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Are We Preparing
Torah Communicators?

From Spain to the Holy Land

Reward and Punishment –
Its Meaning to Modern Man

Point of Order, Mr. Chairman...

Daf Yomi Is a Bridge

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AS THIS ISSUE WAS BEING PREPARED FOR THE PRESS, WORD CAME OF THE PASSING OF RABBI ELIEZER SILVER IN CINCINNATI, OHIO. RABBI SILVER WAS ONE OF THE GREATEST RABBINIC LEADERS OF AMERICAN JEWRY, AND PRESIDUM MEMBER OF AGUDATH ISRAEL OF AMERICA. WE JOIN KLAL YISROEL IN MOURNING HIS LOSS.

Are We Preparing Torah Communicators?

Salesman or Sage — Who Will They Listen To?

THINGS DON'T JUST HAPPEN ANYMORE—they 'explode.' Whether we are talking about population, information, communication, integration—they are all 'exploding,' or about to.

A good deal of the explosion-mentality is a by-product, or perhaps a major product of, the . . . shall we say 'explosion' . . . in the mass-communication industry. Perhaps society's concern with explosions is somehow related to the fear of a real explosion . . . The Bomb.

The success of the mass-communication media depends on constantly rousing excitement among the masses, even where no cause for excitement actually exists. Thus, we become hysterical when we are 'programmed' for hysteria; little people become giants when exposed to the rays of electronic communication; and crises are created in the electronic tube, only to become 'real' when they emerge. Speculation becomes 'fact'; rumor becomes 'history.' Our doorways open wide to our neighbors, in defiance of walls and distance, and the steam that rises from other people's tea-pots assumes intoxicating shapes of momentous import. Our sense of priority and balance has withered to nothingness.

This monstrous power of distortion seeps under our closed doors—it leaves no area of our lives untouched and unaffected. The ability of the statesman to master the new media, aided by the make-up expert and the professional director, has become the key to his success—or failure—to win the allegiance of the masses. Leadership has been wrested from the Sage by the Salesman. In our free society, power has been grasped by the effective communicator. We have already been told by the oracle of the electronic age that the medium is the message—a thought we stubbornly resist out of fear that it may be true.

JEWISH LIFE, in our society, suffers the same affliction. The mass-media strongly influence our interests and our values; and we are often not aware of the changes. In one form or another, we are shaped by *The New York Times* and Bonwit Teller. Jewish

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leadership is in the hands of those who can best make use of the new techniques of communication.

The struggle of Orthodox Jewry to salvage neshomos, today hinges on our ability to communicate. Paradoxically—with the phenomenal growth we have experienced—it is in the area of communication that we have been most negligent—and most unsuccessful.

With few exceptions, we have conceded the formation of the attitudes, the values, and the opinions of the average Orthodox Jew, to either our own 'left-wing,' or to the non-Orthodox. This is as curious as it is tragic. The majority of America's Orthodox Jewry, which should find greater affinity in the values espoused by our Gedolim, is often manipulated to oppose Daas Torah. This is surprising when we contemplate that the willingness to simply be known as an Orthodox Jew involves a commitment to Torah values, and acceptance of Torah as the guide to every aspect of life. And yet, in most every case of public contention, these people have not thrown their support to the Gedolim.

In a sense, we learned to expect this reaction—even to accept it—as we busily entrenched ourselves in the *daled amos shel halocha*. We believed that as our young people emerged from the yeshivos, endowed with allegiance to Torah, as personified by their rosh yeshiva, they would go into the frontlines and reverse the tide. What has actually happened?

A new generation of balebotim *has* emerged from the beis medrash—from the yeshivos, the day schools and the mesivtos, taking with them—in varying degrees—familiarity with the well-springs of Torah. They are not all scholars—it is to their credit that they know this. They are committed to Torah, and they have entered the world as businessmen and professionals; some have entered the rabbinate. And yet . . . as time separates them from the beis medrash, they grow more and more susceptible to attitudes and philosophies which are alien to the spirit of the beis medrash—attitudes they might themselves have condemned in their earlier years. One can only surmise—but there is good reason to think that this is true of a large group of our new Orthodox generation; and it is they who will shape the Orthodox communities, yeshivos, day schools,

and institutions, throughout the country. And if their number is smaller than it appears to be, they are in any case more vocal.

It would be an error to maintain that they are bereft of loyalty to Gedolei Torah—but this must be further developed. But . . . who shall do this? Who will help them to have the understanding to bend with certain winds, and to resist others? Who will win their confidence, and shape their attitudes?—will it be the Salesman . . . or the Sage?

It is evident, that the voice that addresses them most often and most intelligibly, will win their allegiance. If it is indeed the Salesman, and not the Sage, who reaches people today, then like-it-or-not, we must train our own Salesman—all the better if he is a bit of a Sage—and send him out to sell. To fail to do this is suicidal. It is just no longer the case that the Jewish masses, even the Orthodox, will submit to the leadership of Torah authority—simply on the basis of authority. (Every college freshman ‘knows’ that “appeal to authority” is a shabby way to prove anything.)

Of course, there has always been a need for effective communication. In the decades preceding and following the turn of the century, the language gap, the cultural gap, coupled with the generation gap, made communication between father and son, mother and daughter, extremely difficult, if not impossible. Today, the need is at least as great as ever, but the possibilities are even greater. But what are we doing to train our people to communicate with those outside?

BEFORE ATTEMPTING to answer this question, we must first take a look at the composition of the student bodies of our yeshivos. All education interacts with the environment of the students—religious education even more so reflects the interaction of the degree of observance at home and the intensity of instruction in the school. Most yeshivos have found that their curriculum needs to be adjusted to mitigate against the conflicts that will inevitably arise between home and school. Ideally, the yeshivah or day school should provide an environment of total commitment to Torah and its values, but this is not feasible unless the student body is drawn primarily from Orthodox families—a circumstance found only, as a rule, in the Yiddish-speaking yeshivos.

These yeshivos, with a homogeneous student population, have a distinct advantage over other yeshivos. The learning program is more intense, and the dedication to Torah as the totality of Jewish life comes through more forcefully. Since development of Torah scholarship is the prerequisite for Torah leadership, we could hopefully look to these yeshivos to develop the Godol b'Torah. Such institutions should be aware of their responsibilities in this area and set their sights in this direction.

However, there are two distinct types of Yiddish-

speaking yeshivos: the Chassidic type, and the type more indigenous to America. We must, of necessity, rule out those Chassidic yeshivos—as a source for Torah communicators—which have chosen the path of isolating themselves from the society in which they live.

It is, then, the yeshivos whose students are exposed to the American scene, that we must look to for our Torah communicators. These young people are aware of the attractions, and the distractions, that our society has to offer. Inherent in their yeshiva training is the principle of selectivity in adopting cultural mores, with Torah as the yardstick. Exposed to affirmative Torah values at home and at school, and yet living in American society, they offer the most likely potential to develop as communicators of Torah.

AND HERE LIES THE TRAGEDY: we are doing pitifully little to develop these youngsters' capacity for expressing Torah perspectives when they enter adult life. We expose them to the world of thought; we train them in the processes of thought—but we do little to prepare them to express this thought outside their own group.

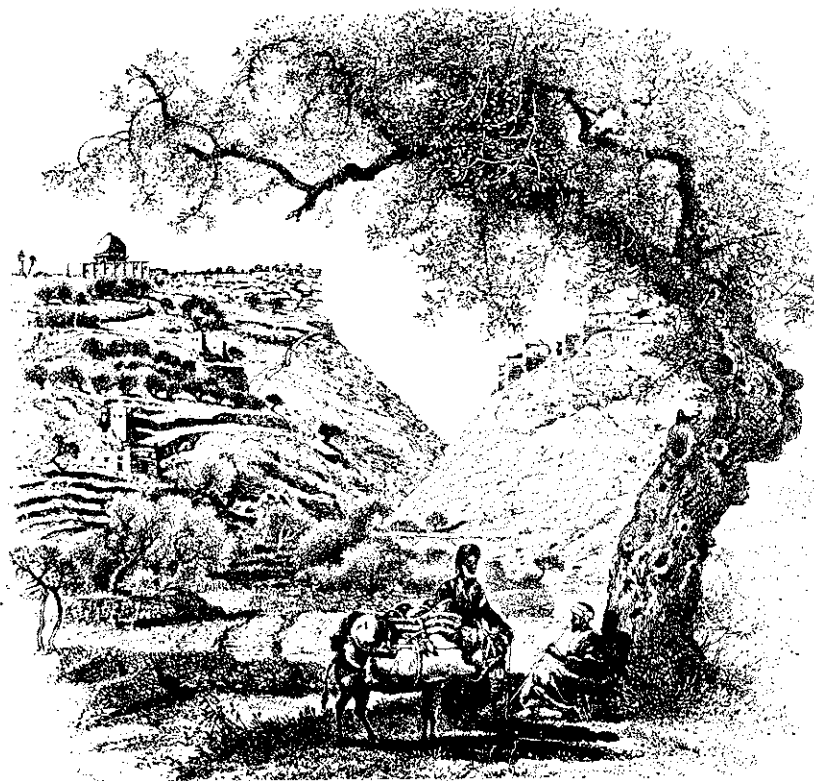
Orthodox Jews delight in pointing to the achievements of yeshivah students in their secular studies—yet in the language-arts courses, where students are taught to communicate orally and by the written word, students in Yiddish-speaking yeshivos consistently perform poorly. One researcher has found this to be the case in several such yeshivos with otherwise excellent secular-studies departments. That the poor achievement is compensated for by unusually high achievement in mathematics and the sciences offers little consolation. It is not the purpose of our yeshivos to produce scientists and academics—it is their purpose to assure Jewish survival. And in this struggle for Jewish survival we desperately need young people who can reach out to their brothers and sisters and win them back to Torah. *We are not producing such people.*

AS ORTHODOXY GROWS throughout America, we will more and more be looking to the yeshivos for well-trained, competent personnel to staff our schools and communal institutions. It will be *their* task to lead, to influence, to guide those many Jews who lack basic Jewish understanding, but yearning for it. They cannot do this successfully without ability in oral and written communication. Many young men with leadership potential, shy away from it because they are aware of their limitations in communication. Others make the attempt . . . and fail, leaving communal work out of sheer frustration—a tragic loss to Klal Yisroel. *When we fail these young people, we fail ourselves.*

Yeshivah educators in the religious—as well as secular-studies departments must begin to react to this problem. The reasons for this deficiency in the language arts are far from obvious, but we can see some of the causes even before we study it in depth. but first, we must become convinced that it is indeed a deficiency.

C. B. Chavel

From Spain to the Holy Land



It is seven hundred years since an elderly man approached the gates of the Holy City of Jerusalem on a late summer day. He had come a long way to behold this sight, traveling from Spain over mountains and oceans, to see this "beautiful height, the Joy of the World, the City of the Great King."

He gave thanks to his Creator for having reached his goal. The words of the Psalmist formed on his lips — "Our feet stand within your gates, O Jerusalem."

But as he entered the gates he was seized by grief and sorrow; he saw destruction and desolation; buildings only recently plundered and burned by the Mongol invaders; the population reduced to two thousand souls, and hardly a minyan of Jews. The joyous song

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gave way to agony, and he tore his garments in mourning for the destruction of Jerusalem.

