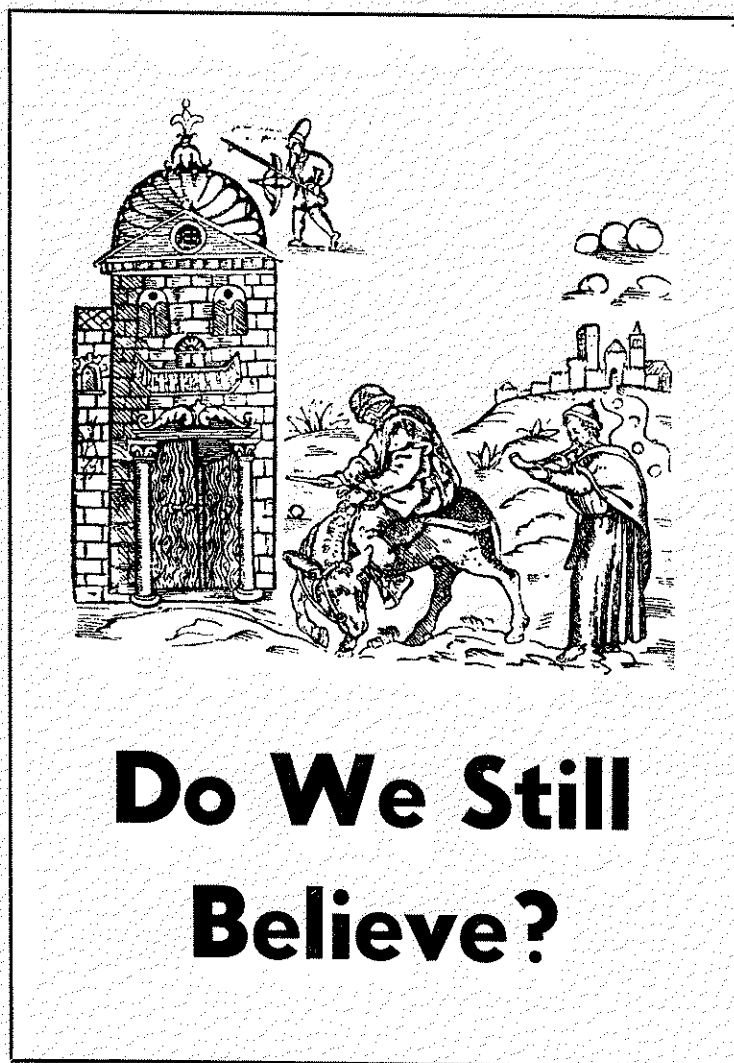


THE JEWISH OBSERVER

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The Bankruptcy of
"Jewish Education"

•
A Shooting
in Detroit

•
The I and Thou
of Sinai

•
Prayer
and
Jazz

THE JEWISH OBSERVER

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The Bankruptcy of "Jewish Education"

A New Flurry of Conferences Reveals Old Weakness

AMERICAN JEWRY HAS discovered Jewish education. After decades of neglect by federations and community councils and after an almost constant flow of articles, papers and surveys on assimilation, inter-marriage and the alienation of American Jewish youth, it has suddenly occurred to the Establishment that there may be a relationship between the two phenomenon. Since we last reported on the subject, (*The Spectrum Theory and Jewish Education*, January, 1966) there has been a flurry of activity in the field: The American Association of Jewish Education held a four-day conference in New York City; the Council of Jewish Federations and Welfare Funds has established a Committee on Federation Planning for Jewish Education which will seek wider support (funds) for Jewish education in the total "community planning process"; a report has been issued of the proceedings of the World Presidium of the World Council on Jewish Education, and Dr. Isidor Margolis, former director of Mizrahi's National Council for Torah Education has been appointed executive director of the World Council.

Moving force of the Council is Dr. Nahum Goldman, who told the opening session of the conference that they have received a budget of \$60,000 from the Memorial Foundation for Jewish Culture (N. GOLDMAN, PRESIDENT) which received a grant from the Jewish Conference on Material Claims Against Germany (N. GOLDMAN, PRESIDENT). Dr. Joseph H. Lookstein, acting president of Bar-Ilan University in Israel, and Coordinator of the World Council, in his opening statement acknowledged a grant of \$20,000 from the Jewish Agency for Israel, and chided the Agency and the Council's constituent bodies for not being as generous as the Memorial Foundation.

After reporting on the organizational achievements of the Council, Dr. Lookstein closed his remarks in a somewhat apologetic tone reminding the assembly that, "We are only fifteen months old. Paraphrasing the Psalm—fifteen months in our sight are but as yesterday when it is past. The Messiah of educational redemption may be slightly delayed. But we are convinced that he will come."

Yehuda Hellman, Director General of COJO, the World Council of Jewish Organizations indicated that the World Council intends to become the exclusive spokesman for Jewish education on the world scene. He reported that Catholic and Protestant educational bodies are represented on the United Nations Economic and Social Commission (UNESCO), and that he had "taken the liberty" of discussing with UN officials the affiliation of the World Council as the Jewish representative body.

A Shortage of Teachers

Dr. Alvin Schiff of Yeshiva University told the conference that there is a need for 900 new teachers in Jewish schools in this country. Of between 100 and 150 young people who become eligible for certification by the National Board of License, no more than 10-15% actually become career teachers. Throughout a long paper on "Teacher Recruitment and Training Programs," Dr. Schiff painted a bleak picture of the difficulty in interesting young people in teaching in Jewish schools, and the inadequacy of those who already are teaching. In several instances, he somewhat disdainfully refers to the yeshiva student as a potential recruit.

The other sources of recruitment are the *yeshivot gedolot*, the rabbinical seminaries which ordain between 150-200 young rabbis each year, a large percentage of whom go into teaching. Five of the larger seminaries in cooperation with Torah Umesorah, have recently organized teaching training programs for their students. In addition, there are the Beth Jacob teacher seminaries which supply about 50 teachers a year, particularly for the Beth Jacob movement.

By "simple arithmetic" Schiff concludes that "there is an annual deficit of at least 500 teachers." Who fills these gaps and is entrusted with the religious education of thousands of Jewish children? Schiff's answer is as interesting as it is candid:

These positions are filled by a variety of "re-

cruits" . . . a) the American version of the *lo yutzlah*; b) the enterprising young person with some Judaic knowledge eager to supplement his income; c) public school teachers with varying degrees of Jewish education; d) young people with Hebrew background desiring a modest income while they prepare for more lucrative and more intellectually satisfying experiences; e) young girls with some Hebraic knowledge biding their time before marriage; and f) young religious men with intensive emotional attachments to Judaism and equally strong traditional background, who are not professionally trained to do anything else, and to whom teaching is a kind of "path of least vocational resistance."

"Why is there a shortage of trained teachers?" Schiff asks. Because, "First there is a shortage of inspired young people in the Hebrew high schools [and] secondly, there is a shortage of inspired students in the teacher training schools."

After years of conferences and ballyhoo, surveys and scholarly papers, and the proud professionalism of the Hebrew-speaking teachers and educators, we are now told that teaching and teacher training is a big bust and an even bigger bore; but again the salvation lies with the yeshiva bochur, who has appeared on the American Jewish scene in spite of the "Jewish educators," and in spite of their failure to train a new generation of teachers, not to mention ordinary, practicing Jews.

"What is needed is the recruiting and training of young scholars in the *Mesivtot* for teaching careers. It is for this very reason that the Master's degree program in Jewish pedagogy has been initiated by the Department of Religious Education of the Ferkauf Graduate School of Education.* This program, however, serves a small segment of the *Mesivta* population since it is limited to ordained rabbis who have (our emphasis) a *collegiate undergraduate background*."

To paraphrase the above paragraph, "We are prepared to take advantage of the *mesiras nefesh* of the men who built and maintain yeshivos in this country; we are prepared to offer a select number of their *talmidim* a career in Jewish education to fill the gaps created by our own failures, but . . . they'll have to clean themselves up, get rid of some of the naivete of the yeshiva bochur, and come to us with their undergraduate diplomas in hand, if they want to teach in our schools."

What of the graduates of the "non-denominational" teacher colleges? . . . here too Schiff is most candid:

One of the serious shortcomings of the teacher colleges is that they do not produce teacher-scholars. . . .

* Yeshiva University's Graduate School of Education which is a non-sectarian institution—Ed.

The 1958 study made by the National Committee on Teacher Education and Welfare indicates the Hebrew-teacher-college graduates are rarely engaged to teach classes beyond the 4th grade in a yeshiva. It is the exceptional graduate who is equipped knowledge-wise to teach in the upper elementary grades and in the junior and senior high school levels of the Jewish day school. My own experience between 1956 and 1965 with teacher placement in the day schools of greater New York via the Department of Yeshivoth of the Jewish Education Committee, adequately bears this out. On the other hand, the *musmachim* of the various *mesivtot* who are employed to teach the upper grades are not adequately prepared—neither Hebraically nor pedagogically.

Not Ready For 4th Grade

Schiff admits in essence, that the graduates of the teachers colleges, in spite of their sound Hebraic and pedagogical training, are essentially illiterate, and not equipped, as he puts it, "knowledge-wise," to teach beyond the 4th grade. The graduates of the yeshivos, who obviously are well-equipped to teach the higher grades, he dismisses as being deficient in Hebrew and pedagogical techniques. He chooses to underplay the major advance made by Torah Umesorah in establishing teacher-training programs in conjunction with various yeshivos in New York, Baltimore and Cleveland.

The disdain for the yeshiva bochur manifest by Dr. Schiff, comes through more clearly in a statement by Dr. Elazar Goelman, Dean of Gratz College in Philadelphia:

The proliferation of European-style *yeshivot* has turned out in recent years a number of rabbis or pre-rabbinical students who spill over in allied areas. Some are religious functionaries in synagogues and the rest of them are the non-productive "Lumpenproletariat." Basically these young people are knowledgeable in Bible and Rabbinics. They also have an unequalled [by graduates of Gratz College?—ed.] love for Judaism and abiding faith in Jewish survival. This enthusiasm should be channeled into Jewish education by attracting this human element to our schools. Naturally, special courses would have to be set up for this Yeshiva group in Hebrew language and teaching methodology. The idea of utilizing and productivizing (sic) these people is not new. It has been suggested before. However, no one has really taken steps to make this human reservoir a continuous source of supply for the Jewish teaching profession.

Dr. Goelman too ignores the teacher-training program of Torah Umesorah, perhaps because he realizes that "the unequalled love for Judaism and abiding faith

“...the Messiah of educational redemption has not yet arrived.”

in Jewish survival” may keep “this human reservoir” from serving as a “source of supply” for the kind of Jewish education the teacher colleges represent.

Lest there be any doubt as to the type of education the learned doctors have in mind, it is quickly dispelled by the critique of Dr. Eisig Silverschlag, Dean of the Hebrew Teachers College in Boston:

It is my contention that . . . we are not developing adequate teachers [among other reasons, because] our curricular offerings are antiquated. Two examples: Too often a class in Bible in 1965 will not differ from a class in Bible in 1465: the same text *Humash*—the same commentary *Rashi* with a dash of *Ibn Ezra* or a pinch of *Seforno*. The great proliferation of knowledge in the field of Semitics archaeology, epigraphy is ignored. Courses, in a subject like the Dead Sea Scrolls are non-existent. . . .

AT THE MEETING OF THE American Association of Jewish Education, which now claims to represent the “three branches” of Jewish education, and is the U. S. wing of the World Council, the delegates heard a report of a study of Jewish adolescents. The youngsters told the interviewers that they found that their Jewish education was boring and “takes the form of religious entertainment, utilizing tranquilizers, and the instruction is frequently dull and vapid.” The solution: “Radical changes are needed in the Jewish school curricula,” and a national youth commission has been created to “study” the situation and come up with realistic changes. What remains unsaid is, that the young people whose opinions were reported, were not students of day schools or yeshivos; they received their training at the hands of teachers who were equipped with Hebrew and pedagogical methodology at the various non-denominational Hebrew-teachers-training colleges.

If the teachers are illiterate and bored, what can be expected of their students? Do the educators seriously believe that a “pinch” of the Dead Sea Scrolls and “Semitics archaeology, epigraphy” to replace *Rashi* and the *Seforno* will save Jewish education from boredom or change the attitudes of the youngsters polled, who in the same study indicated that 41% favored mixed dating, with 10% undecided, a statistic which the director of the study agreed is “alarming”?

In a sense, the new awareness of the failures of Jewish education in the past, and the willingness on the part of federations to seek wider support for Jewish education, represents a wholesome change in American Jewish thinking. The pitifully small allocations by federations for education in comparison to, for example,

funds expended for community relations, have been amply documented in these pages (*Education: The Step-child of Jewish Budgeting*, September, 1965). Yet, it appears that the World Council on Jewish Education and the American Association of Jewish Education (which is the American section of the World Council) appear to be preparing to cure the patient with larger, and more costly doses of the same medication which has brought Jewish education to its present bankrupt condition.

