proponents further argue that since Israelis are already watching programs from neighboring-Arab countries this should be counter-balanced by a domestic product. However, we fail to see any great advantage in Israelis watching American Westerns with Hebrew dialogue dubbed in rather than Arabic.

## Orthodoxy and the Y

THE WILLIAMSBURG YMHA HAS been the showplace of the New York Federation's desire, in the words of the Y's Executive Director to "serve all Jews, whatever their points of view." (THE JEWISH OBSERVER, Oct. 1965)

For a while there was some uncertainty as to the position of Williamsburgh's Chasidic community. Now the *Hisachdus Harabbonim*, the Satmar rabbinical group, has spoken in loud and clear terms. In a pamphlet distributed in Williamsburgh and posted in various public places, Williamsburgh's Jews are warned of the dangers inherent in permitting their youngsters to par-

ticipate in the various programs especially tailored for Chassidic Jews.

The statement enjoins participation in any Y program and even entering the building.

YMHA officials have now been given an unexpected and sharp reply to the question posed by the Y's Executive Director, "... how do you serve a group that does not accept you, your agency or your principles?" The answer, at least as far as one group is concerned is—you don't! (See LETTERS TO THE EDITOR on the next page for some reader reaction on the subject of Y's and Jewish Centers.)



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# Letters to the Editor

## ORTHODOXY AND THE CENTERS

To the Editor:

The diametrically opposed views posited by Rabbi Bernard Weinberger and the editors of THE JEWISH OBSERVER on the highly explosive issue of Torah Jewry's relationship to the Jewish Center movement were well reasoned but the most relevant aspect of the problem was excluded in the discussion. Although cognizance was taken by the editors that Jewish Centers are "dedicated to educational, cultural, or social objectives . . . (and) they seek to gain sway over all families in the community," they seem to regard the Center, as does Rabbi Weinberger, merely as a "social service agency," to be qualitatively distinguished from "other such agencies." It is on this miscalculation that I wish to dwell.

In my opinion, the Jewish Center movement has developed an ideology and philosophy which warrants our considering it as *another wing of Judaism*. While it is true that the ideology has

not often been articulated, nor has it entirely been crystalized, both the national and local leadership do *not* regard the Center or "Y" as an agency which must take seriously the requisitions and demands of the religious bodies within the community, since it regards its program as *equally* viable and *equally* essential as that of Orthodoxy, Conservatism or Reform for the survival of Judaism in America.

It should not come as a surprise, therefore, that we find *Chillul Shabbas*, Trefe dinners and a secularistic orientation characterizing life at the Centers, often in bold defiance of a goodly portion of the communities which the Centers purport to serve. This is "Jewish identity" as they have defined it. I am not suggesting that the Center movement be deprived of its right to offer a formula for Jewish survival, but it has become manifestly clear to me that they are wearing the mask of a social service agency while, in fact, they are functioning within the framework of a particular ideology, one which is inimical to the objectives of Torah Jewry. Under these circumstances the Williamsburg Y in the Center movement should be viewed much the same as an Orthodox *minyan* using the facilities of a Reform Temple, and our Halachic frame of reference should be adjusted accordingly.

It is only because Centers are subsidized by funds raised by the general Jewish community that they take on the image of an agency which is not competitive with any of the existing Jewish organizations or synagogue bodies, ideologically or programatically. This perspective is distorted and ought to be revised . . . now!

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To the Editor:

It was with great interest that I read the beautifully written article of Rabbi Weinberger about the YMHA's and Jewish Centers.

I however was appalled at the editor's anti-social attitude toward Federation. On one hand you see no wrong in accepting the social services as Foster Care, Family Service, etc. But on the other side of the ledger "we cannot give our endorsement or join in the responsibility for them as long as the authority of the Torah is not fully accepted."

If you don't believe in shouldering your financial obligations toward Federation then please be man enough not to accept its good offices and I say move out to some desert island and live as anti-socially as you wish. However so long as you wish to avail yourselves of Federation's good social services, please have the *Derech Eretz* of not biting the hand which feeds you.