When he reached the site of the Beis Hamikdosh, he again tore his garments for "the Temple and its Courts which lie in ruins." Out of the agony of his soul he cried out, "What is the most holy has suffered most destruction."

When he was able to still his tears, the old man sought out the handful of Jews still in the city. His first objective was to form a minyan. An abandoned building was dedicated as a beis haknesses, and a new foundation was created for the Jewish community of Jerusalem which has continued to this very day.

It was on the ninth day of Elul in the year 5027 that at the age of seventy two, Rabbeinu Moshe ben Nachman, the Ramban, fulfilled his life-long dream of living in the Holy City.

A letter Ramban wrote to his son Nachman lays bare the soul of the writer:

May the Lord bless you, my son Nachman, may you see the good of Jerusalem, and may you see your children's children. . . .

I am writing to you from Jerusalem, the Holy City, for thanks and praise to the Rock of my salvation, I was deemed worthy and safely arrived here on the ninth of Elul, and remained in safety until the day after Yom Kippur. I now intend to go to Chevron, the burial place of our Fathers and Mothers, there to pray on their graves, and to prepare a burial place for myself with G-d's help.

What shall I tell you about the Land? There are so many forsaken places, and the desolation is great. It comes down to this: the more sacred the place, the more it has suffered—Jerusalem is most desolate, Judea more so than Galilee. Yet in all its desolation it is an exceedingly good land.

The Holy City has two thousand souls, three hundred of them Christians who escaped the Sultan's sword—and almost no Jews. They fled when the Tartars came here—those who weren't killed. There are two brothers, dyers by trade, who buy their supplies from the local government. It is in their house that the minyan gather every Shabbos. At our urging, they have found a vacant building with marble columns and a beautiful cupola which we have adopted as a shul—the city is ownerless and anyone who cares to, takes possession of the ruins.

They have already sent to Shechem for the return of the sifrei torah removed from Jerusalem when the Tartar invasion began. This way a beis haknesses will be established where all can pray; men and women constantly arrive in Jerusalem—from Damascus, Aleppo, and other areas, to visit the site of the Mikdash and to mourn.

Now—may He who has deemed us worthy to see Jerusalem in its destruction, deem us worthy to see the City restored and rebuilt when the glory of the Divine Presence returns. And you, my son, and your brother, and the whole of our family—may you all live to see the good of Jerusalem and the consolation of Zion.

Your concerned and forgetting father who sees and rejoices, Moshe, the son of Nachman of blessed memory.*

Extend my good wishes to my son and student R' Moshe, ben Shlomo of blessed memory, your mother's brother. Let him know that I went up the Mount of Olives, which faces the Har Habayis with the valley of Jehosophat between them. There—facing the Sanctuary, I read the stanzas he had composed, crying bitterly as I read. May He who has caused His Name to rest in the Sanctuary, magnify your well-being, together with that of your entire honored and sacred community, now and forever after, Amein.

* The intent in the Hebrew text is not too clear. In my commentary to the Hebrew text of this letter (*Kisvei HaRamban* I, p. 368) I suggested that it may be based upon the Biblical Verse: "Anxiety in a man's heart makes it sink; but a kindly word will turn in into gladness" (Proverbs 12, 25). In that case the sense of Ramban's words, would be as follows: "Your father who is concerned about you; and only when he forgets these his concerns can he see this exceedingly good land and rejoices—but how can he forget you!"

With a beis haknesses provided for the Holy City, Ramban turned to the creation of a beis medrash, which would attract students from neighboring lands. When word of his presence spread, many came to the Land to study with him.

On Rosh Hashonoh, 5028, the Ramban addressed the congregation in the city of Acco. In his drasha, he spoke of the shofar and Yom Ha'Din, and he closed with an outpouring of elation over the beauty and the holiness of Eretz Yisroel, and of the privilege of living in the Land—"the palace of the King." It was this sanctity of the Land, he concluded, which "has taken me from my country and made me wander. I forsook my family, my house—became a stranger to my sons and daughters, because I yearned to be a wanderer,

clasped in the bosom of my mother"—an allusion to his wish to be buried in the soil of the Holy Land.

Surprisingly, his involvement in communal affairs did not diminish the Ramban's literary activity. He continued, in the three years he lived in the Land, to produce one masterpiece after another. He became acquainted with the geography of the Land, and saw many passages of the Torah in a new light, and he incorporated these insights into the final section of his classic Commentary on the Torah.

Some of the pain he felt in being separated from his family was alleviated by his correspondence. His most famous letter, *Iggeres Musar*, was addressed to his son Nachman, and it is a classic statement of the virtue of humility.

Give heed, my son, to your father's instructions, and do not forsake your mother's teaching.

Accustom yourself to always speak calmly and quietly to all men, at all times. This will spare you from anger, which is the evil most conducive to sin. As our Sages have said: "He who becomes angry is as one who worships idols."

When you will be delivered from anger, the quality of humility—best of all traits—will arise in your heart. It was humility which was singled out for praise of Moshe Rabbeinu, of blessed memory, as it is said: "And Moshe was exceedingly humble." It was this trait of humility which made him worthy that the Torah be given through him, and which caused him to be designated "the master of all prophets."

The humble is beloved on High, as it is said: "He [the Almighty] dwells with him who is contrite and humble in spirit." . . . As a consequence of humility the fear of G-d will come upon you. . . .

Hold fast to these qualities, and you will then be pleased with your lot—a most admirable trait. As the Mishnah puts it: "He is truly rich who is content with his lot."

*If you practice humility, you will act modestly before all men, fear your Creator who gives you life, and fear to transgress His will. Then the spirit of His presence and His Glory will rest upon you, and you will live a life of the world to come.**

My son, understand clearly, that he who raises himself—out of pride—over other men, rebels against the Kingdom of Heaven, for he adorns himself in the vestments of G-d . . . And the Almighty says of the proud man: "He and I cannot dwell together." Therefore, humble yourself, and the Lord will raise you up.

And now, my son, let me instruct you in the ways of humility—that you may follow them always.

* The author here alludes to a concept which he states in several of his works — that one can in this life experience "Olam Haboh," as, for example, Shabbos is described as "mei-en Olam Haboh!" — a bit of eternity.

- *Let all your words be spoken quietly . . . with love and cheerfulness.*
- *Let your head not be held high—let your eyes be turned down while your heart looks up. . . .*
- *Let every man seem in your eyes to be greater than you. . . .*
- *In every thought, word, and deed, let your heart be filled with the awareness that you are standing before the King of Kings with His Presence upon you. . . .*
- *Let each word you utter be spoken with . . . fear and reverence, like a servant before his master. . . .*
- *Study Torah day and night, for only this way will you be able to fulfill its commandments—it is your life and the length of your days. And when you rise from your sefer, translate into action what the printed word has taught you.*
- *Examine your behavior constantly, in the morning and evening of each day, so that you may depart from evil and do good. In this way you will spend all your life in sincere penitence.*
- *When you offer your Silent Prayer (SHMONEH ESRAI) cleanse your heart of all worldly concerns, and let your mind be occupied only with seeking out the proper kavanah for your prayer . . . Then will your prayer be acceptable before Hakodosh-Boruch-Hu.*
- *The power of life and death lies in the power of speech; he who guards his speech, guards himself from misfortune. Therefore, contemplate always your every word—before you utter it . . . and you will not sin.*

My son, read this letter once a week; do what it asks of you, and it will aid you in walking always with G-d, so that you may prosper in all your ways, and be held worthy for all the good that is in store for the righteous.

To his son Shlomo, who was in government service, the Ramban offered the following counsel.

“Just as a man disciplines his son, so the Lord your G-d disciplines you.” May the Lord bless you and keep you from sin and punishment.

My son, be on your guard to read the SHEMA morning and evening and to pray three times each day. Bless G-d before and after your meal, as the Law prescribes. Let nothing keep you from reading the weekly portion on each Shabbos, and always carry with you a properly written Chumash. . . .

Perform your duties at court with reverence and

integrity. Avoid contact with the ladies of court—our G-d despises immorality . . .

Remember me always, my son, and let my countenance be always before your eyes—let it never leave you. Love nothing which you know I despise. Be with me always. Observe the mitzvohs—and live. Keep on your lips the verses “I am but a stranger in the land; hide not your commandments from me.”

It was these words addressed to his family that helped to sustain the Ramban from the distress he suffered in his separation from family and home. Thus he managed to lay the foundation in the Holy City upon which succeeding generations were to build. □

Reward and Punishment — Its Meaning to Modern Man

Every age has its own outlook — born from the travail of the human mind as it wrestles with the conditions of life that it encounters. A product of man's limited insight, time-bound and necessarily imperfect, the spirit of each age inevitably clashes at some point with the divine teachings of the Torah, which are *applicable* to all times — in *accord* with none.

Let us consider our time. Much has been written about "religion in the age of science." The advocates of a new and modern theology have argued that there is no longer any room for the idea of a supreme being who rules our universe, in a world in which all phenomena are gradually being explained by means of immutable laws of nature. The universe is seen as a self-contained entity, molded by laws of cause and effect which account for its origin, its evolution, its present state, and its future. In such a world there is indeed no place for G-d.

Now it is true that this conception of the human mind which, a few generations ago swept triumphantly through the civilized world, no longer commands such universal allegiance. Science itself, in pushing the frontiers of knowledge ever further, has come to perceive some of its own limitations and the existence of ultimate questions which it is not competent to answer ever. Arrogant atheism no longer rides as high as it once did—and in consequence, the attacks on our faith in G-d have been somewhat muted.

However, that has not meant that the spirit of our age furthers, or even acquiesces in a truly meaningful religious understanding of the world. Even where the belief in G-d may be tolerated, its concrete implications are all too often rejected, leaving it a sterile and in effect meaningless idea. Crucial in this connection, is the doctrine of reward and punishment—central, as we shall see, to a religious worldview, yet ever so alien to the spirit of our age and therefore exceedingly difficult for modern man to accept.

The Rambam, in the eleventh of his principals of faith, gave expression to our belief that "*the Creator, blessed be He, rewards those that keep His commandments, and punishes the transgressors of His commandments.*"¹ In this terse statement, the Rambam summed up the Torah's constant emphasis that our welfare depends on our compliance with G-d's will:

*"If you will listen to the voice of G-d, your G-d . . . all these blessings will come upon you . . . and . . . if you will not listen to the voice of G-d, your G-d . . . there will come upon you all these curses."*²

It should be self-evident that any religious worldview that denies a relationship between man's actions and those of G-d, drives a wedge between G-d and world and, in effect, robs religion of any real significance for mankind. Hence the central place which the idea of divine retribution for man's deeds occupies in the Torah scheme of things.

Questions, it is true, were already raised about aspects of this doctrine in earlier ages. Are sinners *always* punished, and the righteous *always* rewarded? The reply that the place where each receives his true deserts is in *Olom Haboh*, has always, by necessity, invited questions about the meaning of *Gan Eden* and *Gehinnom*. These questions, often the result of the infantile concepts of our childhood, find their answer readily in our Torah literature. In our age, however, the concept of reward and punishment itself is challenged.