“Kinds of Nuts”

The magazine section of the *New York Sunday News* on April 3rd of this year featured a picture story of a seder for children conducted by the Union of American Hebrew Congregations (Reform) which is one of the new constituents of the AAJE. One of the pictures shows a child—with a yarmulka on his head—with an adult who is bareheaded, and the caption explains that the man “explains the significance of the different kinds of nuts used in ceremonies of seder.” How could we better illustrate the bankruptcy and illiteracy of “Jewish education,” and how could we better demonstrate the absurdity of lumping together such drivel with—*lehavdil*—teaching Torah to Jewish children. Rabbi Lookstein is quite correct: “the Messiah of educational redemption has not yet arrived.” The learned doctors of Jewish education have stated the problem well, they even know the answers. The true Jewish teacher must have an “unequaled love for Judaism and abiding faith in Jewish survival.” The Jewish teacher must *believe* himself, before he can teach belief to the *Yiddishe neshomos* who are placed in his charge. The Hebrew-teachers colleges have not, nor can they produce such teachers. Only a *Ben Torah*, saturated with love for Torah and Torah learning can communicate Torah to the Jewish child. The benevolence of Dr. Goldman and the Jewish Agency will produce more conferences and scholarly papers, but they cannot produce a single Jewish teacher adequate to his sacred task.

“Jewish educators,” who have yet to lose their cynicism and disdain in relation to the *Ben Torah*, would do well to wake up to reality: a rejuvenated Torah community in America has left them behind. The phrase “Talmud Torah,” which to many an American Jew conjures up an image of a ramshackle building populated by bored teachers and even more bored students, has regained its true meaning in Jewish life. *Talmud Torah k'neged kulom*; Talmud Torah alone is the Messiah of educational redemption, as truly as it will bring the redemption of all Israel.

A Shooting in Detroit

"We tend to forget, in all our talk about the alienated and uncommitted youth, that much of their unrest in our time comes not from indifference to meaning, but from a desperate search for meaning . . ."

AMERICANS HAVE an insatiable thirst for violence and bloodshed, and the press is most generous in feeding this need. But few care to examine the significance of these acts of violence. One of the few astute observers of America's moral breakdown is Max Lerner, professor at Brandeis University and newspaper columnist. In a column in the *New York Post* (2/14/66) headed SEEKING MEANING, Lerner writes as follows:

Several months ago in Detroit, I took part in a symposium with a rabbi on the theme of the problems of adolescent youth. He spoke movingly, with elegance of phrase and considerable bite in his thought. His stress was that young people today, having broken with the religious tradition of their fathers, had no sense of the past and no continuity with it: they were thus, despite their social zeal, the uncommitted.

That memory came back to me when I read that at an interfaith service in a Detroit synagogue a youth of 23, a graduate student in religion, had jumped up in the middle of the service, brandished a revolver, delivered an emotional tirade against the congregation, pumped two bullets into Rabbi Morris Adler and then shot himself. It was the Rabbi Adler I remembered from the symposium on youth.

The shots were fired by a distraught young man who had been emotionally disturbed for several years. The irony of his case was that he was not uncommitted but overcommitted. His charge

against the congregation was that it had betrayed the true Jewish tradition. His act was the act of a fanatic youth who wanted to draw attention to what he believed to be the betrayal of what he valued. Despite his frantic belief, perhaps because of it, he must have felt empty and alone, and he tried to give meaning and point to his life by seeking to end the rabbi's life and his own.

We tend to forget, in all our talk about the alienated and uncommitted youth, that much of their unrest in our time comes not from indifference to meaning, but from a desperate search for meaning. . . .

Having stated the case most eloquently, Lerner then finds himself caught in a dilemma: "I am convinced that there is no single remedy. Discipline, in the sense of finding a code frame of limits for the young which will be more realistic than the received codes, is certainly one remedy, yet all talk of codes is derided. Social reconstruction, especially to deal with the radical uprooting that our era is witnessing, is another: yet that too requires from us more in the way of commitment and cost than we are willing to pay. Inner discipline, in the organizing of identity, is a third remedy, but an extremely elusive one. Thus we wander between violence that we reject and remedies that we are unready to embrace."

Mr. Lerner recognizes the need for a disciplinary code, but his own liberal inclination—he blames it on others: "all talk of codes is derided"—refuses to permit him to

believe that there can be a meaningful code of moral values. Lerner's ambivalence has significance for the alienated young Jew; for the secular Jew who is tiring of his secularism, and to every Jew who still carries the flame of Sinai in his heart. The Talmud, centuries ago told us, in commenting on the words of the Torah, *chavrus al haluchos* [the words of the Decalogue] were INSCRIBED on the tablets: "Rather than *chavrus* (inscribed) read *chavrus* (freedom), no man is truly free as the man who commits himself to Torah and Mitzvoths."

" . . . so Reformed "

A young Jewish humorist recently said something of a similar nature—perhaps unwittingly, perhaps not. When he wanted to be married he couldn't find a rabbi who would agree to marry him—since he is an agnostic and his bride-to-be an atheist. "But finally," he joyfully concluded, "*they were married by a Reformed Rabbi—so Reformed in fact that he was a Nazi.*" (The *New York Journal-American*, January 18, 1966).

Perhaps some will find this allusion offensive, but hasn't our young Jewish brother aimed his barb at the heart of the matter? If there is no code, if we reject the "freedom" of the Law, then we have rejected all sense of discipline. The Jew who feels free to erase the Shabbos from the tablets can then more easily remove the restriction against murder.

THIS BRINGS US to a problem which has disturbed us for many months.

New words and catch phrases enter the Jewish vernacular quickly and easily. Jewish leaders, who find that their efforts to "reform" and to "update" Judaism constantly fail to win the expected allegiance of Jewish youth, are always anxious to explain the continued apathy and lack of concern for things Jewish. The most recent efforts in that direction, stimulated by the involvement of Jewish youth in social action movements, is to declare that we have failed to make Judaism "relevant" to the times. The phrase-makers have decreed that unless we quickly make Judaism "relevant," the defection of Jewish youth will continue unabated.

Shall Judaism Live?

Now how do we go about making Judaism relevant? In the Winter 1965-66 issue of *American Judaism*, a Reform publication, an editorial poses the question, SHALL JUDAISM LIVE OR DIE? It will not die, the editorialist writes, because courageous efforts are being made to make it live. What are some of these courageous efforts? At an assembly of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations held last November, it was voted that:

- An armistice in Viet Nam be called for;
- converts be sought to Judaism from the unaffiliated;
- there be a probing into Jewish theology; and that
- sex education be introduced in religious schools.

These statements and resolutions are typical of the innocuous platitudes that are fed to the American public. They do not reflect authentically Jewish religious values and are usually a regurgitation of the secular, materialistic philosophies of our time which are themselves at the root of the social upheavals they are supposed to cure.

What is the relevance of Torah in our computerized, missile age? . . .

What is the relevance of Torah today in our computerized, missile age? . . . the very same relevance which our father Avraham discovered when he stood alone — as each of us stands alone today — in a pagan world that clutched its gods to its bosom out of fear of existence and was unable to relate itself to the One G-d. Avraham found the relevance of existence — a relevance which became the essence of Jewishness — when he destroyed his idols and stood erect in the presence of his Creator, prepared to take on existence with the help of his G-d.

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Searching For Meaning

Jewish youth today, 'liberated' from the bonds which tie them to eternity, are engaged in a desperate struggle and search for meaning; for the fullness of life; for the experience of love and joy. Liberated from Torah and eternity, they have bartered eternity for the oblivion of narcotics and LSD. They have bartered the joy of traditional Jewish morality for the loss of identity of promiscuity. They have snatched at the thrill of thumbing their noses at society with its codes and restrictions, but this thrill wears thin in the loneliness of a narcotics ward,

and when they are forced to make peace with society in order to survive.

Torah, in a world which thirsts for discipline, which feeds its soul-yearnings with sensual fare, is relevant . . . no, the word is too weak . . . it is more vital than ever before in the history of man's struggle to find meaning in life. It is testimony to the eternity of Torah, to the Wisdom of its Author, that its message for man comes through the morass of transistors, wires and programmed circuits which betray man's futile efforts to 'communicate'; that through these man-made obstacles to understanding, the sounds of Sinai come through with growing clarity.

Lerner quotes Livy, the historian of Ancient Rome, who observes "how when discipline wavered morality first tottered and then began the headlong plunge, until it has reached the present level when we can tolerate neither our vices nor their remedies." There is yet time to save Jewish youth from the "headlong plunge" into nothingness. Those young Jews who have heard the sounds of Sinai, have found meaning and relevance, and the strength to resist man's suicidal attacks on his own identity. It becomes the sacred task of those who hear these sounds to transmit them to their brothers.

MAIR LEVI

Do We Still Believe?

A Classic Statement of Jewish Belief in the Messiah

On rare occasions men emerge in history whose lives mirror their entire age, all its ideals and errors, achievements and failures. Rarer still are those who are chosen, at the end of their pilgrimage through life, to rise above the world and to attain that ultimate wisdom which is above time and circumstance. Hence the greatness of Nathan Birnbaum.

Birnbaum helped create the major Jewish movements of our time: Zionism, Autonomism, Yiddishism. He gave to all of them of his pro-

found humanity and understanding of life. But he passed from one to the other, in search of truth, driven by his inexorably logical mind and incorruptible honesty, until he found his way home to the simple yet sublime teachings of Jewish tradition. It was at the end of his road that he came to write *Gottesvolk* his great manifesto to the Jewish people. Birnbaum rediscovered the teachings of Judaism as they had been cherished, defended, and died for, through the ages. But his challenge was not confined to what he called

“the heathen rebels”; it also addressed itself to the loyal Jew. He saw the most fundamental, and dangerous, aspects of the Jewish problem in the weakening of Messianic fervor among the religious Jewish masses; and in the resulting threat of sterility, stagnation and death.

The above introduction (in an abridged form) and the selection from GOTTESVOLK which follows, are from CONFESSION, published in 1947 by Jewish Pocket Books and the Spero Foundation.

HOW CAN WE ESCAPE FROM OUR GUILT? IT SEEMED TO me, when I first posed this question, that we had, above all, to uncover the source of our failure. This I found in the Jew's attitude towards the Messianic ideal.

It was just this which had captured my attention when I had found my way back to Judaism. It seemed to me to be of central importance in our world-view. G-d had created man as a physical being, and yet had imparted to him of His own spirit. He had let him fail and fall, and yet had given him the knowledge of G-d's existence, will, and glory. He had let him sink into sin, yet had held out to him the ideal of virtue, by which he might save himself. It could not be otherwise, then,—there *must* come a time when G-d will hearken to man's longing to be saved from the tragedy of these contradictions, from the pains of failure. The Divine plan of world government *must* provide for this salvation—otherwise the creation of this strange human race, belonging to our world, yet possessed of a Divine spark of immortality, would be meaningless. The Divine spark cannot remain hidden away in the half-shadow of secluded obscurity but must, one day, illuminate all our life. Just as the world of nature knows of cosmic upheavals, so there will be an upheaval in the realm of human affairs. The ordinary development of mankind can only promote earthly, human values and ideals, but “the end of days” will pass beyond these, to grant to man a “new heart,” the full clarity of a Divinely guided insight into the world, an unquestioning and unquestioned holiness—of knowledge, mercy, splendor.

All this seemed to me natural and necessary. However, I also realized that it can only be a human being, *one man*, who will bring salvation unto humanity. It will be a towering personality to whom G-d gives the greatest mission in world history; with unsurpassed spiritual energy to conquer the souls of millions of men and of their descendants, to redeem each one individually and to bring them all together into the covenant of redeemed humanity.

Yet, I realized, the achievements of this great messenger of G-d cannot but stand in relationship to the human struggle against sin! The blessing of salvation will not come unmerited, it must be gained by human endeavor: by the pains of sin, the struggle with it, the longing to overcome it; by hard labor—through which the towering heights of virtue are slowly climbed.

And finally, I also realized that there has to be *one people* which should march at the head of the nations in this hard struggle. Its selection does not mean the rejection of the other peoples; they can enter into the mercy of G-d by serving Him in other forms, with other symbols; the granting of the Divine Law to the Jews is only the means of pointing out, to them all, the royal road that leads to the Messianic goal. The Jewish people has produced the noblest heralds of holiness, men who attained an unsurpassed spirituality in their craving for salvation; and the man of the “end of days,” who will bring about the supreme, the only lasting achievement of world history, will be the greatest of these men, a son of their people . . .