SIDNEY ADLER  
Lawrence, New York

*Mr. Adler misunderstood the sentence he quotes, it did not refer to the question of finances at all, but meant to stress that we cannot take responsibility by endorsing or sharing in the administration of Federation services unless Federation learns to abide by the authority of the Torah or unless at least the particular agency in question is totally turned over to the authority and*

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*control of the Torah-true. It should go without saying that any services which we can use in the meanwhile certainly have to be paid for by those who use them.*

Editorial Board

#### A WORD OF CAUTION

To the Editor:

Reuben E. Gross, in the September issue of THE JEWISH OBSERVER, drew attention to the neglect, hitherto, of rabbinic responsa as a source of information about Jewish and even general life in the past, and he warmly praised Professor Agus for mining this tide of

information for his work, *Urban Civilization in Pre-Crusade Europe*.

There is no question about the usefulness of responsa for the historian but the problem in the past, as Professor Agus himself pointed out in his introduction to his work, has lain not only in the neglect of responsa but just as much in the difficulties that their correct interpretation poses; many historians have used responsa in the past, but for a variety of reasons—lack of rabbinic scholarship, use of unreliable secondary sources, or preconceived theories—have failed to come up with the right interpretations.

This word of caution is particularly

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in place because Professor Agus himself has not been able to avoid all the pitfalls of his subject-matter. There are a considerable number of inaccuracies in his book, both minor and major, of which the following are some examples:

1) Professor Agus quotes a responsum of *Rashi* (vol. 11 pp. 794-6) according to which *Rashi* refused on the last day of Pesach to accept a present of cakes from a non-Jew or even to have him deposit it with a [non-Jewish] neighbor, "for as soon as he thus deposited it, it would become *Chometz* and no Israelite would be permitted to eat it or derive any benefit whatever from it." Professor Agus concludes that "ordinarily *Rashi* would eat bread from a non-Jew."

Frankly, a rash conclusion on a matter of general historical interest can be forgiven; no great consequences will follow from such an error. But here we deal with a *halachic* conclusion, presented to an audience that does not likely have the possibility of checking it, and therefore special caution is indicated.

In actual fact, *Rashi* merely restated here the twofold prohibition on *Chometz*, and there is no evidence at all that ordinarily he would have "eaten" the cakes rather than "derived benefit" from them (e.g. by giving them to non-Jewish servants which, according to Professor Agus, were employed in even the humblest Jewish home at that time).

It so happens that a passage in the *Sefer Hayoshor* of *Rabbeinu Tam*, the grandson of *Rashi*, (which is quoted in *Chasam Sofer, Chulin* 46) makes it very clear that *Rashi* considered the bread of a non-Jew forbidden. But even without this, the responsum quoted does not warrant the conclusion drawn.

A similar instance is found in Vol. II, p. 730, where Professor Agus quotes *Rebbeinu Gershon* as refusing to repay his salary as teacher for a period when he was sick, and comments: "It is important to note that at this early period the right of the hireling to receive his wages during the period of his illness was already affirmed." Without going into the entire complex *halachic* question, it may be sufficient to quote here the *Remoh* (*Choshen Mishpot* 333, section 5): "... and likewise a teacher who becomes sick has his salary deducted for the period of his sickness; however, if (he) already received

his pay, some say that he does not have to return it" (compare also *Keneseth Hageddah*, ch. 333, subs. 16). Obviously the dictum of *Rabbeinu Gershom*, read in this context, does not support the wide interpretation put upon it by Professor Agus.

2) Much more far-reaching and therefore dangerous in its implications is a statement in Vol. II, p. 459 that is also repeated in a number of other places (such as 461, 471 and 499) and represents a keystone in the author's thinking: "The responders held the opinion that the power of the *Herum* flowed directly from the people; that the authority of Joshua, the great Sanhedrin, King Saul, and of any other ruling body, was derived *exclusively* from the people; and that *no other source of authority existed*" (my emphasis). There is plenty of support for the first point—the power of the organized community to act in a judicial manner—but not a shred of evidence in any of these responsa or elsewhere to warrant the conclusion that the community is the *only* and *exclusive* source of legal authority in Judaism.