IN HIS MATERIAL PURSUITS, modern man readily understands that, say, the successful salesman will be rewarded, while the unsuccessful one will suffer consequences; but he is most reluctant to think of G-d dispensing retribution in like manner. The reason?—as stated at the outset: Modern man sees himself as living in a strictly mechanical universe, governed by the scientific laws of cause and effect. Any interference with the operation of these laws—and that is what supernatural reward and punishment seems to be—appear to him an unnatural, nay capricious upsetting of the proper order of things. Even if he does not hold that G-d *cannot* interfere in the working of the natural universe, he refuses to believe that this is what G-d occupies Himself with. Indeed, he considers it unworthy of G-d, as he equates the idea of divine re-

tribution with that of petty and willful human vengeance.

In reality, this is a complete misunderstanding of the doctrine of reward and punishment. In trying to clarify it, we may find a deeper understanding not only of this concept, but of life and the world itself.

A Dualistic World

Man actually lives in a dualistic world. *One* aspect of it we see when we consider its outward appearance. This is the aspect that is studied by science, and is understood and explained by the theories of the scientist and scholar; here the laws of nature rule. But there is also *another* aspect, which underlies the world of science and is not amenable to the research tools of the scientist. It too, is governed by laws—but *these are the laws of divine justice.*

We take it for granted that a man taking a lethal poison will suffer fatal consequences unless the proper antidote is quickly administered in the proper manner. In exactly the same way, human actions automatically evoke consequences commensurate with the actions that brought them about. This higher, moral causality is what we usually call divine reward and punishment.

It is this higher system of laws which truly determine the fate of man; but it achieves its goal by using, by working through the laws of nature. "*It is not the snake that kills, but the sin*"—in this way the Talmud expresses this fundamental principle. No wonder that Jewish tradition calls the world of nature "the world of appearances," while the deeper reality is termed "the world of truth."

(Perhaps the interactions of moral and natural factors is easier for us to understand in the light of the findings of psychosomatic medicine, which has shown the influence mental attitudes have on the functioning of the body. Or we can think of the effect of matters of the spirit upon political and social developments; a case in point was Hitler's maniacal, wounded pride that caused him to undertake the Balkan campaign of 1941 and delayed the invasion of Russia by the crucial four weeks which it is generally agreed were the margin of victory or defeat.)

The concept here developed was stated by one of the great personalities of the Mussar movement in these words:

*We see from many sayings of our Sages that the spiritual causes are hidden causes that also were provided for in the law of Nature, to work upon and to guide the affairs of world and man. However, the physical causes are clearly recognizable in practical life, while the spiritual causes, which are concerned with more elevated matters, are not so visible to the eye. But, in truth, they are stronger than the physical causes . . .*³

And he points out that under this deeper system of divine laws, "reward and punishment are not, as people think, separate from man's deeds, so that one would give him some reward for a good deed, and would punish him for a bad deed. In truth, a mitzvah and its reward, a sin and its punishment are one thing, for so it was ordained in the system of creation."⁴

Looked at in this way, divine retribution is no petty dispensing of carrot or stick; but *an automatic process built into the very structure of our universe.* Just as the consequences of ingesting poison are predictable and unavoidable, and cannot be forestalled by incantations or recriminations—and nobody sees this as being terribly strange—so too, sin carries with it its own consequences that cannot be forestalled by empty gestures. Of course, there are antidotes for poison that will neutralize its effects—but such an antidote also exists for sin: *teshuvah*, repentance, which is the only way of undoing the consequences of a sin.

The Divine Quality of Justice

Our Sages expressed the deeper lawfulness of our universe by saying that the world was created by the divine quality of justice (or law). In other words, it is not a world following its own blind course, whose inhabitants are at the mercy of natural forces, in no way the concern of the deity that created them. Nor even, is it a world in which the deity will intervene, when necessary, to contend with the forces of nature. It is a world that is itself totally based upon G-d's will for justice: the world has an ultimate purpose and every human act of omission or commission will evoke the response which will make sure that the world will not be diverted from the attainment of its final goal. We may see in world history a vast educational process—and the laws of divine justice are meant to assure its ultimate success.

The terms 'reward' and 'punishment' are actually misnomers, when seen in this light. They describe the consequences, pleasant or unpleasant from our earthly viewpoint, necessary to offset harmful actions of men and to encourage proper behavior. In explaining the Rabbinic statement that "*there is no reward for mitzvos in this world,*" the Rambam writes:

*He assured us in the Torah that if we will keep it joyfully and in good heart, and will always ponder wisdom, he will keep away from us all the things which prevent us from observing it, such as sickness, hunger, and the like, and he will pour upon us all the good things that will strengthen us to keep the Torah, like plentifulness, peace, and much gold and silver, so that we shall not have to spend our days on our bodily needs but will be free to study wisdom and keep the law, in order to attain life in the Future World.*⁵

“We take it for granted that a man taking a lethal poison will suffer fatal consequences unless the proper antidote is quickly administered in the proper manner. In exactly the same way, human actions automatically evoke consequences commensurate with the actions that brought them about. This higher, moral causality is what we usually call divine reward and punishment.”

Conversely, the evildoer who will not use the earthly gifts entrusted to him according to G-d's will, fails to promote the purpose for which he—and the world—came into existence and therefore, automatically forfeits his blessings. Sometimes of course, the divine purpose is furthered by the righteous man undergoing tribulations—which he will accept, to his still greater glory, as truly being “for the good”—and by the sinner flourishing—to his even greater undoing as he prides himself on his ill-gotten successes,⁶ but, ultimately, “G-d knows the way of the righteous, and the way of the sinners perishes,”⁷ from its own evilness.

(This, it must be emphasized again, is not a matter of ‘reward’. Reward for a mitzvoh, in the simple sense of the word, must be spiritual—and that, indeed, is the only form of reward, deserving of this name. The mitzvoh, elevating the soul of man, produces, in the first place and on this earth, further mitzvos; and ultimately it prepares the soul to be able to receive the unfathomable spiritual bliss of the World to Come, as described by our Sages.⁸

MANY EXAMPLES could be cited from *T'nach* to demonstrate the working of the moral law, and moral causality, in our world. “These are the paths of everyone who pursues gain: it takes the soul of its owners.”⁹ King Solomon avers—and he reiterates his warning to the evildoers: “They will eat the fruit of their way, and be sated from their schemes. For the rebelliousness of the fools will kill them . . .”¹⁰ The destiny of the Jewish People throughout its history is in fact reduced by Isaac to a law of history when he assures Esau: “It shall be, when my sons will transgress the laws of the Torah, you will throw off Jacob's yoke from your neck.”¹¹ The Torah, our Sages say, is the blueprint

of creation—and the destinies of all creatures necessarily depend upon their conformity to Torah.

When we speak of divine providence thus working through the moral law, and in turn, the laws of nature, we do not, of course, mean to imply that things *must* be this way. All we can say is that G-d—“He who renews each day the work of creation”—chooses to do so according to principles that we call the laws of nature; and He has chosen, too, to have these laws operate in such a way as to conform to an even higher principle—that of divine justice—as the ultimate law of the universe. R' Mosheh Chaim Luzzatto eloquently expressed the significance of this:

G-d is a G-d of truth . . . Since the Holy One Blessed be He desires justice, ignoring the bad would be as much of an injustice as ignoring the good. If He desires justice, He must deal with every man according to his ways.”

To the question of what function G-d's quality of mercy then performs, he points out three expressions of G-d's mercy:

*It provides that the sinner be given time and not be blotted out as soon as he sins; that the punishment itself not involve utter destruction; and that the gift of repentance is given to sinners . . . so that the rooting out of the will which prompted the deed be considered a rooting out of the deed itself.*¹²

Divine mercy, then, qualifies but does not negate the operation of divine justice. This is the true “law of nature” of our universe. Modern man is right when he sees himself in a world of law, of cause and effect, —but he must find them far beyond the reaches of scientific experimentations, in the realm of divine providence. □

1. Cf. the Rambam's introduction to *Perek Chelek*, in his Mishnah Commentary, and particularly his comments on the eleventh principle.
2. *Devarim* 28, 1-5.
3. Rabbi Joseph Yehudah Leib Bloch, *Shiurei Daas* I, p. 108.
4. *Ibid*, p. 144.

5. YAD HACHAZOKH: *Hilchos Teshuvah*, Ch. 9.
6. *Shiurei Daas* I, pp. 108-110 for the complexities of moral causality, which make it impossible for man to find a simple correlation between human deeds and divine ‘reaction.’
7. *Tehillim* 1, 6.
8. Cf. Rabbi E. L. Dessler, *Michtav M'El'yohu* I, p. 4; seen in this light

the whole question of human deeds and divine ‘reaction’ becomes altogether insignificant, p. 19.
9. *Mishlei* 1, 19.
10. *Ibid*, 1, 31-32.
11. The rendering of *Bereshis* 27, 40 by *Targum Onkelos*.
12. *Mesillath Yeshorim*, Ch. 4 (transl., S. Silverstein).

Daf Yomi — *Entering the Seventh Cycle*

It is characteristic of greatness in Torah scholarship, that when the lamdan has posed a difficult question—or answered one—that others wonder, “Why didn’t I think of that myself?” The brilliance of mind is as immediately evident as is the seeming simplicity of the thought.

This aspect of greatness carries over into the actions of the godol; into his thinking, his ideas, his reactions to circumstances which leave the smaller mind wondering where to go to find the answer.

WHAT COULD BE SIMPLER?—in a time when Jews are scattered over the face of the earth; when study of Torah has slackened—what better way to bind them together, and at the same time stimulate Torah study:

Let every Jew whose love for Torah takes him to his gemmorah, learn a daf each day, with the joy of knowing that thousands of his fellow Jews throughout the world are learning that very same daf, pondering a Rashi, delving into a Tosfos—in Jerusalem and New York, in

Paris and Melbourne, in London and Johannesburg, in Chicago and Buenos Aires.

Simple?—of course. Yet we had to wait until the third day of Elul of 5683, when the great Gaon, R’ Meir Shapiro, ל”צ, arose to address the first Knessiah Gedola of Agudath Israel, convened in Vienna, and electrified the huge assembly with his proposal for the *Daf Yomi*.

At the Knessia, the call went out: “*World Jewry obligates itself to learn each day, one specified daf gemorah beginning with Maseches B’rochos on Rosh Hashonah, 5684.*”

Initially, Rabbi Shapiro modestly proposed that the *Daf Yomi* be adopted by the young people who are the potential leaders and scholars of the future; but it was quickly adopted by those who were already immersed in study of Torah. The Gedolei Torah enthusiastically supported the spread of *Daf Yomi* not only by encouraging it, but by their own example. The Gerer Rebbe, ל”צ, following Ma’ariv on Rosh Hashonah, announced “I’m going

to learn the *Daf Yomi*.”

The *Chofetz Chaim*, ל”צ, referred to R’ Meir Shapiro as “R’ Daf Yomi,” and he used to say of him that he was “a mass-producer of Torah.”

It immediately became the practice that all newspapers and journals of Agudath Israel listed the *daf yomi* for each day.

In the month of Teves of this year, the sixth complete cycle of the study of *Shas* through the *Daf Yomi* was completed, and it was celebrated by masses of Jews organized by Agudath Israel in Jerusalem and New York, in London—in communities throughout the world.