Messiah or Messianic Age?

I was not surprised to note that pagan Jews, if they did not reject, had crippled this glorious Messianic conception. The idea of a Divinely-sent personal Messiah follows quite logically from the historic sequence of Jewish messengers of the spirit; but there has been put in its place the fiction that the Jewish people as a whole is the Messiah. Instead of the longed-for act of redemption, involving the resurrection of Israel, the liberal-ethical ideal of cultural progress has been set up—to be realized by assimilation and apostasy, stock exchange and journalism—summed up in the phrase of “the special Jewish mission.”

Such views fit perfectly into the picture I have of our modern Jewish pagans. All the more surprised have I been to note that the pious masses, too, no longer have that inspiring faith in the coming of the Messiah which seems to me so vital an element in the Jewish world-view. I have heard them daily proclaim their loyalty to it, and I do not doubt their honesty—but I cannot overlook the legendary color which the Messianic ideal has acquired in their eyes. Above all, I have had to note that in their thoughts and sentiments the belief in the coming of the Messiah is no longer linked to the other great teachings of Judaism; the idea of the Chosen People, and that of reward and punishment. They have become blind to Israel's splendid destiny: *to advance with the Law, through the attainment of holiness, to the coming of the Messiah.* They have forgotten that the mission of the *Chosen People* does not exhaust itself in the observance of the Divine Law but has a threefold content; the Law is the basis of Jewish selection, sanctification is the road which the Jew has to follow, and the Messiah is the goal to be attained by him.

Our pious Jews are apt to think of the Messiah as an isolated phenomenon—to be sent by G-d in token of His mercy, without regard to the merits of the men to whom he is sent. All too often they do not remember that they could bring about his arrival by their merits, by the observance of the Law as a means to their sanctification. In short: they believe in the Messiah, but not strongly enough; their faith in him does not move them to reform their ways, to rise in sanctity. Thus they have condemned themselves to the present state of affairs, in which they are happy and satisfied if they are merely able to live according to the Law. They have lost the revolutionary impatience and the creative ambition which are required to make over a world according to the dictates of the spirit. It is thus that they have become guilty.

Of course, this fact provokes another question. How was it possible that the pious masses lost the true meaning of the Messianic ideal? How could the Messiah shrink for them into a legendary figure, of little signi-

ficance in their world of religious ideas? I do not believe that this development was caused by the inability of the people to grasp the lofty spiritual ideal of a Messiah to be brought by human exertions; the history of the Jews disproves such a view. There only remains the explanation that the Messianic idea has not been sufficiently supported by tangible forms which would assure it a permanent hold on the mind and life of the people. Such forms are necessary, to sustain an idea which offers such a challenge, demands such energies and sacrifices as the Messianic ideal does.

Paganism, in its later stages, pandered to the individual; it thereby ruined the community and, with it, the individuals too. Judaism has disciplined the individual and thus saved him as well as the community. The discipline of Judaism is based on the eternal foundations of its Divine Law (both its Written and Oral parts). In accordance with the spirit and purpose of this Law, the Sages erected “fences” around every one of its provisions, to preserve the pious from unwittingly transgressing them. But in the course of time it has become evident that still more is needed if the Law is to conquer the ages and to turn them to its service; a “fence” has to be erected around the Law as a whole; the entire body of Divine teachings has to be surrounded by rules regulating the varied conditions of life of the community at large, which will prevent it from drifting away from the Jewish ideal and losing its powers of self-sanctification. Moreover, such rules must be supported by practical organs of communal action, which will enable the Law to dominate Jewish life by shaping Jewish material existence in accordance with the Jewish ideal. The absence of such organized communal discipline in subservience to the great goals of Judaism is responsible for the loss of revolutionary Messianic fervor.

The Role of Chassidism

It is true that some efforts have been made to remedy this weakness. Thus, Chassidism represents a faint, almost unconscious recollection of the Jewish task. It never posed the question of “law versus faith,” as some people claim today; it gave even less justification for such an interpretation than the prophets of old Israel. It never was a protest against the religious discipline of Pharisaic Judaism (which pagan Jews love to calumniate). Its struggle for closeness to G-d did not clash with the disciplinary element in Judaism. On the contrary. From its very outset, Chassidism represented a practical attempt to strengthen communal religious discipline, by closely organizing the community around religious leaders, and thus releasing great popular energies in the service of the Jewish ideal.

Chassidism succeeded in teaching the Eastern Jewish

masses an enthusiastic confidence in their spiritual leaders, a social virtue much more human and creative than the so-called independence of modern crowd-man. But the energies released by Chassidism have not been channelled into a powerful stream of Messianic endeavors; nor, indeed, has any organized direction and personal leadership been given to the life of the people as a whole. And what Chassidism did not succeed in, the other sections of traditional Judaism could not achieve either.

Yet this sad state of affairs, the decline of Messianic consciousness, and the absence of communal leadership and planning, should not be taken to indicate an inability of the Jewish people to discharge its task. Such a conclusion is contradicted by the Divine assurance of the ultimate triumph of Israel, as well as by the lonely road which the Jew has walked so far, and by the eternal values which he has created in his struggle with the times. The tenacity he has revealed is but the symptom of intense and concentrated power—held in chains so far, but waiting for a time when it will break its bonds and remake its world. The strength of the Jewish spirit among the Eastern Jewish masses holds out the hope that Jewry may even now, just now, embark upon its greatest spiritual ascent.

Our time calls for deeds. It demands that we rid ourselves of the faintness which besets our Messianic faith—that we make up for old sins of omission, and rededicate ourselves to the supreme goal of self-sanctification.

One thing is therefore needed: if the Messianic faith of the pious masses is uninspired because they do not see redemption as the Divine reward of loyalty and sanctity, they must be made aware of their error and sin—must be awakened to warm, creative Messianic fervor. And another thing is necessary: if the weakness of the Messianic ideal is due to the lack of suitable communal organs for the protection and strengthening of our faith, then communal anarchy must be replaced by the spiritual leadership of the true guardians of the faith. Neither comfort and the ambitions of incompetent men, nor the hostility of the pagan opponents of creative discipline, should keep pious Jewry from evolving within its midst an organized community of *guardians of the faith*, for spiritual leadership and representation. A final demand: if pious Jewry, despite its religious loyalty, has been subject to the persistent and evil influences of so-called modern forms of life, it must resolutely cut itself off from all those forms which endanger the discharge of its lofty mission. . . .

If these demands are fulfilled, we can free ourselves from the threat of stagnation: the atmosphere is created, then, in which we can advance to a life of sanc-

tification. The study of the Law, and the devotion to prayer; creative labor and inspired song; dedication to our tasks and isolation from the confusion of our world—those are the steps leading to the holiness which devotion to G-d can alone produce. Ever more unselfish endeavors to serve our fellow-men in all fields of life, will make us share in the sanctity of Divine mercy. And by striving for beauty and grace, purity and order, we attain the sanctity of Divine glory.

These are the roads of endeavor which lie before us. If G-d wills it so, they will be taken even now; if not, our people will discover them later. But I feel bound to do all I can to gain pious Jewry for them, however hard this may be. As for our pagan Jews of all shades of opinion, some groups among them may well find their way back to the true Judaism—perhaps under the impact of the historic happenings of our time and especially, as I hope, the revitalization of pious Jewry. There are quite a few of those pagans who have always wanted to come back to us, without knowing it themselves. I shall be happy to see them with us—but I am not out to convert pagans. If they so desire, they may cleave to their aberrations (for which, I know, I have a good deal of responsibility). All I have aimed to do in writing this frank and open essay is to take leave from them, and to tell them on this occasion what I plan to do, and that they have somewhat underestimated the strength still inherent in pious Jewry.

I do not want to convert, because I know that many, too many, Jews are so far from us that they will not even hear me—those who were born into apostasy, or those who proudly chose it out of their rebellious mood. I shall not, therefore, be touched by their reaction. They may sympathize; they may be silent; or they may vituperate me. I shall not react. I leave them to their own pursuits. Let them depose G-d every day anew and yet without overcoming Him. Let them go out and “seek” Him in the jungle of their stock-phrases, or pattern Him to their own desire. Let them instigate their petty rebellions, and try to govern the course of history, whilst they are in truth but its street-arabs.* Let them play at a conventional humanity which does not entirely conceal their hunger for might, or their narrowness of mind. Let them crowd the theatres, lecture halls, and newspaper columns, befuddling their own minds. Let them worry about the *Jewish question*, strike the Jewish people from the list of the nations, or cut it to their fashionable pagan pattern. Let them, in short, do all that they, as lost and restless pagans, cannot help doing. It cannot touch me, for I have found my way back to pious Jewry, and I know they cannot succeed: G-d will be G-d forever, and Israel dedicated to Him.

* This essay was written before the Holocaust—ed.

* I.e., urchins—ed.

The *Chofetz Chaim* combined the intellectual genius with which he mastered *Shas* and *Poskim*, with the religious genius which made it possible for him to see and to express the most complex ethical and theological truths in the simplest terms. With the one, he gained the respect of scholars throughout the world who looked to him as a supreme authority in Halochah; with the other he won the hearts of the less learned masses of Jews who looked to him for religious guidance in a difficult world.

For example, he once said that the discovery of the principle of radio transmission makes it easier for us to understand that which we have always known, that one may say something in one place and it can be "heard" in a far-off place. The principle of the phonograph, he continued, contributes to our ability to grasp the notion that man's words—each of them—are "recorded"; that they are not lost in the vastness of the universe. The good that we speak will continue to serve us for all eternity; and the evil which leaves our lips will forever haunt us. He described in simple but graphic terms, the horror of having to listen to a recording of every word we have let drop from our tongues, at some future time of recognition.

It is easy to project how the *Chofetz Chaim* would have reacted to complex computers that store vast amounts of data which they are prepared to spew forth at the closing of a circuit. Much that modern technology has achieved, apart from the serious problems it has created,* gives us insight in

* "In a benevolent, scientific disguise, the age of big-brotherism is fast approaching with possibly disastrous consequences only dimly recognized by recognized by researchers and the public, a mental health meeting . . . was told . . . 'An ugly alliance may be developing between legal-electronic surveillance, scientific research and Government dossiers, according to Dr. Orville G. Brim Jr., a sociologist . . .

. . . a professor of law at Columbia

THE VOICES OF TIME

*What the Chofetz Chaim
Might Have to Say
About Some New
Discoveries*

some small way, into the vastness of the *Ribono Shel Olom's* wisdom. *The Voices of Time,*** a recently published collection of essays on current views of time, brings to mind a new understanding of the universe which offers some insight into an age-old problem: Since the Almighty knows what will take place at any given time in the future, how is it possible for man to enjoy *bechira* (free will) and choose any path of behavior that pleases him? Of course the problem is one that

University, predicted even greater growth for 'surveillance technology.' In addition to wire-tapping and closed-circuit television, he mentioned personality testing, 'truth serums,' brain wave analysis, voice recording and the increasing exchange of information among public agencies."

THE NEW YORK TIMES, April 15, 1966

** Edited by J. T. Fraser / George Braziller / New York, 1966.

cannot be solved in any conventional sense; it touches an area of knowledge which is beyond human ken. Nevertheless, man's new appreciation of time as a dimension rather than as an absolute, can in some small measure help us to grasp what appears to be a hopeless paradox.

We now know that when we observe something happening on a distant planet, it may actually have "happened" some ten years ago. On the other hand, from the perspective of yet another planet, the event may not yet have "happened" at all. We are not here concerned with the many complex problems that this new understanding brings with it; we simply note, as the *Chofetz Chaim* did in regard to radio transmission, that we can now gain a glimmer of understanding into the Almighty's freedom from the limitations of time, and man's freedom to choose his own path in life.

Yet, in spite of man's wider knowledge of the universe, and his success in probing space, man's greatest need remains to probe his own cosmos, to understand the reality of his own being and his relationship with the Master of the Universe. Scientific sophisticates still point to the vastness of the universe as further indication of the insignificance of man, who lives on a speck of a planet in a cosmos that appears to be many sizes too big for him. But it has been noted, that it is man, with his G-d-given intellect, who has fashioned a telescope and peers through it at the cosmos; there is no evidence as yet that the universe is looking back at us.

Above the hum of the computers and through the smoke and fury of the information explosion, the words of *Rebbe in Pirkai Ovos* ring truer than ever:

*Know what is above you:
An eye that sees,
An ear that hears,
And every deed is recorded
for eternity.*

Rabbi Avrohom Moshe Babad

זכר צדיק לברכה

LONDON (*The Jewish Tribune*)—Rabbi Avrohom Moshe Babad died in a London hospital on Thursday evening, March 31 (Nissan 10) after a brief illness. Rabbi Babad, who was Rav of the Sunderland Bet Hamidrash and honorary head of its Yeshiva, Kollel and Day School, was known among world Jewry as one of the outstanding spokesmen and ideologists of religious Jewry through his many years of association with the Agudath Israel World Movement. The following appreciation of his life was written by a close friend and associate, S. B. UNSDORFER, Executive Secretary of Agudas Israel of Great Britain.