Professor Agus goes so far as to say that "the legal authority to confiscate property and to pronounce the ban against an offender possessed by (Ezra and Nehemiah), did not flow from . . . the fact that they possessed full ordination and presided over the great *Sanhedrin*. No! This legal authority and this competence was possessed by Ezra and Nehemiah solely and exclusively, because it was granted to them by the people of Israel." (p. 490) ". . . the rights and the powers of the (Sanhedrin) stem exclusively from (Israel) and therefore cannot exceed the prerogatives of (Israel)." (p. 461) On the other hand, any community can "grant to its leaders similar authority and similar legislative and judicial competence" as did the Jews of Ezra's time (p. 499).

How untenable Professor Agus' theory is can be seen, for instance, from the fact that the authority of the community courts is limited by the overriding authority of the "godol Hador," whether the community has accepted him or not. Moreover, the medieval community courts could not expropriate property to one party's benefit and another party's harm, unless communal or religious needs were involved, or unless unanimous agreement of all community mem-

bers was given; this limitation, however, did *not* apply to the Sanhedrin and all other courts which possessed ordination—how, then, can one claim that all communal authority always and exclusively flows from the community itself? (Incidentally, Professor Agus takes the "unanimity rule" as a proof that Judaism recognizes inalienable "private rights of the individual" (vol. II, p. 430 and 469), without explaining why an ordained court was not bound by it!)

3) The author's particular view of the role of the organized community may have been the reason for his complete misunderstanding of an important responsum to which he gives an interpretation at variance with *Halochoh* (vol. II, pp. 522-4). This responsum, ascribed by some sources to *Rashi* and by others to *Rabbeinu Chananel*, seeks to reconcile the Biblical injunction to admonish one another, with the Talmudic rule, "Let them rather transgress unwittingly . . .", and explains that the latter rule only applies where the transgressor was not aware of doing wrong

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and would continue to sin even if he were told.

Professor Agus expresses his preference for one version of the responsum that starts with the words "It is true that the prophets and the sages were commanded to admonish the children of Israel . . ." and, pointing out that the responsum always speaks of the admonishers in the third person plural, he claims that the responder dealt with the rights of a community to reproach individuals living outside its limits and meant to rule that only "the prophets and sages were given the authority to admonish sinners; implying that the individual Jew, or even a group of such Jews organized in a community, was not given such authority." According to Professor Agus the author clearly ruled *against* the possible thought that "all Israel was authorized to rebuke and admonish one another."

Even if we accept Professor Agus' version of the responsum, his interpretation is clearly untenable. Even if the responsum were written entirely in the third person plural, this would not be evidence at all that it discusses commu-

nity rights and duties rather than those of the individual; in fact, however, it does speak of the *admonisher* where Professor Agus translates *admonishers*, and a concluding passage completely omitted by him speaks of "one who sees another transgress deliberately, where he is commanded to protest." But is it really necessary to prove that the biblical obligation to admonish the transgressor is addressed to every individual and not just to prophets and sages, or to the communal authorities? Even if we wanted to consider this responsum a reply to a community question, we could say at most that community leaders might have a special practical concern with when to apply the rule "Let them sin unwittingly . . ." to individuals in and outside the community; but they certainly had no monopoly on the basic duty to admonish sinners.

In conclusion, let me say that Professor Agus has certainly succeeded in opening to the interested reader the world of the responsa. From the host of historical details there emerges an interesting and inspiring picture of a community adhering to the highest intellectual and religious standards. On commenting on some weaknesses of his book, it is not my intention to detract from this achievement, but to point out the need for extraordinary caution in the handling of responsa—after all, a most important part of our Torah literature.