The success of the *Daf-Yomi* concept symbolizes the ability of Torah Jewry to create new forms in response to the specific challenges of each epoch in Jewish life. As such, it is unparalleled in modern Jewish history—except in the sense that it is symbolic of the very concept of Agudath Israel itself, which created the climate for the conception of *Daf Yomi*, and mobilized the masses of Torah Jewry to the extent that *Daf Yomi*, and the many other educational and communal institutions nurtured by Agudath Israel, could take root and restore Torah and Torah learning to its central position in Jewish life. □

The Chofetz Chaim: on Daf Yomi

When R’ Meir Shapiro visited Radin, the Chofetz Chaim told him:

“I am especially fond of you—and why?—because of the Daf Yomi. You have to your credit a tremendous achievement, and in Heaven they are pleased with your efforts. You should know that there—in the ‘World of Truth’—man is not honored for his good deeds nearly as much as he is honored for his study of Torah.

“In the World to Come, each Jew is honored

for the measure of Torah he has studied. They call out: WELCOME TO THE MAN WHO STUDIED MESECHTES B’ROCHOS; WELCOME TO THE MAN WHO STUDIED MESECHTES SHABBOS. Each one sits on a seat engraved with the name of the mesechta which he learn’d.

“Until now, many of the seats were empty; people studied only certain mesechtos, neglecting others. But now, thanks to you, all the seats are being filled, and what joy there is in Heaven!”

Daf Yomi
is a
Bridge



**An Address to the First Siyum
by R'Meir Shapiro**

זכר צדיק לברכה

IN THE YEAR 5684, on the day of Rosh Hashono, tens of thousands of Jews took to hand the first *mesechta* of *Shas* and began to learn the words: "From what time may we read the Shema . . ." They have all reached the last *mesechta* of *Shas*, and on this *Rosh Hashonah L'Ionos* (Tu B'Shvat) stand at the very end: "Whoever studies halachos each day. . ."

Two thousand, seven hundred and two days have flashed by, and on each passing day, these hands have turned another *daf*, and as we look back at the interlocking of *daf* and day, we are left with no doubt of the reality of this number.

The Jew deserves praise. What stamina, what endurance: after being buffeted throughout the day through the sea of trouble and strife of his daily labor, he manages to find time to refresh his soul in the crystal-clear waters of the Talmud. He sets aside הליכות עולם, ("the ways of the world") for the הלכות עולם, ("the laws of the world")—אל תקרי הליכות, אלא הלכות.

—and his face takes on a new countenance. He is laden with concerns, with harrassment, but his daily *daf Gemmoro* stands above all else.

The *Daf Yomi* is a bridge—though fashioned of paper—which lifts the Jew above the stormy confusion of the waters below, and he walks with more assurance and confidence than on the firmest steel structure.

The great allure of the *Daf Yomi* concept, lies in the realization that the *daf Gemmoro* which I learn, here and now, is being pored over by countless Jews scattered over the face of the earth. While each one has his own particular mode of learning, and is influenced by the intellectual climate of his environment, nevertheless—*Abbaye v'Rovo* remain the same *Abbaye v'Rovo!*

IT WAS ON MY FIRST TRIP abroad—on behalf of the Yeshiva of Lublin—when I found groups and individ-

uals learning the *daf yomi* in every Jewish community I visited, that I saw at first hand the impact *Daf Yomi* had made on the Jewish world. Whether it was the learning of the *daf* by Dr. Brauschweig in Strassburg, Reb Isser Assistant in London, Rabbi Schwartz in Baltimore—while their styles of learning differed, there was the same motivating force which is inherent in *Daf Yomi*. Whoever learns the *daf*, wherever he may be—the basic drive is the same.

How clearly I recall a Jewish soldier from Radin; I found him carrying a small *gemmora* under his coat, and asked him if he learns the *daf yomi* regularly. He replied:

Certainly—I'm a soldier, and a soldier must be disciplined. He stays with the daf, and never leaves his post.

How right he is. We have gained a vital position

which will serve us as a crucial fortress in the course of the struggle for our existence.

On this day of the *Siyum Ha'Shas*, this stronghold has been doubly fortified. Our ranks are constantly growing, and we are all anxious to see many more troops manning the *Daf-Yomi* fortress.

Today is a yom tov for all of Klal Yisroel. Those who have had the *z'chus* to complete the *Daf Yomi* cycle are filled with joy and exhilaration. . . .

In our hearts burns the desire and longing that we may merit the *z'chus* of completing the second cycle in better circumstances and freed of the yoke of Golus. . . .

On this great day may these two thousand, seven hundred and two *dafim* of *gemmora*, learned by tens of thousands of Jews—may their number increase—ascend to Heaven and present themselves before the *Kisei Ha'Kovod* as ambassadors and advocates for the deliverance of Klal Yisroel. □

A CALL TO TORAH LEARNING

from the Moetzes Gedolei Hatorah

Blessed is our G-d, who created us for his Glory, gave us His Torah, and covenanted with us that we and our children after us would forever be occupied with His Torah—a covenant that has sustained us through the ages of our existence as a people of G-d, and has been our shield and our strength.

The Almighty inspired the great Gaon and tzadik, R' Meir Shapiro, זכר צדיק לברכה, to bestow upon us his proposal—accepted at the first Knessia Gedola of Agudath Israel in the presence of the Gedolei Hador—the institution of the study of the *Daf Yomi*, which has been sanctified and has won the endearment of our brothers all over the world.

The thousands of *Daf Yomi* adherents are now celebrating the completion of the sixth cycle of *Shas*, and the beginning of the seventh cycle. In these days of *simcho shel mitzvoh*, we call upon all of our brothers to swell the ranks of the adherents of *Daf Yomi*, to bolster their study of Torah, and to set aside a specific time for the *daf yomi*, as an irrevocable trust. Particularly now, when we have merited G-d's salvation and

grace, as He humbled those who sought to destroy us—*chas v'sholom*—it is our sacred obligation to bring the Word of G-d to all of Israel; and to bring back those who have stumbled, to their Father in Heaven; to set times for Torah; and to strengthen the three-fold bond of Israel, Torah, and G-d.

It is imperative that everyone should share this mitzvoh with others—the mitzvoh of Torah study which is equal to the sum of all others—to institute in every congregation of Jews the study of the *Daf Yomi*, the *Mishna Yomis*, and the *Halacha Yomis*—to the end that we learn so we may teach; that we carry out all that Torah demands of us, and that the “earth shall be filled with the knowing of G-d, as the waters cover the sea.” There is a special obligation upon those who spend their days in study of Torah, that they spread Torah learning by setting up Torah study groups wherever they may be.

The merit of Torah study will stand by us, and will shield us from evil, and from all tribulation, that we may in our day witness the coming of Moshiach. □

"...let US make man..."

Freely adapted from:
Sefer Yismach Moshe

OUR SAGES EXPLAIN that the Almighty said "Let us make man," in the plural—He did not say "I will make man"—because He consulted with the Angels, desiring to teach us the trait of humility: Even someone in a position of power should consult with his subordinates. But I should like to add my own thought, beginning with an explanation of the words of the Medrash Rabba (*Tazria*, 8):

The passage in Psalms—"You have beset me from behind and in front" (139:5)—teaches: If man is worthy, he is told: you came before all else in Creation; if he is not worthy, he is told: the lowliest insect preceded you in Creation.

The Medrash, it appears to me, refers to the well-known fact that every living creature was created for the benefit of man; man alone was created for his own sake. The meaning of the Medrash then is, that if man is worthy, that is, if he succeeds in achieving perfection, then he is told: *You take precedent in Creation, for all was created for your sake, but you alone were created for your own sake; therefore you take precedent to all creatures.* If he is not worthy—that is, if he fails to achieve perfection—he is told: *The lowliest insect was in fact created before you—for you have been created to serve others, as have the lower forms of life—and they were created before you; they are higher forms of life, for they serve some purpose to others, while you serve none.*

WE CAN APPRECIATE the meaning of the Medrash in yet another manner: R' Yosef Albo has observed in his *Book of Basic Beliefs*, that following the creation of each of the animal forms of life, it is said "and G-d saw that *it was good*," yet following the creation of man it is not said "and G-d saw that it was good." Why?—because in regard to the other living creatures their mere existence is in itself perfection; of them it can be said: "*it was good*," but in regard to man it is not said: "it was good," to demonstrate that in regard to man, existence alone is not an end; the ultimate good of man is yet to come when man transforms his potential into reality and achieves his ultimate perfection. This is what Solomon meant when he said: "A good name is better than fine oil, and the day of death is better than the day of birth"—for on the day of a man's death he has realized his potential, whereas on the day of his birth he exists only in potential. THEREFORE, how could the Almighty have said: "I will make man," when at the time of man's creation he is not yet man, and he will become man not by the work of the Almighty alone, but by his own efforts. (While he was called 'man' at the very moment of creation, this is simply a designation of his species.) Therefore G-d said: "Let us make man"—I and he together will make man: I, the Almighty, by giving him the potential; and man himself by realizing his potential through his free choice and will. □

Point of Order Mr. Chairman...

Listen . . . you look like a bright fellow—let me ask you something. I look around, I see lots of intelligent people who have something to say and can say it well. The thing is—correct me if I'm wrong—they're saying the wrong things to the wrong people.

You ever stop to think about all the talk that goes on? There isn't a day without a breakfast, a brunch . . . a luncheon, a meeting . . . a cocktail party, a dinner, or parlor meeting . . . and always there's a speaker. Whatever the occasion, he'll tell his audience what they're doing is of vital importance for mankind . . . I mean, what bothers me is . . . the people who run these affairs—to them the whole world stands on the success of this one affair. After all, when it's over, and all the words have been swallowed by the audience, together with the food that goes with it, does anyone remember the words? . . . do they really believe . . . I mean . . . does it move them any?

Usually it's just . . . "You know who we had for a speaker?" But does anyone ask, "What did he say?" Nobody's that interested. And if they do ask, so the answer would be, "He told us how important *our* work is."

DID YOU EVER STAND outside a shul on a Shabbos offer the davening? "Gee, the rabbi was terrific today." What did he say?—well maybe they remember the story he started out with, or a *gut vort*—but were they moved? . . . I mean, like, did they grow at all from listening to the words?

I'm not just thinking of the audience that has to listen . . . and listen . . . and listen. What about the poor speaker . . . is he any more interested than his captive audience. You know, if you ask people, they say, "I personally could do without a speaker, but what

would *the other* say." I'll tell you what the others say . . . *they say the same thing.*

Now, don't get me wrong . . . speech is very important; where would we be without it . . . I mean people want to be told what the Torah has to say. After all, we're the ones who are working to protect the Torah . . . but don't you ever get the eerie feeling . . . like we're talking to ourselves?

Another thing . . . somehow it used to be when there was an argument . . . somehow it got straightened out. Nowadays, it seems to go on and on, and meanwhile everyone goes his merry way.

Like, take the discussion about relations with the non-Orthodox . . . the secular Jews. So some of us decide we have to work with these people . . . we can't cut them off . . . so what happens? who are we talking to? Some old-time Zionists . . . the socialists, the 'intellectuals' . . . years ago they had everything figured out. They were going to solve "the Jewish problem" once and for all. They were going to wipe out anti-semitism, but everybody knows today . . . they often admit it themselves . . . it didn't work . . . And these old-timers—where are their children? they thank G-d—in their weaker moments—if their children are still Jewish. And they cry that their sons don't join their organizations . . . they don't read Yiddish or Hebrew . . . they're busy with their careers, they have no time for Jewish things.