Rabbi Babad

“Why do you keep on praying for the Rabbi? You’re not doing *him* any favor!” these were the nurse’s words at the hospital where Rabbi Babad lay dying. She saw his son Yosselle and others with little *Tehillims* in their hands praying fervently while Rabbi Babad was struggling for a last few breaths of life. To her, the man in the small cubicle at the entrance to the main ward was just another patient for whom, sadly, neither science nor the country’s best medical brains had any further answer. To her, he was a patient awaiting death and she saw no reason why outsiders should interfere with the inevitable.

Of course, she knew the patient’s case, she had his medical records, she knew the gravity of his illness, the hopelessness of his condition—but she did *not* know the person! She did not know that her patient, that seemingly helpless white-bearded semi-conscious ‘old man’ was our beloved Rabbi Babad only 57 years and three months young. She could not have known that he was that dynamic, powerful and unflinching leader of Orthodox Jewry in Europe who had no equal in this orphaned generation in his exquisite combination of Biblical, Talmudical and worldly scholarship. Had she known all, or at least some, of Rabbi Babad’s many great qualities, she might have understood why nobody, neither family nor friend, wanted to face the reality that he was about to depart this world and why they all clung to these all-important few chapters of *Tehillim*.

But, alas, our prayers proved to be too weak to invoke the mercies of Heaven and bring about the

desired change in the verdict that was about to be pronounced. Within a few hours Rabbi Babad returned his *neshomo* to its Maker to the utter grief and unspeakable sorrow of his family, his friends, his Agudas Israel and Klal Yisroel.

Quickly and quietly, he slipped away from earthly life leaving those who have known him a little closer to stand back and marvel at some of the experiences they witnessed around his sick-bed in his brief but tragic three months of severe illness and at the manner in which he had left this world.

For a man who despised publicity and shunned the headlines throughout his life he could not have chosen a quieter “back-door” for his exit even if he were allowed to select the hour himself. Thursday night at seven, with Pesach and all that goes with it almost upon us, there was no opportunity to make any of the elaborate arrangements that befitted the *petirah* of so great a man. The national Jewish press was already published; a quick “priority” press cable to Jerusalem, which should have caught the week-end papers in good time before the midnight deadline, was delayed by sixteen hours for reasons which the G.P.O. and the Israeli Telegraph Office are still investigating; family reasons made it necessary for the *levayoh* to be fixed for 9:30 *Erev Shabbos Hagadol*, the busiest Friday morning of the year, leaving no time to inform the wider Jewish London of the hour and place.

Quickly and quietly, indeed, went the man who at 57, stood on the threshold of his final ascent into the

top ranks of world Jewish leadership. Few, very few, knew Rabbi Babad well, but many, very many loved him. There was so much in that one man, so many wide and varied sides to his greatness, that everybody managed to find in him that particular quality in life which he himself considered most important.

His family saw in him a wonderful and truly devoted husband and father. And not only his immediate next of kin, but the entire Margulies family saw him as their Elder, the ideal successor to their cherished father the Premyshlaner Rebbe. His Kehilah, the *Baale Battim* of Sunderland, had in him a highly distinguished spiritual leader who brought much fame and credit to his community. It is not uncommon in the history of Jewish Orthodoxy for its finest and greatest spiritual leaders to have resided not in the heart of the capital but in a small and far-away provincial community. Sunderland had the honor and privilege of having Anglo-Jewry's most versatile and popular Rav as head of their own community, and it was he who initiated its Yeshiva, Kollel and Day School and thus placed Sunderland on the Torah map, alongside London, Manchester and Gateshead. Chassidim saw in him a devout and life-long *Belser Chossid*, who translated his Chassidus into active work for Bels as a world movement generally and for its British *Mosdos Hatorah* in particular. *Rabbonim* saw in him a sincere and loyal colleague. They found that in many an intricate communal or private problem which called for an extra measure of *Daas Torah*, be it in London, Manchester or Leeds, the one man to call in was the *Sunderland Rav*. His many friends and admirers could almost "pick and choose" the qualities of their own liking. There were those who admired his honesty and straightforwardness; others his penetrating and profound wisdom in all fields of scholarship; there were those who liked his sharp wit and pleasant company, and others who found him tolerant and broad-minded. Certainly, nobody ever parted company with Rabbi Babad without having been pleasantly surprised by the discovery of this or that new and hitherto undisclosed quality. His period of illness, in and outside the hospital, presented us with a completely new side of him: a man who accepted his severe sufferings without a word of complaint or an expression of despair. For one who had never known illness before, this sudden attack showed him to be *מקבל יסורים באהבה* in the finest traditions of our faith.

His Work For Agudas Israel

Whatever one may say with regard to the attachments which he felt towards others, nothing is sufficient to describe the closeness of his relationship with Agudas Israel.

There is not the slightest doubt in the mind of this writer that Agudas Israel had a rather special and even

sacred place in his heart and in his life. Agudas Israel was his foremost outer-communal occupation even though it was a burden on him physically, economically and perhaps even spiritually. His journeys from his home to London, or to Paris or Jerusalem were an extreme physical strain. With long and late meetings, irregular and hastily consumed meals, strange beds and tiring train or sea journeys—he hated flying and avoided it whenever possible—few will engage in such excursions as readily and as often as he did without some personal or financial interests or gains. The bare costs of a train ticket, with the "occasional luxury" of a taxi or a pullman, was all he ever accepted from communal funds. Often the writer of these lines stood with him on the platform at King's Cross outside a crowded holiday train with hardly any seats left, appealing to him to travel First Class as, indeed, befits a Rav and leader. But he would hesitate and say: "Why should I deprive the *areme Aguda* of an extra few pounds" and would get on the train seeking a quiet little spot for himself.

Declines Call to Beth Din

It is well known that he was invited to join the London Beth Din upon the retirement of Dayan Abramski. He declined the call for various reasons. But it may well be that there were other positions which were vacant in Anglo-Jewish Orthodoxy and which might have been offered to him if it weren't for his open and continuous association with a "political" party. Yet, he never gave any serious thought to stopping or even reducing his work for Agudas Israel for the sake of another rabbinic appointment. His work inside Agudas Israel, as indeed his efforts and achievements in his own Kehillah which were beginning to bear such rich and beautiful fruit, were too deeply-rooted and too important for him to be exchanged for any other attractions.

Yes, there was even spiritual sacrifice. It is not unknown that he disliked having to lose some of the favor of those sections in Orthodoxy who in recent years firmly disassociated themselves from the Aguda and its ideology. It was hard for him to feel that they were now on "opposing sides," but he remained loyal and outspoken in his alliance with official Agudist policy irrespective of the many new "winds of change" that swirled around him and other faithful Agudists. And yet, Rabbi Babad had no enemies neither on the Right nor on the Left.

His gentle manner and conciliatory character allowed no room for inter-party quarrels or personal animosities that usually go hand in hand with communal work. Whenever he was faced with a tense meeting a little *maaseh* had to have priority over the prepared agenda. Having thus achieved a moment of relaxation and

From the many tributes paid to Rabbi Babad:

. . . I have never met any one in my life who felt גלות השכינה so deeply and personally as did Avrohom Babad. The suffering of our people meant to him a real הסתר פנים (see Devorim 31:8 and Hagigah 5a)—a reflection of our poor spiritual situation. How often did I hear him sigh at our people's plight. His sadness however was caused not only by the awareness of the physical dangers in the path of our people's existence but even more so by his anxiety at the threat to our people's character as עם ה' and his genuine fear of a falsification of the religious essence of our nationhood.

It has been said of Rabbi Babad that he was a "master of the English phrase, pithy, balanced and biting." But his biting phrases were not indicative of any aggressiveness in him but of a soul that suffered deeply at the fate of his people, and suffered even more from the threatened estrangement of a great part of our people from the ideals of the Torah than from the wounds inflicted from outside. . . .

—DAYAN DR. I. GRUNFELD

amusement he would proceed immediately with the issues at hand without any further difficulties. This kind of chairmanship, unconstitutional though it may have been, always proved most effective, not only at meetings of the British Aguda but even at heated plenary sessions of the Knessia Gedola. He never tired in his pursuit

For him, there was only one source, namely the Torah, from which he drew decisions for personal conduct and to guide his flock.

ובחורתיך כחוב—If the answer to any problem, positive or negative was written in our Torah (including the משנה, גמרא, שלחן ערוך, etc.) then לאמור—that was the correct answer and solution to all our difficulties—שוב אינו צריך.

No need for further examinations in other spheres of thought. The Torah's decision is final—irrespective of modern criticism even at the cost of being considered intolerant etc.

Men who are staunch in their Faith and loyal to the teachings of our Torah as the late Rabbi Babad, are few in number, and not only will Sunderland Jewry mourn for his demise, but וכל בית ישראל יבכו.

Religious Jewry in many countries will mourn for the great religious vacuum caused by his passing away, which will be most difficult to fill.

ת נ צ ב " ה

—RABBI R. RABINOWITZ

of tolerance and understanding within Agudas Israel and in most cases was rewarded with a ready response by his colleagues.

He was keen and active not only in the political field but also in the practical field. *Chinuch Atzmai* was closest to his heart. From his sick-bed in the hospital he sent messages to friends in the pre-Pesach days begging them to help *Chinuch Atzmai* in its current financial crisis. Year after year, along with the late Gateshead Rav, Rabbi N. Shakowitzky, and in more recent times with Rabbi Leib Gurwicz, he would conduct campaigns for *Chinuch Atzmai* in Gateshead, Newcastle and Sunderland. He did not falter in his firm resolve, nor did he shrink from the unpleasant duty of making door-to-door calls. And what was necessary for *Chinuch Atzmai*, was necessary for *Shemitah* when its turn came and even for the Aguda Election Fund when its call was due. He feared nobody when representing an idea or a cause which he thought was deserving of his attention.

And when all is said and written about Rabbi Babad—the Rav, the Maggid, the friend, the leader—there is still left that large though lesser-known chapter of Rabbi Babad the writer and thinker.

I will not hesitate to claim that in Rabbi Babad we had a rare combination of a *Chofetz Chaim*, a Yaakov Rosenheim and a Yitzchok Breuer. Those who admired how in a lifelong political and communal career he managed to avoid indulging in anything even bordering on *Loshon Horah*, personal enmity, or inter-party positional wrestling, will be reminded of the *Chofetz Chaim*. Those who had the opportunity to get to know Rabbi Babad's true loyalty to the party as a party will compare that particular quality with that of Rosenheim, and those who had bothered not merely to read but to study some of his essays and editorials have become conscious of the close kinship that existed in the literary sense between him and Breuer.

Now, one man died and all those great qualities have gone with him. As if an entire department store had collapsed, burying in its rubble all its many sections and entire stock—so, with the sudden *petirah* of Rabbi Babad, an entire and complete structure in our organizational and political set-up has disappeared.

Not only his widow, son, daughter and son-in-law find themselves inconsolably bereft at the loss of their husband and father; not only the Sunderland Kehillah mourns the departure of their beloved Rav; but the whole of *Klall Yisroel* laments his passing. We, who since the great *Churban* of the last war have never succeeded in properly re-manning our "Mizrach-Wall" with universally recognized and far-seeing men of spirit, now stand in utter grief over the fresh grave of one of the most promising and exalted post-war leaders. Rabbi Babad is here no longer.

מי יתן לנו את תמורתו.

The I and Thou of Sinai

Z'man Matan Torosanu

"Had He brought us near *Har Sinai* and not given us the Torah, דינו, it would have sufficed us!" Surely not in the sense that the Jewish people could have become what they were supposed to become or achieve what they were supposed to achieve . . . without Torah! It would have sufficed us only in the sense that the experience at Sinai—the theophany minus the content—was of and by itself of sufficient value and importance to warrant our profound thanksgiving and appreciation.

Our official designation of the Shevuos Festival is זמן מתן תורתנו—the *season of the giving of our Torah*, and this is indeed the central significance of the Revelation at Sinai. Here was no mystical experience for the sake of mystical experience. Here was no cultivation of ecstatic communion with the Divine for its own sake. What was needed, what was intended and what was achieved at Sinai was the revelation of G-d's will, the publication of the Divine plan, the "what is it that the Lord requires of you" in terms of actual statutes and judgments, commands and ordinances anchored in the conditions of human existence; specific observances as well as general principles. As the *Chasam Sofer* interprets the phrase ויהי עולם נטע בתוכנו—a *worldly life has He planted within us*. We are thankful to the Almighty for giving us a way of life that is responsive to the social and individual needs arising out of the world around us.