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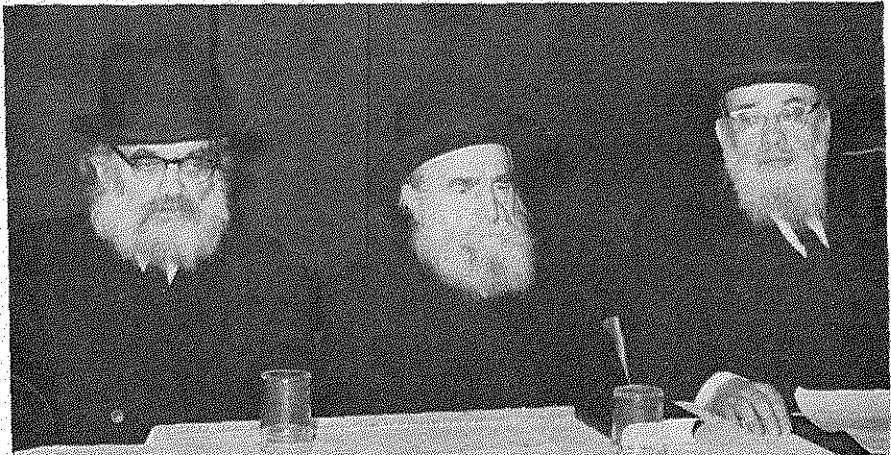
# Annual Convention of Agudath Israel Stirs Great Enthusiasm

ORTHODOX JEWS WERE CALLED UPON to "take independent Orthodox action without bowing to the whims of a dominating secular leadership" in a resolution adapted at the closing session of the 43rd National Convention of Agudath Israel of America. Over 1,000 delegates and guests from every part of America participated in the 3-day conclave from November 11th through the 14th. It was the largest convention in the organization's history, and apart from the practical plans and programs charted at the working sessions, it was one of the most dynamic demonstrations for authentic Judaism in the annals of American Jewish history.

All Orthodox groups were urged in another resolution to convene an emergency conference in order to issue "a united public manifesto to the Jewish masses delineating the fundamentals of Judaism and the dangers that Reform and Conservative Judaism present to the very survival of our people." The convention was marked with a warm spirit, as Orthodox Jews from every walk of life—Torah authorities, professionals, businessmen, educators and students met together in a common purpose. A significant indication of Agudath Israel's growing roots in American soil was the large attendance and active participation of young adults who had grown up within the American Agudah movement. The Shabbos program was infused with a deep spirit of traditional Shabbos holiness inspired by the stimulating addresses of the most famous *Roshei Yeshivos* of the North American continent.

AMONG THE DISTINGUISHED *Roshei Yeshivos* who addressed the convention were Rabbi Moshe Feinstein of the Mesifita Tifereth Jerusalem and Chairman of the *Moetzes Gedolei Hatorah*; Rabbi Yaakov Kamenetzky of Mesifita Torah Vodaath; Rabbi Yaakov I. Ruderman of the Ner Israel Yeshiva (Baltimore), Rabbi Mordecai Gifter of Telshe Yeshiva (Wickliffe, Ohio), Rabbi Shneur Kotler of Beth Medrosh Gevoha Lakewood, New Jersey) and Rabbi Yaacov Weinberg of the Toronto Ner Israel Yeshiva.

Rabbi Nachum Perlow (*Noveminsker Rebbe*) spoke on Thursday evening and Rabbi Moshe Horowitz (*Bostoner Rebbe*) presidium member and chairman of the Administrative Committee of Agudath Israel, greeted the guests on the eve of Shabbos. Rabbi Levi Yitzchok Horowitz of Brookline, Massachusetts spoke on "The Challenge of the Jewish Student on the College Campus."



Rabbi Yaakov Kamenetsky, Rabbi Moshe Feinstein and Rabbi Yaakov I. Ruderman at the Convention of Agudath Israel.