So they have youth groups . . . they have to have them; it looks bad if they don't. So they give the kids some money, and then they feel better; but deep down they know it's no use.

ALRIGHT—so you'll ask me, "So what should we be talking about?—and who should we be talking to?" I'll tell you who we should be talking to—those who don't come to meetings and conferences; those who don't come to shul on Shabbos, or any other time. The ones who don't put on tefilin and don't keep Shabbos—not because they don't want to . . . but because

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or... Letting Off Some Steam

they don't know how. And why don't they know how?—it's not their fault . . . nobody's telling them they should and nobody's telling them how. But do we blame ourselves? . . . no, we blame them.

So what I mean is this . . . let's take all those words that we talk to ourselves . . . let's stop criticizing each other, and let's start talking to the people we really should be talking to. Sure it's a big job, but that doesn't mean it can't be done. Sure it takes *mesiras nefesh*, it takes guts . . . but who should be ready for digging into such a job . . . who should have the guts if not those who believe.

And you know how upset we all get when we read about a Jewish 'spokesman' who goes to government leaders, maybe to the White House . . . even to Rome . . . and who are these people? A Jewish 'spokesman' talks about the right to observe Shabbos, and *he* doesn't. They talk about the right to worship, but they haven't said *Modeh Ani* in years . . . if they ever did. And some of them say they're against praying in public schools, and we wince when we read a headline in *The Times*: JEWS HIT PRAYER—and the goyim wonder, how come the people who taught men how to pray all of a sudden are against praying? And sometimes in the group of 'spokesmen' whose picture gets into the papers, they manage to get an Orthodox man to stand there with a yarmulka . . . and people get the idea that the 'spokesmen' really are spokesmen.

Sure, we have our own spokesmen now—a handful. And sometimes *we* go to talk to the government . . . we go into court with our own briefs and statements. But are we using all of our strength? People still don't know who we are. After all, we know how to teach our children. We know how to lick assimilation—and who knows more about Jewish survival than we do. Wasn't it the genius of the Torah Jew that built a day school movement, with maybe less money than the others spend on surveys and conferences.

But, you know, sometimes I wonder about our day schools—I mean . . . they're doing a great job; so great, that the others are trying to copy it—they're

trying to build day schools too. Those fellows, they're so modern, so up-to-date, and they had to wait for the 'fundamentalists' to show them the way.

But what about our return on our investment. After all, every boy who goes through a yeshiva or a day school costs us thousands of dollars—what's our return on our investment? Where are these boys now? I'll tell you where they are: they're in the laboratories, in the universities, they're in politics. Sure it's nice to hear about 'our boys' making the big-time—and still remaining *frum*; but is that what we need most today when so many *Yiddishe neshomos* are going down the drain? We're turning out thousands of graduates from our day schools, and we still don't have enough teachers; we don't have enough principals; enough executives.

BUT SOMETIMES I think maybe it's not the young people who are to blame. You know, when a team goes into the field they send out their best men—naturally. But they've got a 'bench'—and who sits on the 'bench'?—the younger players who are just coming up. And when the old-timers get tired, or don't do so well, the coach sends in somebody from the 'bench'. Maybe *they* don't do so well—but they learn, and the coach knows that when one of the old-timers gets tired, he's got somebody 'coming up' to take over. Somehow . . . I'm not so sure why, but I have some idea, we don't have a 'bench'—we're not bringing up the youngsters. Sure, with so much to do, who has time for training newcomers, we can't afford the time it takes . . . we can't afford the mistakes they may make. But . . . what happens when there's nobody to send in? . . . what happens when a community begs for a day school and we have no one to send them? What happens when we need executives to run our institutions and we don't have them? Can we afford that?

Alright, so I've let off a lot of steam, and maybe I've just added some more words to the flood. But sometimes a fellow wonders—and when he wonders he has to talk to someone. □

The Patterns of Jewish History

Some Axioms for Understanding Our Past

HISTORY, in the simplest sense of the word, is the chronological arrangement of noteworthy events. But if history is nothing more than a set of data and dates, then its only appeal is to the natural interests of the curious. Students of history, however, discover much more in the story of mankind than a sequence of adventitious episodes. They find that events tend to fall into patterns; that these patterns possess a meaningful context, and that this meaning not only relates to the past, but to the present and future as well. This process of organizing the data of history into a rational framework is called interpretation.

Understandably, the interpretation of history undergoes modification as new facts come to light. The endeavors of scholarly research, the excavations of archaeologists, and diverse attempts to gather material evidence about the past produce new perspectives corresponding to the augmented information. Interpretation, however, is not purely a matter of assessing data and educing valid conclusions. Two historians may examine the same collection of facts, yet arrive at an entirely different theory to correlate these facts. Interpretation evolves from *objective* data, and the *subjective* orientation of the historian. Thus history books may represent a projection of the writer's point of view as reflected in his interpretation of the facts which are offered to the reader.

Scientific Objectivity?

Secularist historians will, of course, expound a natural interpretation of history, since they presuppose that Providence does not intervene in human affairs, they seek a rational explanation of mankind's experiences. Events that reveal the influence of a Supreme Being are either rationalized or ignored. Written or oral records of such episodes are deemed—by virtue of their character—to be false, or else they are labeled "folk tales" and "legends." While secularist historians make eloquent claim to scientific objectivity, their

rationalist premise drives them to make unfounded judgments that are a patent demonstration of their lack of belief in a personal G-d. Consequently, neither reason nor logic will move them from theories and hypotheses.

JEWISH HISTORY must profess a distinct point of view. One important aspect of this perspective is the principle that the course of human events is shaped by Providence. G-d is responsive to human conduct, and He displays His grace or His wrath in accordance with the individual and collective behavior of mankind. Israel's rise and fall is traceable to the prevalence of good or evil in its midst. In this respect, the destinies of other nations may also be affected by Israel's spiritual condition since these powers are part of the universal mechanism whereby the Almighty accomplishes His will on earth.

History is an Unrolled Scroll

Providence is not the sole principle to be utilized in interpreting Jewish history, however. An American scholar once said: "History is but the unrolled scroll of prophecy." One may go a step further and say—in the language of modern technology—that the history of the world was 'coded' from the very moment of Creation. An illustration of this principle which is particularly applicable to an understanding of the beginnings of Jewish history, is found in *B'reishis Rabbah*. Interpreting the second verse of *Parshas B'reishis*, Reish Lakish expounds the word *tohu* as an allusion to Babylonia, *bohu* to Media, *choshech* to Greece, *al p'nei s'hom* to Rome, while the words *v'ruach elokim m'rachefess* he sees as a reference to the advent of *Moshiach*. Thus, *the emergence of the four principal powers which Israel encountered in its passage through history was implicit in its nature from the time of its Creation*. In this light, the prescience of such prophets as Jeremiah and Daniel derives not simply from power to predict the future, but from the faculty to divine the realization of the plan which is intrinsic to the act of Creation.

In addition to the intervention of Providence and the 'coding' of future development, there is yet another consideration which enters as an essential element in

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the process of historical interpretation. In *Chofetz Chaim al Ha'Torah*, the following comment is found on the events recorded in *Parshas Vayigash* wherein Joseph reveals himself to his brothers and proclaims "I am Joseph!":

During the entire period from the time Joseph's brothers first came to Egypt to bring back grain, and Joseph pretended not to know them, speaking harshly to them and suspecting that they were spies, they asked each other many questions. What happened?—and why? They sought counsel and blamed each other. The second time, too, they wondered and were asked "what has the Lord done to us?"—until they heard the words "I AM JOSEPH" from their brother's mouth. Immediately, the questions, the wonder, and the doubts vanished, and the matter was fully resolved for them.

Similarly, when the world shall hear the words "I AM G-D," all questions and wonder concerning the conduct of the world—which up to the present time presents a puzzling sight—will become clarified, all doubts will be resolved, and all mankind shall together see that the hand of G-d acted at all times for our benefit.

Thus, complete understanding of Jewish history must wait for the future. Any interpretation prior to the final Redemption must of necessity be tentative and subject to revision in the light of later events. The apparent complexion of particular historical periods as favorable or unfavorable, may prove to have been wholly deceiving. Jewish history must be studied in projection and in retrospect: in projection—as the emergence of a pre-designed pattern of the future; and in retrospect—as a continuous re-interpretation of the past.

Eyes Endowed With Wisdom

The cosmic and spiritual aspects of Jewish history—and the paradoxes inherent in them—must be studied through the eyes of those who are endowed with the vision to discern the unique character of our people. In the *Talmud*, the *Midrash*, and other sacred sources, our Sages have provided the insights which are necessary for a true evaluation of significant episodes of the past. By use of the transcendent wisdom which they have passed down to us, we are able to introduce into a mass of facts the integrating concepts which translate history into a universal testimonial to the unity and omnipotence of G-d. An attempt to chart the course of Israel's history without drawing upon the talmudic writings must inevitably result in a gro-

tesque and distorted image of our past. The fallacies which find their way into the works of secularist Jewish historians, bear ample witness to this proposition.

FINALLY, the history of Israel must be studied parallel with the emerging patterns of the Torah of Israel. Time and again the extinction of Israel's existence was averted by the appearance of Torah in a new form capable of meeting the special challenge of the period. The Chazal tell us that following the destruction of the *Beis Hamikdash*, "the Holy One, blessed may He be, has no place in the universe except the four ells of the Law." This declaration defines the Torah as the site where G-d maintains His intimate involvement with Israel and ultimately with the world at large. It follows, therefore, that a study of the transmission of Torah from one age to the next and the manner in which Torah adapts to the changing condition of Israel is essential to an understanding of our history. Indeed, a true perception of Jewish existence leads inevitably to the realization that it is the *talmid chacham* who devotes himself to the study of Torah and bears the sacred responsibility of passing Torah to future generations, who is the history-maker; and it is the *Gedolei Torah* of each generation who are our heroes and champions. □





BOOKS

SERMONS usually must be heard, not read. Without the immediacy of the spoken word, they all too often seem stilted, lifeless, and full of bathos. The present volume of essays, many of which were originally delivered as sermons, does not suffer from this shortcoming. Drawing on a wide variety of traditional sources, the author has succeeded in expressing significant insights

G-D IN ALL SEASONS

Rabbi Shubert Spero

New York, 1967; Shengold Publishers, \$5.00

in modern terms and in an expository style which strike a responsive chord in the reader.

Some of the points made by Rabbi Spero are most suggestive—for instance his discussion of the symbolism of the Purim masquerade (p. 85 ff) or of the militancy of Chanukah (p. 62 ff). Others may only be effective re-statements of essentially familiar ideas, such as the chapter on the Shofar (p. 16 ff); and still others may represent ideas so novel as to jar us by their difference from the commonly accepted approach—such as the author's suggestion that the Wise Son of the Haggadah represents a *critical* questioner (pp. 112-113).

In the light of some such discussions, a special significance attaches to the author's discussion, in the Introduction, of the subjective element in *D'rash*. Rabbi Spero speaks of the insights gained by *D'rash* as "sparks" that are brought into existence by the interaction between the Divine text and the human mind. There is by necessity, then, a subjective, creative factor in every *drashoh*. However, does this mean that we can therefore put all *drashos* on the same level, since they all share an element of subjectivity? Or does not their validity, rather, depend upon the kind of human mind that produced them? Does it not depend upon whether this human mind was itself molded in the greatest possible degree by Torah?