It is this *content* of revelation, this Torah that was received and transmitted, that was by far the most important consequence of the encounter at Sinai. הביאני המלך חדריו נגילה ונשמחה בך. *The King has brought me into His chambers, we will be glad and rejoice in Thee*. Although the King of all Kings brought us into the inner chamber of mystical experience at Sinai where we had a glimpse of the *mysterium tremendum* that is Divine Presence, nevertheless our chief cause of joy is בך—the twenty-two letters of the Hebrew alphabet with which we form words and sentences and by which the קולות of encounter were transformed into the דברים of prophecy.

Yet in spite of what has been said, there emerges through the observances of our Festival, a focusing upon the subjective accompaniments of the Revelation;

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not only upon *what* was given but upon *how* it was given. In short we are asked to appreciate the fact that had He brought us near *Har Sinai* and not given us the Torah, דינו, is would suffice to generate our gratitude and thanksgiving.

Consider the portions from the prophets which are read as the *Haftorah* on the days of Shevuos. Over the objections of the Mishnah that public reading from the esoteric *Merkavah*-prophecies may prove confusing, we do read on the first day Ezekiel's dazzling vision of the Divine chariot because the Almighty appeared at Sinai in similar visions and this is what the people experienced at that moment. On the second day we read from Habakkuk who also speaks of the theophany at Sinai—*G-d comes from Temen and the Holy One from Mount Paran*—but nowhere does he mention *what* was transmitted at that revelation; he confines himself rather to the overpowering manifestations and the subjective experience of the spectators: *and a brightness appeareth as the light; rays hath He at His side; and there is the hiding of His power . . . When I heard, mine inward parts trembled, my lips quivered at the voice; rottenness entered into my bones and I tremble where I stand*.

Rambam makes it quite clear that the experience at Sinai was important not only for the content that was revealed—the Torah. But rather—the manner in which the Torah was revealed provided us with the grounds for accepting and believing what was given.

The Jews did not believe *Moshe Rabeinu* in consequence of the signs which he performed; for he whose belief rests on signs must still have a suspicion in his mind of the possibility that the sign might have been performed by magic or wizardry. All the signs which *Moshe* performed in the wilderness he did through necessity and not to adduce evidence of his prophecy. When it was necessary to drown the Egyptians, he divided the sea and plunged them into it. When we had need for food he brought us down manna . . . And so it was with all the other signs.

On what ground then did they believe in Him? It was in consequence of their presence at Mount Sinai, when our own eyes, and not another's, beheld, and when our own ears, and not another's, heard the fire and the thundering and lightnings,

whilst he approached the thick darkness and the voice spoke to him in our own hearing, "Moshe, Moshe, go and say unto them thus . . ."

Indeed there are some who would see this as the distinguishing element between the two festivals on our calendar which celebrate Torah—Shevuos and Simchas Torah. While the latter concentrates upon the Torah itself, the former underscores the *manner* in which the Torah was revealed to us—the MATAN Torosanu.

If what has been said is true, then it behooves every thoughtful Jew to deepen his understanding of the מעמד הר סיני, that *standing* before *Har Sinai*. What was so compelling about that moment that it conveyed a sense of conviction of G-d's reality to all who experienced it? Surely it was not merely the pyrotechnics, the volume of the Shofar sounds, the brilliance of the fire, the trembling of the mountain . . . for these would not escape the *Rambam's* searching comment—the *sign might have been performed by magic or wizardry!* Each Jew at Sinai—and the souls of all generations were present—underwent a profound prophetic experience! Obviously in its essence this was something ineffable which can only be experienced and not described. Nevertheless there is still something which can be said and should be known about this event which is at once the basis of Judaism and Jewish peoplehood. Surely there is something about the experience of that Day aside from its legacy in the Torah which we are enjoined to remember: *The day that thou stoodest before the Lord thy G-d at Horeb when the Lord said unto me, Gather me the people together, and I will make them hear My words that they may learn to fear Me all the days that they shall live on the earth and that they may teach their children.* And as the *Ramban* and the *Netziv* point out, this refers not only to the words which were said on that day but to the *spectacle and the awe which took place at that moment.* We thus have a special *mitzvah* to analyze and depict this experience and transmit it to our children. Says the *Ramban*: והתועלת במצוה הזאת גדולה מאד, *The benefits of this mitzvah are exceedingly great.*

The Jewish people standing at Sinai did not merely hear a voice proclaiming sentences which were grammatically formed in the imperative, but comprehended the propositions as orders—experienced the words as directed at them from someone in authority to command them. Was it fear then and the threat of sanctions that the people felt? Undoubtedly there was fear and trembling and awe: *And they said unto Moshe . . . let not G-d speak with us lest we die.* Undoubtedly there was this sense of overpoweringness, of becoming conscious of one's creaturehood, of being "dust and ashes" as against the majesty of the *Shechinah*.

But this was not all. Our Sages tell us: לכל דברות ולכל אמירות ולכל צוויים קדמה קריאה לשון חבה . . .

statements and commands were preceded by a call which was an expression of love. But what in the call indicated love? To begin with there was the fact that the Almighty identified himself as *the Lord your G-d who took you out of the land of Egypt.* He is the liberator, He is the one who has already shown His kindness and His love. He is the one to whom the Jews already have an obligation. As a Chassidic sage once put it: *G-d says to man: I am the one who fished you out of the mud. Now you come here and listen to me.*

The *Maharal*, however, makes another observation. When Moshe heard himself called by name—"Moshe, Moshe"—he felt himself the recipient of love. To feel oneself personally addressed is to feel oneself the object of concern and regard. Each Jew felt that he personally was known by the voice that commanded, was individually being regarded by the אנכי of the עשרת הדברות, and was being addressed in the depths of his personality. This is denoted by the use of the singular voice throughout the Decalogue.

BUT COULD THE VOICE BE AN ILLUSION? Whence came the conviction and the faith? What we must understand is that everyone standing at Sinai had an overwhelming conviction of the reality of the One addressing him because he experienced the One as a Thou, as a being possessed of the attributes of personhood, as a being exhibiting love, concern and intentionality. *Face to face the Lord talked to you on the Mount out of the midst of the fire.* When I confront another human being and converse with him face-to-face, the reality of the person I am addressing is conveyed to me not primarily by the visual or auditory sensations, but by the direct intuition that over against me is a center of consciousness as alive and as responsive as I am, possessed of will and vitality. The self seems to be aware of self in some immediate, mysterious way. Analogously, at Sinai the Jewish people with the sensitivity given to consciousness were enabled by G-d to penetrate the cloud and thick darkness and realize with an unshakable conviction that addressing them was an אנכי, pure subjectivity, a self, indeed the ground of all selfhood. What they experienced was not a mysterious sound that needed to be explained, but a transcendent Self that ought to be obeyed. *And the Lord spoke unto Moshe face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend.*

There is a final point that should be mentioned. The Midrash states that when the Lord first appeared to Moshe, he called to him in the voice of Amram, his father. This must be understood not merely as a particular protective device lest Moshe be overwhelmed or frightened but as a disclosure about the very nature of the revelatory experience in general. The voice of one's father strikes precisely that note that we have been describing—it combines love and concern on the one hand with authority and reverence on the other. Every Jew experienced the voice of Sinai as Fatherly—

Jewish piety must once again direct its energies towards the aspiration and longing for the immediacy of the Divine encounter.

love combined with authority, compassion overlaid with awe—אבינו שבשמים.

For indeed the voice of the Divine is always the voice of someone we recognize. In its depth we detect intimations of our own existence. In its tones we intuit the source and fountain of all life. In its vibrations we sense the authority of our Creator. If we did not we could not respond to it at all. We are overcome by awe and reverence as is due one whom we sense is responsible for our existence. But side by side with this sense of the "wholly other," which evokes the awe and the trembling there is paradoxically some feeling of kinship and love. One is in the presence of a loving father. That portion of Divinity which is within us responds to the Presence that is without. Like reaches out to like and the awe gives way to longing and joy. רצוננו לראות מלכנו, *It is our desire to see our King.*

Once a man recognizes a loving father, does he have to justify his obedience to him? Can we withhold trust from He who gives us life to begin with? Can one doubt His goodness? This gives rise to the strange contrasts which Torah attributes to the prophetic experience. On the one hand, awe and dread leading to withdrawal; on the other hand, fascination and longing leading to a desire to draw closer. We see this clearly in Moshe's first revelation. At the beginning, upon seeing the strange phenomenon of the burning bush, Moshe says, *I will turn aside and see this great sight.* And as our Sages observed, the Almighty regards this as a positive and worthy response: *And when the Lord saw that He turned aside to see . . .* Yet shortly thereafter, the Torah reports, *And Moshe hid his face; for he was afraid to look upon G-d.*

Had He brought us near [to Him] before Har Sinai and not given us the Torah, דינו, it would have sufficed to make us eternally grateful. For by means of this one public experience, מעמד הר סיני, the Almighty implanted within us a knowledge of His reality, awareness of His goodness and conviction that He alone ought to be obeyed.

Is this all a matter of the past? Can our generation only talk about it, analyze it, remember it? Our Sages taught that we have a promise that this kind of experience will again be vouchsafed to Israel sometime in the future. We can look forward to a revelatory experience which will not result in a new Torah but which will reveal secret depths and understanding of the Torah we already have. We say in SHIR HASHIRIM: *Let Him kiss me with the kisses of His mouth; for thy love is better than wine.* And Rashi elaborating on a Midrash states:

על שם שנתן להם תורתו ודבר עמהם פנים אל פנים ואותם דודים עודם ערבים עליהם מכל שעשוע ומובטחים מאתו להופיע עוד עליהם לבאר להם סוד טעמיה ומסתר צפונותיה ומחלים פניו לקיים דברו וזהו — "ישקני מנשיקות פיהו".

Because He gave them His Torah and spoke to them face to face, that act of love is still longed for above all endearment. And we have assurances from Him that He will appear again to explain its secret reasons, and its hidden mysteries. We entreat Him to fulfill His word and that is what is meant by 'kiss me with the kisses of His mouth.'

JEWISH PIETY MUST ONCE AGAIN direct its energies towards the aspiration and longing for the immediacy of the Divine encounter. Celebration of Shevuos should awaken within us a sense of the reality of the experience and the rich spiritual harvest it promises for the individual Jew. Perhaps *this kind of experience* can be achieved not only amidst וברקים but also, in a lesser degree to be sure, amidst דקה emanating from Torah sincerely studied; a prayer fervently uttered; a *Mitzvah* purposively carried out; an act of *Chesed* selflessly performed!

A precondition for doing so however is a sincere effort on the part of man to *seek* out G-d, to *search* for Him, to *long* for Him until we can echo the words of the Psalmist: "My soul *thirsteth* for G-d, for the living G-d." Can we see in this phrase more than a mere figure of speech?

As the *S'forno* observes in his commentary on *Shir Hashirim* 2:9: *In truth He is not distant but close to all who shall call Him but He remains hidden so that we may not feel His presence until we will awaken to seek Him as it is written—"And you seek from there the Lord your G-d and ye will find Him."*

With some age old Jewish aspirations having been fulfilled in our day, perhaps the time has come to move some others into the forefront and to focus the full creative energy of our people upon them.

הלואי ישקני מנשיקות פיהו כמות שהיה
הלואי יגלה פעם שנית
הלואי יתקע תורתו בלבנו כמות שהיה

(מדרש שיר השירים רבה)

Wouldn't that He would reveal Himself a second time.

Wouldn't that He would kiss us with the kisses of His mouth as it once was.

Wouldn't that He would fix His Torah in our hearts as it was!

OPPORTUNITIES

MODERN ORTHODOX RABBI wanted for small congregation, must be aggressive, will consider beginner, write all details and include recent photograph, to: Cong. Beth Israel, Middletown, Wisconsin.

Chaim folded his Morning-Journal and put it aside. "I'm a beginner, all right," he thought to himself. The signatures on his *s'micha* were just about dry; the date had been set for his wedding, and the pressure was on for him to find a *shtela*.

"But it's not for me; they probably have mixed-seating and want the rabbi to conduct late-Friday services . . . but what's a fella to do, how many 'kosher' *shtelas* are there around, and for those few there's so much competition."

It bothered him: here he was fresh out of the yeshiva, ready to devote himself to helping to re-build *Yiddishkeit* in America, even ready to go "out-of-town"—how many young *musmachim* were willing to do that?—but already they were asking him to make compromises. Already the struggle had begun.

"What's the matter with these Jews, do they want a *rabbi* or a *puppet*?"

"Maybe if I talk to them, they'll take me on my terms . . . maybe . . ."