The roster of the speakers included Rabbi Leiser Levin (Detroit), National Chairman of the Convention, Rabbi Mendel Chodorow, Rabbi Z. Eisenstadt, Rabbi Yitzchok Z. Berenfeld, Rabbi Yehudah Altusky, Rabbi B. Z. Frankel, Rabbi Harry Bronstein, Rabbi Isaac Small (Chicago), Rabbi Eliezer Silver (Cincinnati), Rabbi Jeruchem Gorelik, Rabbi Chaim Z. Kruger, Rabbi Leiserowski (Philadelphia) and Joseph Friedenson, editor of *Dos Yiddishe Wort*.

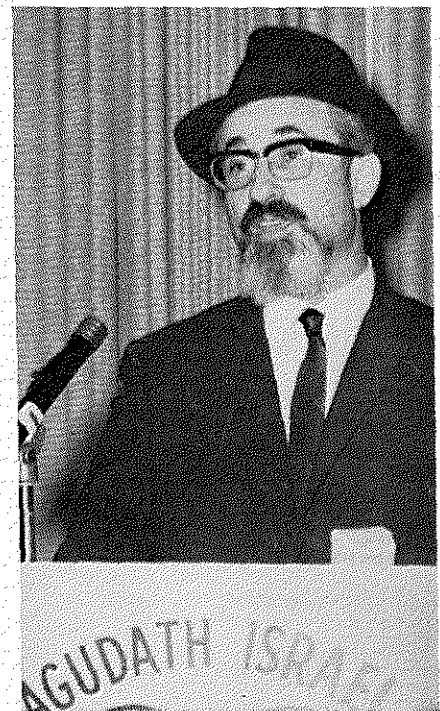
Among the session chairmen were David H. Turkel, Julius Klugman, Joseph Borenstein (Detroit), Rabbi Shaye Koenigsberg (Winthrop, Mass.), Hershel Rubenstein (Toronto), William K. Friedman and Chaim Hertz.

CONVENTION DELEGATES WARMLY RECEIVED the 20-page annual activities report presented by Rabbi Moshe Sherer, executive vice-president of the movement, which spelled out the significant progress made by Agudath Israel during the past year in its manifold areas of activity. Rabbi Sherer pointed to the organization's role as a pace-setter in galvanizing independent Orthodox action in representing Jewish affairs, as a major accomplishment of Agudath Israel, and clarified the new program that Agudath Israel will launch to broaden the benefits to yeshivos from government aid programs.

Dr. Isaac Lewin, chairman of the American section of the Agudath Israel world organization, extended greetings. A special memorial session was dedicated to the recent loss of two famed personalities who had played major roles in Agudath Israel for over a half century: *Moreinu* Yaakov Rosen-

heim, a co-founder and international president of Agudath Israel, and Rabbi Dov Berish Weidenfeld, the famed *Tchebiner Rov*.

An exciting aspect of the convention was the report and analysis of the Israeli elections by Member of Knesset Rabbi Shlomo Lorincz, who flew from Israel to the convention in order to address the gathering. His report was enthusiastically received and helped clarify the entire background of religious strife



Rabbi Shlomo Lorincz, M.K.

in Israel, a major issue explored at the convention. Other issues which received major attention were Jewish policy regarding Russian Jewry, the expansion of Agudist activity among Jewish youth, Orthodox Jewish representation before governmental agencies, and inspiring a deep sense of commitment to authentic Judaism among the Jewish masses.

The new administration was called upon by the gathering to launch a public relations campaign to expose the anomaly of Torah education being represented through agencies which include Reform and Conservative educators, such as the Jewish Education Committee of New York. "Just as we affirm that there are no 'three wings in Judaism,' we affirm that there can be no 'three wings' in Jewish education, which must be based upon total subjugation to Torah as revealed at Sinai," the resolution declared.

THE CONVENTION ALSO GREETED THE beginning of the third year of publication of THE JEWISH OBSERVER, citing it as "a major contribution to the education of the broad masses about Torah views on current Jewish issues."

The convention received greetings from leading personalities throughout the world, including Rabbi Yitzchok Hutner, Rosh Yeshiva of Mesifita Rabbi Chaim Berlin. A taped greeting was heard from Rabbi Yitzchok Meir Lewin, world chairman of Agudath Israel.