RABBI SPERO HIMSELF seems to recognize this when he writes: "When man exposes himself to tradition and enters into the [Divine] 'Word' with the totality of his being, his orientation may become shattered; he may experience flashes of insights so that he can perceive 'wondrous things out of Thy Law'." (p. 5) Surely this is not a description of how every *drashoh* is born, but rather a statement of those conditions under which a *drashoh*, subjective though it be, can really lay claim to validity—"when man exposes himself to tradition

and enters into the 'Word' with the totality of his being."

We have a word for the man who has attained this level; we say that he has *Da'as Ha'Torah*, and we recognize that, as he has shaped his self more and more in the image of the Torah, he has in turn become more and more capable of understanding what the Torah truly has to tell us. This is the stature of the *Gedolei Ba'Torah*, and his teachings therefore have a claim on us that goes far beyond the technical qualifications of "yoreh, yoreh" or even "yodin, yodin" as listed in any *semichos rabbonus*.

Does this mean that we who have not attained this level may not essay a word of *D'rash*? I certainly do not suggest this—but it must be recognized that our efforts must be vested with extreme humility. We must be aware that our minds reflect a variety of influences, all too often quite incompatible with Torah, and that this imposes limitations on our insights into Torah. Hence we must make sure that the conclusions of our *drush* are compatible with the teachings of the *Gedolei Ha'Torah* of past and present. Measured by this standard, several points in this volume must be questioned. Thus, the author develops the idea that Sukkos is the "festival of integration"; in the first place he sees it as calling for an integration of the various schools of Jewish thought before us (but can Kabboloh be called a school of thought, and *neo-Platonic* on top of it, as the author does on p. 50?); and beyond that, he sees Sukkos as teaching us "to seek the 'integration' of the diverse elements within the Jewish people itself . . . Sukkos reminds us that we have a responsibility toward the Jewish people as a whole . . . to work out a realistic policy of 'integration' which, while saving us from the pitfalls of separatism, will enable us to uphold the absolute and uncompromising nature of Torah truth" (p. 52). For the reader interested to know what such a policy should be, Rabbi Spero provides a footnote at this point, referring him to an article of his in *Tradition* in which he takes issue with the *Psak Din* on Synagogue Council membership issued a dozen years ago by the Brisker Rav, Reb Aaron Kotler, and the other *Gedolei Hador!* In other words, the "realistic policy of integration" which the author considers the lesson of Sukkos, does not agree with what the *Gedolim* have taught on the subject.

There is another point—which, moreover, reappears time and again in this volume—on which Rabbi Spero takes an even more explicit stand in contradiction of the *Da'as Ha'Torah* of the outstanding *Gedolim* of the last two generations. He correctly points out that "Judaism requires the Jew to be an activist; he must never resign himself to his condition, so long as some effort, no matter how slight, is possible . . . *Bitachon* is of essence, but there must also be *Hishtadluth*" (p. 42). The question, of course, is what this *Hishtadluth* must

or should ideally consist of in any given situation. To Rabbi Spero it is obvious that as far as Israel's *Golus* existence is concerned, any opportunity to bring about the coming of the Redemption by political and military means must be seized. He can therefore speak confidently of "our own Messianic effort that has taken the form of the reborn State of Israel" (p. 145)—"there is no question but that the process of redemption has begun" (p. 150).

OF COURSE, THESE VIEWS are not uniquely Rabbi Spero's. But he eloquently re-states them at a crucial moment in our history, and they therefore warrant a more detailed analysis. In support of his approach, Rabbi Spero submits that the mourning period of the *Sefiroh* was really instituted as a memorial to the Bar Kochba uprising—and he explains that a longer lament was ordained for this event than even for the fall of the Temple, owing to the special significance of the Bar Kochba uprising for the Jews of all future generations:* "It represented the only successful effort

* The Talmudic explanation for the *Sefiroh* mourning period "always seemed a rather inadequate reason" to the author (p. 138). He finds it "reasonable to assume" that the disciples of Rabbi Akiba were soldiers of Bar Kochba who fell in some disastrous defeat. The martyred rebels "could not be mourned openly at the time of the tragedy. Hence, while mourning was prescribed, the true reason for the observance went 'underground.' The Talmud permits itself to speak only in vague terms of some 'violent death,' some 'plague' . . ." (p. 139). "The Talmud, at one point, speaks of a falling out between Bar Kochba and the religious authorities. Undoubtedly (*sic!*) this is what is implied, in the Talmud's statement that the 'pestilence' came upon Rabbi Akiba's disciples because they displayed some weakness of character" (p. 144).

THE AUTHOR'S ONLY authority for this revelation of what he calls "the best secret of the Jewish calendar," apart from a reference to an equally unsupported suggestion by a contemporary Jewish writer, is a single phrase in the Epistle of Rabbi Sherira Gaon which possibly could be interpreted in this way if nothing else spoke against it. Actually, however, Rabbi Spero's theory encounters many objections: • Why should the *Amoraim* in Babylonia, far from Roman rule, hide the real happenings behind what Rabbi Spero calls vague terms? • Actually the Rabbinic sources are not at all vague; the pestilence (for some reason always put in quotation marks by Rabbi Spero) is identified as an actual sickness repeatedly mentioned in the Talmud, and the *Midrash (Bere-shis Rabbah 51, 3)* recounts in detail Rabbi Akiba's warning to his later disciples: "The earlier ones died because they were jealous of each other—beware that you should not do like them" (see also *Kohel's Rabbah 11, 10*). • It is noteworthy that the *Sefiroh* mourning itself is not mentioned in the Talmud itself (where, according to Rabbi Spero, it should have been formally ordained, albeit without mention of the real reason). • When the *Rishonim* for the first time refer to it, referring in turn to the *Geonim*, they offer different calculations of the mourning period, based on different views of when the disease raged; these arguments (which are typical of a developing *Minhag* but hardly of a formal Rabbinic ordinance) indicate that Rabbi Spero's "real reason" was already forgotten at the early stage when the *Minhag* was only just emerging (cf. *Shibolei Haleket 235*)—is this believable?

made by the Jewish people from the time the Second Temple was destroyed . . . until the Israeli War of Liberation in 1948, to retake their land by political and military means. Equally important is that this military effort received the sanction and active support of Rabbi Akiva and the Sages of his generation as a genuine Messianic movement . . . Somehow, somewhere, the memory had to be preserved for all generations to come, teaching the Jew that he must remain ever alert for opportunities to make his way back to the Holy Land. Indeed, when such an opportunity presents itself, *our religious law obliges us to work and, if necessary, to fight to regain [it]*" (p. 141, my italics).

"Perhaps tradition was too effective in concealing the connection between the disciples of Rabbi Akiva and Bar Kochba . . . the harsh realities of exile rendered us politically impotent and soon caused us to push our dreams of a Messianic return into the realm of Divine action . . . *In our day, starting with the uprising in the Warsaw Ghetto, continuing with the War of Liberation in 1948, the Suez Conflict of 1956 and the miraculous Six Day War in 1967, we have witnessed a full return to the image of the Jew of old . . . We have returned to the tradition of Joshua, David, Judah the Maccabee and, above all, of Simon Bar Kochba* (p. 142, my italics).

"There is profound historic significance in the fact that a day on which, for centuries, we had been mourning a Messianic effort that failed should be transformed into a day of celebration for the revival of a Jewish State which in itself already constitutes a partial Messianic fulfillment . . ." (p. 143). It is, of course, consistent with these views that Rabbi Spero combines in this volume essays on the biblical festivals, and Chanukah and Purim—and *Yom Ha'atzma'ut*. But do these views agree with *Da'as Ha'Torah*?

IT IS IMPORTANT to realize that, when the possibility of *Yishuv Eretz Yisroel* came up, as early as the eighteenth and through the nineteenth century, *Gedolei Ha'Torah* favored it; thus the founding of Petach Tikvah was the occasion for impassioned appeals by Rabbi Yitzchok Elchonon and Rabbi S. R. Hirsch. With the creation of Agudath Israel, the *Chofetz Chaim*, Reb Chaim Ozer, the Gerer Rebbe, and the other *Gedolim* who made up the *Moetzes Gedolei Ha'Torah*, approved efforts for *binyan Eretz Yisroel*, and greatly exerted themselves for it. Apparently, then, they did not feel that *Hishtadlus*, human effort, is wrong. Yet they did

And, in sum, is there any valid reason to set aside the explanation of the *Sefiroh* mourning which *all our Poskim*, from the earliest to the latest, accepted and based their decisions on—for the sake of a new and completely speculative theory? And then, in turn, to proceed to build upon this an entire program of action for *Klal Yisroel*? □

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not draw the conclusion that Rabbi Spero draws, that political and military action *as such* represents a value —albeit a partial value. At the 1937 *Knessia Gedola* in Marienbad, the *Moetzes Gedolei Ha'Torah* adopted a declaration affirming our everlasting connection with, and right to our Holy Land, but also pointing out that *the existence of a Jewish state is possible only if the law of the Torah is acknowledged as the constitutional basis of the state, and the sovereignty of the Torah dominates the administration. A Jewish state that is not based on the foundation of the Torah would mean a denial of Jewish history and of the true essence of Jewish nationality and would destroy the basis of national life.*

Hence, even after the State of Israel came into existence, the *Chazon Ish*, the Brisker Rav, or Reb Aaron Kotler, refused to see in it a source of rejoicing, even while they called for all possible efforts to strengthen Torah there. Apparently, then, they all read Jewish history, and its lessons, differently from Rabbi Spero. *Hishtadlus*, from their Torah viewpoint, is not incumbent upon us because human effort *as such* can mold our world (because "God is always with the strongest battalions" as Frederik the Great put it)—it is rather required of us because G-d wants—as a condition of His blessing—that we exert ourselves on behalf of the goals, spiritual and practical, that He has set us. Divorced from this religious foundation, disregarding the Divine guidelines set to us, *Hishtadlus* becomes an exercise in human self-deception and ultimately, G-d forbid, self-destruction.

I do not want here to go into the question of whether the duty of *Hishtadlus* resting upon the Jewish people in their Golus existence ever included or includes the use of force (except in self-defense). Can we at all compare the mission given by G-d to Joshua or David—or even the war of the Hasmoneans—to the stance demanded of the Jewish people after their state had been destroyed because of their sins? Where do we find a "religious law" that *obliges* us to fight to regain our land before the coming of *Moshiach*? Do we not have a specific warning *to the contrary*? Leaving these questions aside, it is certainly clear that whatever human effort we make must be totally based upon our desire to do the will of G-d.