Gentlemen:

In response to your advertisement in last Friday's Morning-Journal, I should like to be a candidate to fill the position as rabbi of your congregation...

In a very precise manner he finished his letter with the details he thought they would want to have, enclosed the picture he had taken for the yeshiva's *Chag Hashmicha*, and sent it out air-mail special-delivery.

In a few days he received a letter; it was neatly typed on the Schul's letterhead, with the name of the rabbi xxed out. He held it up to the light but he couldn't make it out; they'd done a good job in xxing him out.

Dear Rabbi:

Thank you for your letter. We will be happy to consider your application to fill our pulpit. A committee will be in New York City on Thursday, June 17 at the Hotel Wilson to meet you at 4:00 P.M. Please bring along a copy of your ordination certificate and be prepared to deliver a brief 5-minute sermon for the committee's consideration.

Sincerely yours,

Max Ehrenthal, President
Congregation Beth Israel

Chaim was there right on time—he knew that first impressions are important—and so were seven other young men who sat together uncomfortably in the ante-room of the two-room hotel suite. He recognized several of them, but there were no exchanges of *Sholem Aleichem*, just polite nods which seemed to ask, "what are you doing here?"

After some anxious, fidgety waiting, Chaim's name was called and he was ushered into the bedroom.

"How do you do Rabbi, I'm Max Rosenthal, this is Sam Goldstein, our treasurer, won't you sit down, we'd like to ask you some questions before we listen. . ."

Chaim didn't let him finish, he knew it was now or not at all, if he didn't speak up at the very start, his nerve would give out.

"I'd like to ask you some questions first," he blurted out. "After all, if I'm going to be your rabbi, I want to know something about you and your congregation."

Ehrenthal and Goldstein were taken back, this was not the first time they had interviewed a candidate. They were old hands at it. Every few years when their rabbi picked up to leave for greener pastures, they flew into New York—the trip was deductible—to bring home a new rabbi. But this was the first one who had tried to interview *them*.

"Does your schul have a *mechitza*?" Chaim got right to the point.

"Wait a minute now, Rabbi," it was Ehrenthal who spoke up, "you saw our ad, it said 'Modern Orthodox,' you know what that means; why did you take up our time if you're not interested?"

"I take it then you don't have a *mechitza*?" Chaim was biding his time, he didn't know where to go from here.

"Look Rabbi, we're strictly Orthodox, we always have been, and always will be, but we went through all this years ago. The girls just won't go for this *mechitza* business. Oh, they sit in a separate section, but that's as far as it goes."

"But maybe if I could speak to them I could show them that it's the right thing to do. . ."

"Rabbi, you're wasting your time and our time, there are still three men outside we have to see, and we have a flight back home tonight." Goldstein bit down hard on his corona.

"Why, if we so much as talked about a *mechitza*," the word had a strange ring spoken with a Western-Yiddish accent, "we'd have everybody leaving us to join the Temple. Why, even our own wives would make us leave."

"But gentlemen, you want a *rabbi*, a spiritual leader,

someone who can help you to be better Jews; if you're starting out telling him 'how things are,' he's not going to be much of a leader. . . ."

"Rabbi, it was nice of you to come here to talk to us, but there's nothing left for us to discuss." Ehrenthal and Goldstein stood up and politely showed Chaim to the door, and in the same motion called in the next candidate.

That evening, the President and the Treasurer sat comfortably in their jet, watching a first-run film, and the hostess was pouring their second cup of coffee.

"Well Sam, we did it again, we got ourselves a rabbi."

"That's right Max," Ehrenthal smiled and nodded his head.

"But y'know Max, that young kid had a lot of guts . . . Maybe he *would've* been a good rabbi for us."

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.

A Woman Rabbi?

The following appeared verbatim in the TORONTO STAR.

A woman rabbi?

To Orthodox Jews, the thought is both fantastic and repulsive.

But not to Dr. Nelson Glueck who, as president of Cincinnati's Hebrew Union College, has ordained dozens of rabbis.

"A woman rabbi is theoretically possible," says Dr. Glueck.

"If a girl came to me who was fully qualified in every way, and who successfully completed our course of studies, I would ordain her to the rabbinate.

Then he added with a chuckle: "But preferably she should not be too attractive or one of our students would marry her and that would be the end of her rabbinical ambitions."

Educator Glueck said that if a woman were ordained a rabbi he felt confident she could get a Reform Jewish pulpit, in spite of the 4,000-year-old anti-feminist tradition in Judaism.

"One of the major breakthroughs of Reform Judaism is this matter of equality of the sexes," said Rabbi Glueck.

"Men and women sit together in Reform synagogues, although they are segregated by Orthodox Judaism. We have no prayer in our services thanking G-d for not making one a woman—as Orthodox Jews have.

"We even have introduced a counterpart of the Bar

Mitzvah—the celebration of a boy's coming of age—for girls. This is the Bat Mitzvah."

Dr. Glueck—who is himself a rabbi, as well as a distinguished archeologist—described Reform Judaism's liberal approach to religion as "the wave of the future."

As president of Hebrew Union College—the seminary where Reform rabbis are trained—Dr. Glueck presides over an intellectual aristocracy. Judaism, traditionally, puts a premium on learning. And standards at Hebrew Union College, said Dr. Glueck, are among the highest anywhere.

"We offer a five-year course after the BA which leads to the degree of Master of Hebrew Letters," he said.

"Practically anywhere else, the same program would lead to a Ph.D., but at Hebrew Union we require much more than that for a doctorate."

Not Sacramental Ordination

"Rabbi" is a degree conferred by the college, not—as in Christian tradition—a sacramental ordination which confers a priestly office.

"Essentially," said Dr. Glueck, "the rabbi is a teacher who is equipped to act as a religious leader."

Hebrew Union College has many distinctives as a Jewish institution. The New Testament—which Dr. Glueck calls "a great religious document" is intensely studied.

The college also has an unusual graduate program of "ecumenical" studies which encourages a kind of intellectual cross-fertilization among North America's religious communities.

At present, some 10 graduate students of various Christian persuasions are working towards Hebrew Union College degrees. One is a Canadian Catholic priest aspiring to his Ph.D. in Old Testament studies.

Dr. Glueck sees Reform Judaism as standing on the verge of an even more dynamic growth than in the past. He calls the present crop of rabbinical students "fabulous young men."

An Experience in a Suburb

THE FOLLOWING APPEARED in *Point of View*, a publication of the Jewish Labor Committee. We believe it to be a significant document which offers insight into the dilemma of the young Jew who is searching for his proper place in Jewish life. It was written by "Sidney Lavon," which the editor tells us is the pseudonym of a New York advertising executive. Our comments follow the complete text.

THE young Jewish family that moves to the suburbs is faced with the problem of "putting down roots." Unless they are fortunate enough to know people in the town they've moved to, one of the first things they do is join a temple or a Jewish center.

A few years ago I moved to a lovely community outside of New York City. Because I personally didn't feel this need to "put down roots," and because I didn't feel the need to identify with the Jewish community, I remained aloof from any affiliation. I had all my friends in the City and I saw them frequently.

After a few months in the town, and after I had heard my friends discussing future Bar Mitzvah plans for their children, it occurred to me that I was not preparing my own son for Bar Mitzvah! My own point of view on religion was that of the agnostic. "If you can prove (in the scientific sense) that God exists, then I'm ready to believe; if you can't prove it, then I won't count God into my plans. I've done without him for over thirty years, I have the respect of my friends, my employers, family, etc.; I do not need to learn Jewish Law in order to lead a decent and humane existence. As far as my son is concerned, why burden him with meaningless Hebrew prayers which he'll probably never use after his Bar Mitzvah?"

At this juncture, my wife pointed out that I was, in a very real sense, imposing my "humanistic" philosophy on an innocent child. She asked me to send him to a school where he could learn "something" about being a Jew. I would at least be putting the boy in a position where he could, at a later date, make a choice between my point of view and that of the Temple.

I agreed with her. I decided to send him to the nearest temple in town. As luck would have it, the nearest temple turned out to be an Orthodox Synagogue! "O.K.," I said, "if you want him to learn something about our ancient faith, what better place than the Orthodox Synagogue?"

We called. "We have a ten-year old boy whom we'd like to register. Tell me, how orthodox are you?"

"What do you mean?"

"Well . . . do the students wear pay-ahs?"

"No. They do not. However, if the child or the parents want him to wear pay-ahs, we'd be very happy to have him."

"You see, Mrs. ———, we are not Hasidic. We are, however, strictly orthodox. Why not bring the boy over so that we can discuss this further?"

We went. And we were impressed by the school, the students, and the principal. We thought the children looked "cute" in their little *Yarmulkes*. Further, the tuition rate was low (not a minor consideration).

About three weeks later, my wife found herself lighting candles on Friday night, my son took to wearing tzitzes and I was nagged by him to come to *Shul* on Saturday morning. After about six weeks, I succumbed. I attended Synagogue. My last experience in a Synagogue hadn't been a happy one. I remembered the old men *davvining*, the musty odor of the prayer-books, the decrepitude of the *Shul*, the zealous *gabbaim* with their cries of "shush" and "quiet or get out." Finally, I remembered that I was bored to tears because I didn't understand.

Upon entering the Synagogue I was pleasantly surprised. Young men, my contemporaries, were praying, children sitting by their side. The prayer books were new and they had complete English translations on the facing page. Above all, I was entranced by the beautiful old melodies, sung by the entire congregation. I soon found myself humming along.

And then I saw the Rabbi! A bearded gentleman, about 50, wearing a black homburg hat scrutinizing two or three books simultaneously. After a while, he stood up. He was obviously going to speak. Inwardly I smiled, thinking that he'd ramble on discussing some obscure point of Jewish law in the language of the Jew—Yiddish!

His first words were startling. He spoke English! Beautifully! He did not ramble on, as I had expected. He did not discuss some obscure point of Jewish law. Instead he discussed the "Jewish viewpoint on labor!" I waited impatiently for an error of fact or for a single *non-sequir*. It didn't come, and I was sold.

In the following weeks and months I looked forward to the Sabbath. I stopped taking my car to Synagogue even though I had to walk a mile to get there. A whole new world of learning opened for me, a world of which I hadn't been even dimly aware. I immersed myself in it gladly. I read books by Jews, for Jews, of Jews. History, fiction, poetry and scholarly papers were all read *anxiously* and a great spirit of "Yiddishkeit" filled our home. I was a "baal-tshuvnik."

HOWEVER, all during those exciting days of my discovery, I was troubled by certain remarks I heard: "The professors at the Jewish Theological Seminary don't believe in God," "The Hillel movement dilutes true Judaism," "that book should be banned," "this film is filth," "the Reform Synagogue

and Conservative slavishly ape the Christian Church," etc.

I suppose that, like most men, I have a built-in ability to "overlook" those ideas which discomfit me. I suppose that I was unwilling to recognize that, while my new-found friends were opening a "new world" for me, they were also *shutting* some important doors of the old world. How could I count myself a liberal and a humanist and still conform to my orthodox friend's view of the world — a world in which there were only Jews (orthodox) and Goyim (everyone else).

When our lovely little town became involved in the issue of school integration (we made national headlines), our Rabbi refused to take a stand. This seemed to me most *un-Jewish*. He made an ambiguous statement which each man could interpret in his own way. The burden of it was that "we have our own Jewish problem, and I cannot waste the time of the congregation with issues that are not wholly Jewish. Besides, everyone knows what the Jewish point of view on this issue is." At this point I was frightfully disturbed, but I wasn't ready to admit that there was something seriously lacking in my synagogue.

SOME time later, and with an increasing feeling of discomfiture, I attended a symposium in our Synagogue. The subject was "Herzog" by Saul Bellow. Four members of the Synagogue were invited to read the book and report their findings. The Rabbi was to sum up. Each of the four panelists found the book interesting, well-written, and worthwhile. Then the Rabbi rose to "sum up." He began by saying that Saul Bellow was in a class with Bernard Malamud and Philip Roth. These three people, he said, "are doing more damage to the Jewish people than they know." They are vicious and filthy and portray an atypical Jew. He said that he couldn't find a sympathetic character in the entire book, with the possible exception of a Japanese girl who appears briefly as a minor character in the book. Further, he felt that not only was the character Herzog a degenerate, but so was his wife who, the Rabbi claimed, defamed Jewish womanhood.

When he was asked to name a modern Jewish writer of real merit, one he could offer as a substitute, he referred his audience to Charles Dickens, Macaulay and other non-Jews. Finally he *advised* his audience not to buy, read or even discuss the book. If they discussed it, they might lead others to read it!

For me, this became the last straw. An impecunious Rabbi in an obscure synagogue placing the works of three of America's outstanding novelists on an Index! Banning them.

For a liberal Jew, obviously, there needs to be an alternative to the synagogue.