A Presidium was elected, consisting of Rabbi Moshe Feinstein, Rabbi Mordechai S. Friedman, Rabbi Benjamin W.

Hendeles, Rabbi Moshe Horowitz and Rabbi Chaskel Besser. Michael G. Tress was re-elected Administrative President and Rabbi Moshe Sherer, Executive Vice-President. Rabbi Leizer Levin was elected National Chairman of the Regional Vice-Presidents.

The convention closed on a note of hope and enthusiasm, with the delegates returning to their homes inspired with the firm belief that a new era of Orthodox activism was to begin.

### ZEIREI AGUDATH ISRAEL ELECTS NEW ADMINISTRATION

THE NATIONAL CONVENTION OF ZEIREI Agudath Israel of America, which took place simultaneously with the convention of Agudath Israel, elected the following new administration: Moshe Rosenberg, President; Yitzchok Fink, Chairman of Executive Board; Shlomo Teichman, Berel Edelstein, Daniel Retter, David Grossman, Sheftel Neuberger and Chaim Amsel, Vice-Presidents; Bin-yomin Silver, Treasurer and Emanuel Strauss, Secretary.

The spokesmen of Zeirei Agudath Israel who extended greetings at the main public sessions of the Agudath Israel convention were Shaye Schonbrun, Moshe Rosenberg and Sheftel Neuberger (Baltimore).

### N'SHEI AGUDATH ISRAEL CONVENTION

THE WOMEN'S AGUDIST ORGANIZATION, N'shei Agudath Israel, conducted very

interesting sessions for women, chaired by Mrs. Esther Knobler. Mrs. Josephine Reichel, National President, rendered her annual report and told of the success of N'shei in establishing a new Day Care Center in Zur Shalom near Haifa, and expansion of their Beth Yehuda Orphan Home in Rishon L'Zion.

The women's gathering was addressed by Member of Knesset, Rabbi Shlomo Lorincz, and Rabbi Boruch Borchardt.

Miss Frumie Heszkel gave the women a glowing report of the recent Bnos Leaders convention held in Lakewood, New Jersey. A capacity audience was inspired by the showing of a color, sound-film from *Eretz Yisroel*, depicting the projects of N'shei Agudath Israel, which was introduced by Mrs. Pesca Friedman.

### BNOS CONVENTION IN LAKEWOOD RESULTS IN NEW GROUPS

The first annual convention of Bnos Agudath Israel, held on the weekend of November 5th in Lakewood, New Jersey, was a huge success. Although most of the representation was from the various branches of New York, there were also delegates from Cleveland, Detroit, Baltimore, Boston, Los Angeles, and Montreal.

The convention was addressed by Rabbi J. Silbermintz of Yeshiva Toras Emes, Rabbi Shmuel Bloom of Yeshiva Ner Israel in Baltimore, Rabbi Uri Hellman principal of Bais Yaakov High School of Boro Park, and Rabbi B. Borchardt, executive director of Zeirei Agudath Israel of America.

A highlight of the Melave Malke was an address given by Rabbi Moshe Sherer, executive vice-president of Agudath Israel of America. Mrs. Josephine Reichel, president of N'shei Agudath Israel extended greetings from the women's Agudist organization. The chairladies were Chanj Gluck, Chaya Weinberger, Yocheved Korb and Frumie Heszkel.

The convention was organized by the National Council of Bnos Agudath Israel, of which Frumie Heszkel is chair-lady. As a result of the convention's enthusiasm, a large number of new Bnos branches will be established, including one in Wisconsin.

### SEFER HAZIKORON

A *Sefer Hazikoron* in memory of R' Yaakov Rosenheim will shortly be published by the Orthodox Library, a division of *Dos Yiddishe Vort*. It will contain a thorough biography of the great Aguda leader, his major addresses, excerpts from his writings, and a series of appreciations of his life and works.

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