And what about the Bar Kochba uprising? I have already pointed out, in an earlier footnote, how untenable the theory is that the Sefiroh lament was instituted to spur us on to renewed Messianic uprisings in later times (if there were a connection between the uprising and the mourning, it would in any case be more likely to be in the nature of a warning *not* to indulge again in premature and unwarranted Messianic efforts which, from Bar Kochba to Sabbatai Tzvi, have brought such tragedies upon our people). In any case, however, can we see in the Bar Kochba incident any indication

that a forceful effort to regain Jewish sovereignty, irrespective of its religious quality, is the way to bring about the redemption? Rabbi Spero follows the Rambam's interpretation of the episode, and his conclusion that there are several steps in the process of Redemption, and that *Moshiach* does not have to work miracles—but the Rambam postulates another qualification for him (which Bar Kochba met, at least initially): the *beginning* of the Messianic process is the appearance of “a ruler from the House of David, who studies Torah and observes mitzvos like his forefather David, according to the Written and Oral Torah, and *forces all Israel to follow and strengthen it*, and fights the wars of G-d . . .” (*Hilchos M'lochim* xi, 4).

The sequence here given by the Rambam is surely not accidental; on the contrary it is in the profoundest accord with the basic rhythm of Jewish history as spelled out in the Torah—that we lost Temple and country because of our sins, and that our return to our ancient glory depends in the first place upon our return to Torah. Political and military efforts, divorced from such allegiance to Torah, are in fact a terrible threat to our people.

Rabbi Spero acknowledges that “there are, of course, some important differences between the task which faced our people in the days of Bar Kochba and the challenges presented to us by the State of Israel today. Rabbi Akiba worked hand in hand with a leader who was truly religious, and whose view of the goals of Jewish peoplehood and the purposes of national existence coincided with his own. The main problem then was to gain and preserve Judea's political independence. In our own day the situation is reversed . . .” (p. 143). However, “the element we do have in common with Bar Kochba is the fact that we are not passive but are attempting to bring the Messiah near . . . by our own

efforts on the political-historical scene” (p. 144). But how can we at all justify taking this political-historical action today, if it lacks the religious foundation that existed in Bar Kochba's time? How can we dare to compare the situation now with the situation then? How can we arrogate to ourselves a Messianic role because Rabbi Akiba thought in Messianic terms under such totally different circumstances?

This essential question Rabbi Spero does not really face up to. He sees “the fallacy of the opposing view, which is far from dead,” in its not realizing that political

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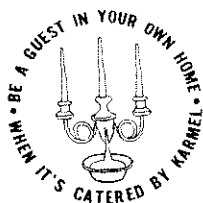
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and practical action can and should be undertaken before *Moshiach* comes; "we have not been told at what point in the process of redemption (he) will appear . . . If he does not, it will mean that our generation has missed a tremendous opportunity" (p. 150). But, even if we were to grant his concept of the sequence of redemption, can it have a successful start in a *non-religious* practical effort? This question, rather

than mere abstract considerations of *Bitochon* and *Hishtadlus*, is the explanation of the fact that the outstanding *Gedolim* of our time have sharply rejected the views expressed in this volume.

It must be recognized that what is at stake here is a vital issue. Nobody denies that we always live on the threshold of redemption, in that *any* generation at any moment can bring *Moshiach* if it just wants to. Nobody denies that the most crucial effort toward this end is the strengthening of Torah within our people. Nobody denies that we must give all possible support to the creation of a Torah-true *Eretz Yisroel*. The issue is whether we consider the State of Israel, in its present non-religious form, a beginning of the Redemption—or, put even more generally, whether political-military efforts are valid and effective means of bringing about the Redemption if they are divorced from our Torah obligations. If the answer is positive, then the feeling that ultimately our destiny can be molded by practical rather than spiritual considerations is immensely strengthened, and the chance of a true *Teshuvoh* movement correspondingly weakened. Particularly since the Six Day War this danger is greater than ever, and therefore also the need to establish what *Da'as Ha'-Torah* has really to say on this issue. Otherwise we may, paradoxically, obstruct the attainment of the very goal which we seek to hasten.

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second looks at the jewish scene

"Divorcing Jews and Judaism"

IN AN ATTEMPT to by-pass, and to test Israeli law that vests control of marriage in the Rabbinate, two kibbutz couples were 'married' in a private ceremony. They had each given a ring to a woman and declared in the presence of two witnesses, "*Harei at ishti*"—"You are herewith my wife."

The Rabbinate of Safed refused to validate their marriage; the Ministry of the Interior rejected their request to register their marriage. The couples petitioned the Supreme Court to enjoin the Rabbinate and the Interior Minister to recognize their marriage and record it as valid. After a year of deliberation, the Court issued a 78-page judgement in which they upheld both the Rabbinate and the Ministry, in effect declaring that the alleged 'marriage' had no legal status.

The position taken by the Court struck down the latest attempt to institute civil marriage among Jews in Israel, and was therefore a victory not only for Orthodoxy, but for all those who are cognizant of the tragic consequences for the unity of the Jewish people in the Holy Land, if marriage and divorce would no longer be under rabbinic jurisdiction. But the Court's ruling at the same time gave some comfort to those who would like to see the institution of civil marriage in Israel.

Dr. Shimon Agronot, the president of the Court, maintained that the law was clear that the 'marriage' in question was improper; that it

constituted a threat to the public order; but he added that any changes in the law must be instituted on the legislative level, rather than in the courts. This made it clear that they had rejected the petition on purely legal grounds, in spite of their sympathy with the purposes of the petitioners. Thus, they placed the prestige of the High Court behind the forces who would split Israeli Jewry by removing marriage from the control of the Rabbinate.

On the other hand, other members of the Court, in varying degrees, acknowledged the pitfalls of civil marriage. Justice Moshe Landau wrote, "So long as it [the marriage law] has not been changed the citizen must submit to it. This requires a considerable amount of tolerance from both camps, but should not a people which fought for its life as one man be capable of carefully mapping for itself a pathway through this minefield, inspired by respect for the feelings of others and a joint effort to solve problems rather than aggravate them?"

More encouraging were the words of Justice Yitzchak Kister, who wrote:

The idea of divorcing Jews and Judaism has been broached in certain 'Canaanite' or 'Hebrew' quarters in Israel. But in periods of emergency we witnessed a spiritual awakening even amongst those Jews

who in ordinary times, seemed to have no bond linking them with their people. The devotion to Jewish sancta and peoplehood was particularly in evidence during the Six Day War. The conclusion that emerges from this is that definitions and patterns of living associated with other people can hardly be applied to the Jewish people and the Jewish religion.

Justice Kister's words are a sensible base on which to build the understanding vital to maintaining the unity of the Jewish people in Israel and the Golah. □



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"Trembling in Place of Joy"

JEWES HAVE FARED WELL, thank G-d, in the free society of America. We take for granted the freedom, which we did not always enjoy, to engage in commerce and industry, unhampered by antisemitic restrictions. But like all good things economic freedom too has its problems. The ostentatious Jew—the *nouveauriche*—has provided a ready target for the antisemite, and, more significantly, a cause of concern to Jews sensitive to the traditional values of Torah life.

Would that we could say that Orthodox Jewry has escaped the plague of ostentation—though we can say that it has been less successful, if only because the observing Jew is bound by restrictions that do not inhibit his non-observant brother. Yet, it is here that the problem

lies: ostentation is difficult to define and it is even more difficult to legislate against it. There are aspects of human behavior that seem to slip through the net of Torah law. As the Ramban put it centuries ago, it is possible to be "*novol bi'rshus ha'Torah*," to be despicable within the confines of the Torah—or perhaps we may translate "*birshus ha'Torah*" apparently with the 'permission' of Torah.

But . . . there were times when the strength and structure of Jewish communal life at least permitted attempts to legislate against ostentation. A recent volume of historical writings* documents the "Sumptuary Laws of Carpentas" issued by this French community on February 19 in the year 1712. They have a contemporary ring and strike close to home in the year 1968:

Seeing the efforts of heads of families to procure their sustenance and to earn the wherewithal to pay the taxes and impositions incident upon each one: seeing moreover how, when occasion arises for any religious festivity which is incumbent upon them, such as a circumcision or wedding, they indulge in expenditure greater than they can afford, so that there is trembling in place of joy as they see the drain of their money, making them limit their household expenditure and their payments for (communal) taxation . . . we undersigned, the representatives and wardens of the Community (may the Lord protect it!) seeing the envy of each man for his neighbor, and how each one endeavors to show his superiority over his neighbor, so that there is no dis-

tinction between rich and poor, all desiring to appear men of eminence and of wealth in their apparel and in the adornments of their women, without being able to sustain the expense: in consequence whereof they are brought low, and borrow needlessly from Gentiles, and become impoverished . . .

. . . and having thus stated the problem, the text proceeds to limit, in great detail, the manner in which simchas were to be celebrated and the manner in which men and women were to dress.

There is no purpose in here detailing the specifics of the problem of ostentation today, and there is little likelihood that our present-day communal structure could come forth with specific strictures against it. But surely the Jewish genius for self-discipline has not been lost. And surely a greater awareness of the problem will make possible some improvement. □

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"Why the Change?"

PEOPLE DO CHANGE, perhaps as often for the better as not. But it's not always easy to tell one type of change from the other. Take the case of Morris U. Schappes.

Schappes is a Jewish left-winger. As a professor of English at City College in the thirties, he was one of the earliest victims of the anti-Communist hysteria, and was dismissed.

For a number of years Schappes has been putting out *Jewish Currents*, a monthly which reflects Jewish Marxist opinion. In 1956, Schappes followed the Soviet position on the Sinai Campaign, in bitter opposition to Israel. Following the Six Day War, however, he maintained that Israel, with some reservations, was justified in its campaign against Arab aggression. Some of his readers were agitated by his deviation from the Soviet line.

In the October, 1967, issue of *Jewish Currents*, Schappes writes on *Rosh Hashona and Jewish Identity*. "There is a large number of Jews," he writes, "who are on principle non-observant, or non-believing, or agnostic or atheistic. Not being religious, such Jews do not join the throngs in the synagogues or temples, but seek other ways of expressing their Jewish identity. The most common way of doing this is for such Jews not to go to work on Rosh Hashona and Yom Kippur." He continues:

Now in the early 1930's, when I was teaching in the English department at the City College here, it was a matter of principle for me to come to work on Rosh Hashona and Yom Kippur — although almost none of the Jewish students attended and very little teaching was actually done by the non-Jewish teachers or by the

few Jewish teachers who came. But for some time it has become a matter of principle for me not to go to work on Rosh Hashona and Yom Kippur. Why the change? And what is the meaning of the change?

Schappes goes on to explain that in the thirties he was an "unsophisticated atheist" who assumed that "the Jews constituted only a religious community. In a Jewish religious community . . . an atheist who had withdrawn from the Jewish religious community—had no place."

He attributes his new-found sophistication to two factors: the first being Hitler's refusal to recognize such a distinction between Jews, and secondly his own (Schappes') re-evaluation of his assumption that Jews are only a religious community, and his conclusion that one can easily be an atheist while yet remaining an integral part of the Jewish community.

All of which leads us to wonder: Is Schappes' change of heart, and his staying home from work on Rosh Hashona and Yom Kippur, a change for the better; or has he only succeeded in confusing himself and his followers as to what the Jewish community really is? □

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UNDER **U** SUPERVISION

Simcha Bunem Unsdorfer, ז"ל

SIMCHA BUNEM UNSDORFER died in London at the age of 43 in early December of the year 1967 . . . a victim of Nazi brutality. Medically speaking, he died of a weak heart, but he was in fact murdered—the process of taking his life began in the black years of Buchenwald and Auschwitz, where as a youngster, he saw his mother and father taken to the gas chambers.