(Our comments on page 22)

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My dear Mr. "Lavon":

It has been your good fortune to enjoy an experience which many of your contemporaries in Jewish suburbia rarely achieve. You managed to break through the barrier of hostility and misinformation which separates many Jews from traditional Judaism. You brought yourself back to Schul; you exposed yourself to Jewishness in every way possible. In your own words, you became "a baal tshuvnik," a rich and enviable achievement. You were on your way home, on your way back to the sources of Jewish vitality which offered such promise, not for your children alone, but for you as well.

You tell us frankly what soured you on the "great spirit of *Yiddishkeit* which filled our home." Your rabbi committed a grievous sin; he stated clearly his positions on the Jewish Theological Seminary, on the Hillel movement, and those movements in Jewish life which "slavishly ape the Christian Church."

Mr. "Lavon"—you chose your pseudonym wisely since you chose to approach *Yiddishkeit* with a clean (white) slate—think for a moment what your Rabbi stands accused of. Having written in a labor publication, you probably have some strong opinions of your own, on labor, capitalism, and general politics. No doubt there are individuals and movements in the area of your political interest, who have distorted the basic principles which motivate your own thinking. We suspect that those people or groups get your gander up at times and you feel compelled to speak out against

them. Would you deny this right to your Rabbi who considers himself to be the guardian of traditional Jewish belief, and whose sacred task it is to guard you and his other congregants from distortions and untruths? Would you have more regard for your Rabbi if he kept quiet in the face of what he considered injustice and untruth? Some have chosen to do so, do you have higher regard for them?

Would you throw away the rich spiritual experience of a return to *Yiddishkeit* which you so eloquently describe, because you find your Rabbi is not an apt literary critic; because you disagree with his evaluation of *Herzog*? Try putting yourself in *his* position; he is committed to upholding the glory of the Jewish people, and he feels—you may disagree—that some of the recent Jewish best-sellers drag our people through the mud. Perhaps the writers of these books believe that many Jews today *are* in the mud; perhaps they feel they are simply mirroring Jewish life . . . be that as it may. But are you prepared to surrender your new-found *Yiddishkeit* because you think that your Rabbi—who obviously has given you much spiritual nourishment—is not a good book-reviewer?

Mr. "Lavon," it is not our intention to engage you in polemics—we wonder how many Jewish souls are saved by polemics. We only ask you to reconsider what may have been a hasty decision. There is no alternative to the synagogue, to the kind of *Yiddishkeit* you have already glimpsed—go back to Schul, give it another chance.

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A New Look at Church and State

ABOUT A YEAR AGO the Frank L. Weil Institute for Studies in Religion and the Humanities, founded in memory of a late chairman of the Board of Governors of the two Reform Jewish seminaries, sponsored a series of lectures by Law Professor Mark DeWolfe Howe of Harvard University on the subject of religion

The Garden and the Wilderness

Mark DeWolfe Howe

University of Chicago Press

and government. This reviewer, noting the sponsorship and anticipating the usual palaver about "separation of church and state," disregarded an invitation.

These lectures have now been embodied in a book entitled, *The Garden and the Wilderness*, whose chapter titles are: Federalism and the First Amendment; Churches and their Government; The Fourteenth Amendment and the Churches; Interactions between Political and Religious Liberties; Race, Religion, and Education; and Equality and Neutrality in the law of Church and State. Each of these topics as well as the book as a whole, gives an initially deceptive impression of being rambling and disjointed with but a thread or two running through them, which appears now more strongly or weakly, or which disappears altogether. The total effect of the book when read and laid aside however, is very different—more like a symphony that traces the idea of religious freedom from before the enactment of the First Amendment down to the most recent Supreme Court decisions interpreting it, with the author weaving his own original and stimulating variations on the theme in the process, and concluding with an echo of the opening theme.

The title, *The Garden and the Wilderness* derives from a statement of Roger Williams who spoke of "separation" a century-and-a-half before Jefferson's "wall of separation between church and state" letter to the Danbury hatters. Williams wrote of the "wall of separation between the garden of the church and the wilderness of the world"—intending something quite different than what is being preached by latter day Jeffersonian separationists—and thereby hangs the dominant theme of Professor Howe's song.

After dispelling a bit of the fog surrounding the enactment and the choice of verbiage in the First Amendment, the author reviews some of the early nineteenth-century legal conflicts over congregational

properties between minorities loyal to the orthodoxy of its founders and heterodox majorities. Going forward to the Civil War era and the enactment of the Fourteenth Amendment, he points out the relationship between changing concepts of the law in relation to religion and the great issues of the times.

Continuing onward to the present time, he demonstrates how from a state of almost total oblivion of its utility as a means of disestablishing religion in the states, the Fourteenth Amendment has become clearly articulated only in the last quarter of a century into a weapon against public religious expression. Professor

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Howe feels that in the last decisions of the Supreme Court barring prayers and Bible reading the Court went too far and committed a grievous and mischief-laden error in confusing equality and neutrality. Equality of all religions has been a cardinal concept in American law, but to equate religion and non-religion, belief and disbelief, as equally protected under the First Amendment is historically inaccurate. Though the author does not sharply disagree with the mandate of the Court in those cases, he fears that its theorizing about "neutrality"—which, in effect, is indifference to religion—"may still serve gravely to delay and possibly to prevent adoption of a national educational program of the dimensions which the times require," among other unfortunate consequences.

The significance of this volume lies in the fact that it sounds an early warning signal against the secularist-humanist trend of the Supreme Court, coming as it does from a highly respected and apparently scholarly source. Though religious critics of this trend have not been wanting, their criticism tends to be disregarded because of presumed bias. The vulgar reactions to the prayer and Bible reading decisions have also not been too conducive to sober reflection. Hopefully, this volume may stimulate some constructive thought in that area.

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MR. GROSS is active in legislative and legal matters of concern to Orthodox Jews. He is a graduate of the Harvard Law School.

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second looks at the jewish scene

Jazz and Prayer

MANY HAVE QUESTIONED the substance of America's religious revival, and with good cause. Yet, there is no doubt that there is today a greater interest in religion, and if not a higher respect for its practitioners, at least a smaller measure of hostility and contempt. In a word, religion in America has become respectable. It has also become news. The major weekly news magazines each have a religious section, and no significant newspaper is without a religious editor.

One of the manifestations of this new interest in religion, is a renewed interest in prayer. In the 20's, when radicalism and skepticism were in full bloom, prayer was looked upon as a device invented by the capitalist and monarchistic oppressors to squelch dissent, to drain off from the masses dissatisfaction with their lot; in the classic Marxian lexicon, it was a form of "opium" for the masses. Religion's new respectability has brought with it a new interest in the meaning of prayer for modern man.

In liberal religious circles it was assumed that the old methodology of prayer was no longer of value, giving rise to experimentation in order to finding new techniques which would give new meaning to the experience of prayer.

AMONG THE MOST recent entries in this race to find what some call "creative prayer" is the modern dance, introduced into the service to express man's yearning for the Di-

vine. In an extreme case, a male dancer performed in the course of the service in a state of undress, at a church in New York's Greenwich Village — a church, incidentally, which shares its "sanctuary" with a Jewish Reform congregation.

The latest rage in this frantic desire to make religion modern, and to avoid the stigma of being "square," "out," or whatever the latest "in" term is for being out-of-step with the times, is the "progressive-jazz service." (It should be noted that the word progressive, as the hyphen indicates, refers to jazz, not the service.)

The "progressive-jazz" service has run the gamut of most religious innovations: It started in the most liberal churches, worked its way up to "high church" and is now being flirted with by the Catholic Church. Of course, the end of the line is the Jewish congregation and this case is no exception.

Now jazz goes to the synagogue. Friday night the rafters of Temple Emanuel in Long Beach, L. I. rang with the first jazz service ever to be held in a synagogue.

Some of the trustees were a bit doubtful about the idea at first. But if anything, Rabbi . . . thought the jazz was "a little too tame."

. . . The service packed the 3-year old Reform temple with a record turnout by the 400-member congregation. . . "I think this is going to be a great

thing, in the way we wanted it to be—not as a gimmick (sic) but to arouse the kind of enthusiasm contemporary religion needs," the 48-year-old rabbi added. (THE NEW YORK POST, 4/10/66).

The reporter goes on to explain that the idea had been carried around by the cantor for a long time, until three years ago he and the rabbi "armed with quotes from the Talmud broached the idea to the trustees." They convinced the board that a jazz service would "stir the kids up, get them excited about

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going to the temple," and the reporter adds in parentheses, "Several churches have held jazz services with that result."

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cern to comment on Christian modes of worship. The Talmud cautions against disturbing even one who is engaged in worshipping an idol, for he is groping to find the One G-d. Attempts to pray through the dance and progressive jazz, may perhaps obscure what is essentially an honest yearning of the lost soul for contact with G-d.

Even assuming that these devices are more than gimmicks "for getting the kids to Temple," there are some serious pitfalls in store. American youth and the "jet-setters" (it is hard to tell who is leading the other) are in a state bordering on hysteria, in their desire to be at the very head of the line. What was "in" yesterday is "out" today; someone who manages to get "in" soon finds that it's "out" to be "in," and "in" to be "out." (The built-in obsolescence which forces the American consumer to buy a new car, washing-machine, electric shaver, et al., when he doesn't really need one, spills over into social status; and the two are not unrelated, for going from "out" to "in" often requires the purchase of new equipment for one's new status.) Out of all this confusion comes the sad realization that the "progressive-jazz service" of today is the obsolescent prayer of

tomorrow; it will "bring the kids to Temple" only so long as "progressive-jazz" remains progressive; when the high priests of "taste" condemn it to the oblivion of "outdom" the "kids" will stop coming to Temple.

But for the Jew there is a more intrinsic fallacy in the search for creative prayer. Prayer ceased to be a living experience for many a Jew, when the traditional modes of *t'filoh* were discarded; when the *Siddur*, the repository of centuries of meaningful Jewish spiritual experience and Divine Inspiration, was put aside for new prayers, written, as someone put it, "in a study, not in a passion." Instead of looking outward into the morass of "indom" and "outdom" for creative prayer, the Jew would do better to look into the richness of Jewish spiritual . . . techniques, if we must use the word. Has not Chassidus re-discovered, from the well-spring of Torah tradition, the efficacy of music and dance in bringing one closer to the *Ribono Shel Olom*? The walls of every yeshiva today, even those fashioned in the most frigid *litvakische* mold, echo with the sounds of flaming *n'ginoh* and shake in rhythm with the stamping of dancing feet.

But . . . the fallacy is yet deeper,

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for it ignores the very absurdity of even the use of such words as "prayer" and "services" in a Jewish context. When "prayer," again we use the word reluctantly, is understood in its classic connotation, the notion of "creative prayer" becomes a redundancy, for what can be more creative than judging oneself, elevating oneself—creating oneself in partnership with G-d. What we need desperately in Jewish life today is "creative literacy," a return to the sources of the richness of Jewish life, and a total rejection of the attempt to be modern, to be "in." Samson Raphael Hirsch said decades ago:

Was Abraham merely a man of his time when he burnt the idols of his day? Were the martyrs of the Middle Ages men of their times when they preferred burning at the stake to the waters of baptism? Israel will only belong to the times when the times are with G-d.

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THE NEW YORK CITY BOARD of Education has reversed a ruling of its legal department which had banned the wearing of a yarmulka by students in the public schools. The reversal came after widespread protests by Orthodox Jewish groups, joined in this instance by the American Jewish Congress.

The mere question of a Jewish child wearing a yarmulka in a public school indicates the growing maturity of religious Jewry. Years ago, when yeshivos and day schools were few, and the very concept of yeshiva education for youngsters had not yet crystalized on American soil, most Jewish boys attended public schools. Yet, even those coming from more

observant families would not have dreamed of going to school wearing a yarmulka. It was hard enough taking off for *Yom Tov* and dodging the barbs of hostile students and teachers—a yarmulka was simply too much to bear.

Today Jewish attitudes have changed; there is considerably less reluctance to expose one's Jewishness. Attitudes of the non-Jew have also changed. In New York City, every good politician, Jewish or Gentile, carries a yarmulka in his pocket. A non-Jewish official who walked into a Reform temple and was told he could remove his yarmulka, is said to have quipped that he "just didn't feel right about it."

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But . . . is all this sophistication really 'gut far yiden'? It is difficult to conceive of a case where a child from an observant family could justifiably attend a public school. Obviously, however, there is some number of such children who are not attending yeshivos and yet they—or their parents—insist that they wear a yarmulka at school. Is there not the possibility that the liberal policy of New York City's Board of Education will in some cases motivate parents to send a child to a public school, when they might not otherwise do so? Should this policy swing the balance in the decision of any number of families, it would mean that that number of Jewish children would be deprived of their heritage of Torah learning and exposed to the secular influences which they are so inadequately prepared to cope with.

Of course we must fight for these rights—Orthodox teachers are now attempting to have the Board of Education remove the restriction against teachers wearing yarmulkas—but is there not the danger that our wall-to-wall *golus* will become increasingly more comfortable with obvious corrosive effects on the Jewish *neshomoh*?

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Letters to the Editor

The UOJCA and SCA

(The writer of the following letter is Administrator of the Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations of America, and Editor of Jewish Life. The letter has been abridged without the omission of any of Mr. Bernstein's salient points.)

To the Editor:

In Rabbi Chaim D. Keller's article appearing in the February 1966/Adar 5726 issue of THE JEWISH OBSERVER, it is stated: "The hard core of the Orthodox community and their rabbinic leaders have from its very inception to this day, rejected participation in the Synagogue Council [of America]." Whatever Rabbi Keller may have had in mind by use of the term "hard core," I believe the statement quoted is contrary to the facts. Perhaps the most notable aspect of the controversy surrounding this question is the apparent fact that neither at the inception of the Synagogue Council of America nor for many years thereafter did any element of American orthodox Jewry, whether rabbinic or lay, whether of Agudist or any other ideological category, "reject" or so much as register opposition to orthodox participation in this interdenominational agency.

The inception of the Synagogue Coun-

cil of America took place in 1926. While my own knowledge of the record may not be exhaustive, it is quite extensive; I have not been able to discover any trace whatsoever of any adverse expression concerning Synagogue Council participation outside the organs of the Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations of America prior to 1955. I surmise that Rabbi Keller's "hard core" configuration would correspond to the one given on Page 5 of the same issue of THE JEWISH OBSERVER, listing Agudath Israel and various other organizations as among the hard core of American Orthodoxy. Yet it seems that never, throughout the twenty-nine years from 1926 to 1955, was there the slightest indication of Agudist disapproval of orthodox Jewish participation in the SCA or of call for disassociation from SCA.

The conclusion is unavoidable that during this twenty-nine year period, Agudath Israel for one, far from having "rejected participation" in the Synagogue Council of America "from its very inception," did not oppose it all. The same conclusion is applicable to the other organizations included in the "hard core" listing. In or after 1955, when such opposition was newly expressed, this evidently was a reversal of the previous attitude on the part of all these groups . . .

Since orthodox participation in the SCA was initiated and for long years led and forwarded by Agudist-oriented figures, and since Agudath Israel voiced no objections over a period of twenty-nine years, the inference is unavoidable that Agudath Israel gave sanction to this association, which it presumably considered Halachically permissible and practically desirable.

The Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations of America necessarily embraces devotees of every shade of orthodox Jewish opinion, non-Agudist as well as Agudist. It is therefore evident that in this instance non-Agudist followed Agudist lead in participating in a mixed orthodox-Conservative-Reform association . . .

In this connection, it is in order to note that the numerous JEWISH OBSERVER articles devoted to the Synagogue Council issue have given the incorrect impression that this issue newly arose in 1955 or thereabouts, and that the question of orthodox Jewish position on participation in this agency was newly initiated, from outside the organs of the Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations of America, by a spontaneous action of a number of leading Roshey Yeshivoth. The facts are not in accordance with this supposition, which too has been assiduously propagated. In reality, the question was initiated entirely within UOJCA.

Long before the events leading to the promulgation of the *Issur* of the several

Roshey Yeshivoh, various people actively associated with UOJCA (not including any of the Agudah-associated UOJCA figures) became concerned with the question of the Union's participation in the Synagogue Council. In 1955, a particular development brought the question to the point of deliberation by the Union's participation in the Synagogue Council. The Halachic basis of the question was then referred for determination to the Rabbinical Council of America, the Union's associated Rabbinic body and Halachic authority. It was only at this time that the issue came into the area of wider public attention. And it was at this time that the group of eminent Roshey Yeshivoh were somehow prompted to take it up independently and thereupon, with notable abruptness, there emerged the celebrated *Issur*.

Be it noted that it was only then, after twenty-nine years of at least tacit support of Synagogue Council of America participation, that Agudath Israel announced its opposition to such participation, and similarly some other orthodox organizations . . .

SAUL BERNSTEIN
New York, N. Y.

REPLY TO MR. BERNSTEIN

First let it be clear that we *do* consider the Union to be part of the hard core of American Orthodoxy, in spite of our serious ideological differences with them. Our listing in the article referred to was in the context of Orthodox groups who have been ignored in the pages of *The New York Times*, and, for reasons made clear in that article, UOJCA is not in that category. It is precisely because of our recognition of the force for Torah that is represented by UOJCA that we have continued to raise this issue. We have no quarrel with the United Synagogue or the Union of American Hebrew Congregations for their participation in SCA; they belong there—the Union does not.

Now, let us look at the historical data. Mr. Bernstein states that none of the Orthodox groups that now oppose participation in SCA voiced such opposition when that body was organized, and that for twenty-nine years—until 1955—they gave SCA their tacit approval. He indicates that he has been reading us very carefully on the issue of SCA but he appears to have missed several paragraphs in our issue of September 1965 (*One Voice*). We noted at that time that when the Central Conference of Reform Rabbis initiated the concept of a synagogue body to include all Jewish groupings, the Agudas Harabbonim (Union of Orthodox Rabbis of the U. S. and Canada) the most logical group to represent Orthodoxy as the major rabbinical body, was invited to participate. Agudath Israel, not being a synagogue group per se, was no more a candidate for SCA than, for

example, Mizrahi. After the first planning session, the Agudas Harabbonim refused to affiliate with the planned council, and in the words of the official history of SCA: "Instead the recently formed Rabbinical Council of the UOJC (later the RCA) became the constituent representing the Orthodox Rabbinate." How, in this light, can Mr. Bernstein conclude that "In . . . 1955, when . . . opposition [to SCA] was newly expressed, this evidently was a reversal of the previous attitude on the part of all these groups." Rabbi Keller was then correct in stating that Orthodoxy rejected the SCA "from its very inception to this day."

If an individual member of Agudath in UOJCA supported the Union's participation in SCA he was acting on his own behalf and in opposition to the historic and fundamental positions of Agudath Israel which uncompromisingly opposed any religious alliances with groups not committed to Torah. It is therefore absurd to allege that since the Union "embraces . . . non-Agudist as well as Agudist devotees it is therefore evident that non-Agudists followed Agudist lead" in working with the SCA. The suggestion that THE JEWISH OBSERVER has concealed "Agudist ties" to SCA compounds the absurdity.

While concerned with the historical record, Mr. Bernstein ignores an aspect of history which he is surely aware of, having himself observed and participated in Orthodox Jewish life over several decades.

Following the end of World War II the yeshiva movement in this country became a reality. The yeshivos produced *musmachim* who entered the rabbinate, often going to small communities where a mixed rabbinic group functioned. It was not easy for a new rabbi in town to reject membership in such a group—though he felt intuitively that he must do so—and questions were put to various *Roshei Yeshivos* who instructed their *talmidim* not to join.

In 1956 the Igud Harabbonim (Rabbinical Alliance of America) raised the question of their participation in the Synagogue Council as a group. It was in response to that question that the *Gedolim* enunciated their firm opposition to any participation by an Orthodox rabbi or a group in mixed rabbinic and synagogue bodies, since this would recognize Reform and Conservatism as legitimate manifestations of Judaism. In issuing the *p'sak din* they stated:

We have been asked if it is permissible to . . . be a member of The New York Board of Rabbis, and similar groups in other communities . . . [and] if it is permissible . . . to be a member of the Synagogue Council of America . . . We have ruled that it is forbidden by the law of our sacred Torah to

participate with them either as an individual or as an organized communal body.

The *p'sak din* was signed by the greatest rabbinic authorities in the United States and firmly endorsed by *Gedolim* of Eretz Yisroel, among them Rabbi Zev Soloveitchik (Brisker Rav). It was clearly a re-affirmation of a policy adhered to over the years which flows most naturally from an understanding of Torah and the nature of the threat to Torah posed by Reform and Conservatism. Not a single *Godol* has ever dissented from this position and stated that an Orthodox rabbi or group may be a partner in a mixed group. It is ridiculous to believe that the *p'sak din* was the promulgation of a new policy over-riding a previous position.

Since, as Mr. Bernstein notes, UOJCA itself saw fit to raise the question of the propriety of its own membership in SCA in 1955, he leaves unanswered the basic question: Why after ten years, in the face of a statement made and affirmed by every great rabbinic authority without a single voice of dissent, is the UOJCA still a member of the Synagogue Council of America?

(A number of letters commenting on Rabbi Weinberger's, *The Yeshiva Bochur and College (March, 1966)* will appear in our next issue.)

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Agudath Israel on the Legislative Front

IN RECENT WEEKS Agudath Israel of America continued its efforts to help obtain fair treatment for the Yeshivos from funds they are entitled to under the Education Aid Law passed last year by Congress. The focal crisis erupted in New York City, where the Board of Education rejected a plan worked out by School Superintendent Bernard Donovan after nine months of negotiations with the public school authorities.

On March 30th, Agudath Israel addressed a hearing at the Board of Education, calling for the immediate implementation of the benefits mandated by federal law. The Agudah spokesman pointed out that unless New York City provides "comparable and equitable services" for the disadvantaged children in non-public schools it would be a direct violation of the federal law. He lashed out at the American Jewish Congress whose spokesman appeared at the hearing to urge the rejection of the proposals

agreed to between Superintendent Donovan and the non-public schools.

WORKING CLOSELY WITH Torah Umesorah, the educational agency authorized by the Yeshivos to represent them officially in federal-aid arrangements with New York City's Board of Education, Agudath Israel mounted a vigorous campaign to prevent the emasculating of the benefits which the non-public schools would receive. Unfortunately, the Board of Education bowed to the pressure of the church-state-separation extremists, and in a surprising ruling on April 6th issued new directives which radically narrowed down the areas of benefits available to non-public schools. The Yeshivos especially were dealt a hard blow, because the new regulations insisted that after 3 o'clock the non-public school children must go to public schools to obtain their services. As a result of this decision, the 49 Yeshivos located in New York City's poverty areas, originally slated to obtain over \$1,000,000 in services and equipment this year, will now receive benefits valued at only \$200,000.

ON APRIL 18TH, Agudath Israel participated in an emergency conference convened in Washington, with the participation of top officials of the U. S. Office of Education, the New York State Department of Education and leaders of the various denominations of non-public schools. The conference pinpointed the New York City crisis, and the charge that the local education officials were violating the legislative intent of the Federal Education Act was fully aired. The government officials at the meeting promised to seek means of remedying the situation.

Since the end of April, the program for the non-public schools began to function in a limited manner, primarily due to the decision of the Yeshivos that they

cannot send their children to public schools for the benefits to which they are entitled. Presently, the Yeshivos in the poverty neighborhoods are primarily benefiting from such services as speech therapy, corrective-reading instruction and library equipment. The struggle for justice for the Yeshivos will continue unabated.

RABBI MORRIS SHERER, executive vice-president of Agudath Israel of America testified in Washington on April 27th before the Senate Education Committee, at the invitation of its chairman Senator Wayne Morse. He sharply criticized the handful of public education officials who are sabotaging the full implementation of the Federal Aid Law for students of non-public schools. He called upon the Senate to extend and expand the benefits of its education-aid efforts which is "changing the American dream from a nightmare of want and deprivation for the disadvantaged into a meaningful, attainable goal for every American child."

Rabbi Sherer also urged the Senate Committee not to be misled by "Jewish groups with high-sounding names that are waging a continuing campaign of harassment against the full implementation of the law." (A full copy of this Senate testimony is available by writing to the national office of Agudath Israel.)

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Rabbi Leib Gurwicz Named European Agudah Head

RABBI LEIB GURWICZ, the Rosh Yeshiva of the famed Gateshead Yeshiva in England and a renowned Torah scholar, has accepted the call of the European section of the world executive of Agudath Israel to become its chairman, as the successor of the late Rabbi Avraham Babad, of blessed memory. The news of Rabbi Gurwicz's emergence as a top-level leader in the international Agudist movement has generated deep satisfaction in all circles.

Agudist Camps Open June 30

PREPARATIONS ARE IN full swing for the official opening on June 30th of Camp Agudah for boys and Camp Bnos for girls, the summer projects sponsored by Agudath Israel of America. The camps, located in Ferndale and Liberty, New York, will serve children from every part of the United States and Canada.

Registration for Camp Agudah closed the first week in May, and Camp Bnos registration will close on June 1st. The camp season is divided into two trips: 5 weeks and 4 weeks. Crews of laborers are working feverishly during the spring months to construct new facilities in the camps and to refurbish the existing accommodations.

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