Following the Liberation, Mr. Unsdorfer came to England where he dedicated the remaining years of his life to klal work, serving as General Secretary of Agudath Israel of Great Britain, and editor of the *Jewish Tribune*, a fortnightly newspaper which has grown to be respected as a forthright spokesman for Torah Jewry.

Mr. Unsdorfer was fully aware of the condition of his heart—a condition that would have prompted a less courageous soul to seek an easy life which would prolong his years. But he threw himself into



communal work in disregard of his own well-being, and leaves behind him a heritage of accomplishment for Klal Yisroel. His determination to publish the *Jewish Tribune* added yet another back-breaking task, and those who must continue his work will be inspired by his spirit.

Simcha Unsdorfer was a happy man; his sense of humor endeared him to all who knew him. He was, as one of his associates wrote, "a tender person who found it hard

to be harsh or angry." Yet, he became passionately angry in the face of dishonesty and hypocrisy. Himself a victim of Nazi Germany, he fought vigorously against the forget-the-past attitude which swept Jewish life in recent years.

THE LOSS OF ANY communal worker is a blow to Torah Jewry which in our time has fallen short in producing the calibre of leadership so crucially needed. But the field of Torah journalism, once a significant arm of Orthodox communal life, has attracted so small a number of workers, that Mr. Unsdorfer's passing has left an even greater void.

We join his family and British Jewry as a whole, in mourning for Simcha Bunem Unsdorfer. May his eloquence in espousing the cause of Torah inspire all who labor in Torah journalism; and we pray that he will espouse our prayers for Israel's redemption before the Kisei Ha'Kovod. □

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—defined in *The New York Times* Feb. 1, 1968

We have been critical of *The New York Times* over the years, even as recently as in our last issue, for their prejudicial attitude to Orthodox Judaism. We had not intended to return to the subject so soon, but we do so this time to say a good word about them.

Readers may recall that we pointed out (TJO, Feb. '66) that *The Times* once reported—in an article on Chasidic Jews in Williamsburg—that most of the men wear beards, but those who don't "shave with a ram's horn."

We are happy to see that *The Times* got it right this time; that is, we assume they now know that you can't shave with a ram's horn, and that sort of bolsters our faith in them.

What was the occasion for *The Times* to define a 'shofar'?—they received a plaque with a shofar mounted on it, from the American Jewish Congress. For what?—for "distinguished journalism in the public interest." □

A week-day Bar Mitzvah, either with or without Krias Hatorah, can be an inspiring experience and will avoid Chilul Shabbos.

MEMO

To: Program Chairman

The contributors to the columns of THE JEWISH OBSERVER have demonstrated their ability to articulate the positions of Torah Jewry on the problems confronting our people throughout the world.

These outstanding personalities of Torah life in America have authorized us to arrange a limited number of lecture engagements for them to discuss before interested audiences throughout the country matters on which they have written in the columns of The Jewish Observer, and other vital questions confronting Jewry

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Letters to the Editor



"Autopsy Less Productive . . ."

To the Editor:

Permit a physician specializing in internal medicine to make some comments on the article by Menachem Porush, *Autopsy Abuses in Israel*, in your last issue [December].

You surely know that Cincinnati is a medical center with an A-Class Medical School and A-1 Accredited Hospitals. Cincinnati is also the seat of several national and internationally known research institutes. With this background you will probably be surprised to learn that the percentage rates of autopsies in Cincinnati is less than 40% and this figure includes all the Coroner's cases, which have to go through an autopsy by state law. Bear in mind further, that almost half of the 40% that are done here are at the specific request of some families, who want to be convinced beyond doubt as to the cause of death or who have insurance or other financial entanglements.

An autopsy is a great research job when carefully done. We simply would not consider it worth while, to expend time and money to do them routinely. An autopsy costs a minimum of \$300.00. Furthermore, we do not have enough personnel to do a careful autopsy on a larger percentage of deceased, as we would not learn anything on a routine basis.

I would like to give you a simple illustration which convinced most of us that autopsies of today are not as urgent or productive as they were 25 years ago. The development of scientific medicine with all the instruments and auxiliary tests available makes the necessity for autopsy

less productive to the advance of scientific medicine. Only 25 years ago the electrocardiogram and such other aids in cardiology were not available. A sudden death could not definitely be diagnosed and differentiated between a coronary, gastric hemorrhage, pulmonary embolus and what have you. We would not think for one moment to ask for an autopsy, when we definitely know that the patient died from an acute coronary. The autopsy would not reveal anything but would occupy the pathological laboratory with an unnecessary burden. These are the reasons that the percentage of autopsy has declined in the past few years here in the United States.

My suggestion therefore, is that you should get a committee of prominent physicians and research men in the United States, to show the Israeli colleagues that their persistence in doing 90% autopsies does not advance but hinders their progress in scientific medicine. Fewer autopsies and with full permission and consent of immediate relatives will enhance and advance . . . scientific medicine in Israel.

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"Faulty and Misleading"

To the Editor:

The conclusion of your article *A New Torah Institution* [December '67] "that the building of the Ohel Children's Home will be another witness to the ability of the Torah community to meet the challenges of modern society in the ways of Torah" is faulty and misleading.

If such a building must be established to provide an Orthodox environment for children who cannot remain at home, it should at least be recognized as the result of a failure on the part of Orthodox families to provide foster homes for Orthodox children.

Some years ago, I worked for the Jewish Child Care Association of New York, which worked with all Jewish children and their families. It is not true that "not a single agency to help Orthodox members of broken homes with their problems" exists. I placed several Hasidic children in Orthodox homes. But the saddest reality was that regardless of the intensive efforts to obtain Orthodox homes, the response from the Orthodox community was minimal. It is this abdication of their responsibility that created the problem, and forced Orthodox children to be placed in non-Orthodox homes.

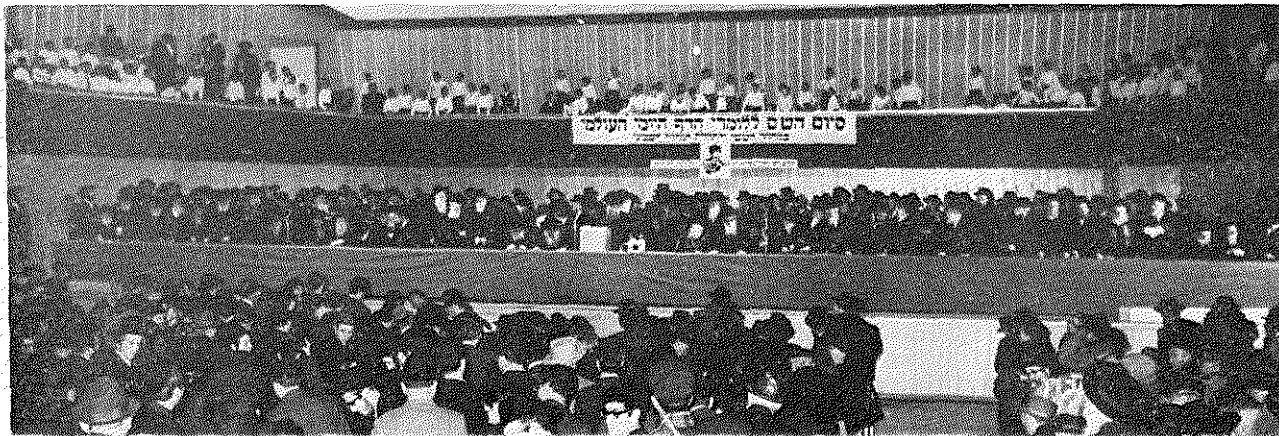
I am not suggesting that building a children's residence is not necessary. I am asserting that it is a lamentable necessity, a "witness" to the refusal of the Orthodox community to open its doors to the needy children in its midst. It is incumbent upon us to face up to the causes that force Orthodoxy to take such a large step backwards in the area of child care rather than delude ourselves, into feeling this venture is worthy of accolades.

LORELL BLASS
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Close of Sixth Daf Yomi Cycle Celebrated the World Over



Some of the thousands at the Daf Yomi Siyum in Jerusalem

Thousands of Jews throughout the world participated in celebrations on Sunday, January 28th, marking the 6th Siyum Hashas of the Daf Yomi, the historic project initiated by the Lubliner Rav, Reb Meyer Shapiro, at the first Knesiah Gedolah of Agudath Israel in 1923. In New York City, a capacity audience participated in the city-wide Siyum held in the auditorium of the Bais Yaakov of Boro Park, with over 1,000 Talmidei Chachomim joining in the festivity. In Israel, many thousands overflowed the Binyonei Haumah in Jerusalem and the Heichal Hatarbut in Tel Aviv. Over 1,000 joined the Siyum Hashas festivities at the Hornsey Town Hall in London. In Belgium, Brazil, Argentina, Mexico, Holland and France similar Siyum Hashas celebrations were tendered that day, uniting tens of thousands of Jews the world over in a simultaneous demonstration for Torah study.

In addition, local Daf Yomi Siyumim were sponsored in various neighborhoods by Agudah groups, in Washington Heights, Manhattan, the Bronx, Chicago, Baltimore and Boston. An immediate result of the wide interest in the Daf Yomi aroused by these highly publicized functions, is an increased at-

tendance at the various Daf Yomi study groups by new enrollees in this Torah study plan, anxious to join in the seventh cycle of the Daf Yomi. The Agudath Israel organizations throughout the world played a major role in organizing these Siyum Hashas celebrations and in encouraging the expansion of the Daf Yomi study circles.

AGUDAH WARNS AGAINST RENEWAL OF DIALOGUE

In a widely-publicized statement that appeared nationally, Agudath Israel warned that "although inter-religious dialogues grinded to a halt as a result of the Jewish disenchantment over the aloofness displayed by the organized Christian religions to the beleaguered State of Israel last spring, alarming new calls are being heard for their resumption." Agudath Israel cited a statement by Supreme Court Justice Chaim Cohen of Israel, as an example of the renewed attempt to accelerate these dialogues. Israel's Supreme Court was called upon to rebuke Justice Cohen for offending Jewish sensibilities by advocating in a Jerusalem speech that "Jews must have a more positive attitude to the New Testament." "This type of moralizing to the Jewish people by Justice Cohen as a prelude to his championing more interfaith dialogues, is a sad indication how even in Israel one can suffer from a Jewish inferiority complex," the statement asserted.

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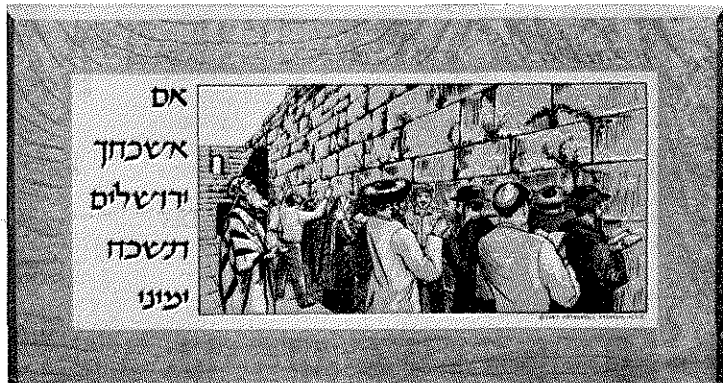
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