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A Dissident Speaks Out

A Statement by Harav Mordecai Gifter

In Retrospect

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The Synagogue Council

WE ARE RELUCTANT—but we cannot shirk our responsibility—to write a postscript to the recent Synagogue Council dinner. This event and its attendant circumstances have left a fateful heritage of implications and consequences for the future of American Jewry—and, in particular, Torah Jewry—which must be faced. Though we foresaw some of them, and therefore raised our voice in advance of the event, we did not foresee how soon and to what extent we would reap its bitter harvest. It remains now for us to take stock of what has happened, praying that the necessary lessons will, after all, be drawn from it.

Nullification of Daas Hatorah

On October 24, 1966 a letter was issued by four outstanding *Roshei Yeshiva*, deploring the calamity represented by the "fatal partnership" of the "three seminaries of American Jewry" at the forthcoming Synagogue Council dinner. Actually *this statement should not have come as a surprise; it introduced nothing new*—it was a logical consequence of the *p'sak din* issued in 1956 by eleven *Roshei Yeshiva*, and concurred in by the late Brisker Rav—Rabbi Zev Soloveitchik, and Rabbi Pessach Tzvi Frank, as well as other *Gedolei Torah* in *Eretz Yisrael*. The letter of the *Roshei Yeshiva* was certainly not aimed to counteract any *heter* issued since 1956 by other sources, for the incontrovertible fact is that *at no time did any responsible rabbinic authority* (including the Halacha Commission of the Rabbinical Council of America or its chairman, Rabbi J. B. Soloveitchik) *issue a heter on participation in the Synagogue Council or challenge the above mentioned p'sak din*.

Yet it is true that these *issurim* were disregarded by the Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations and the RCA, on the strength of the fact that the latter's Halacha

Commission has had the matter under consideration for the past eleven years and had *not issued a decision*.*

The Cheshvan 10 (October 24) statement was therefore an unwelcome reminder, and there ensued a merciless campaign to counter its effect.

First, the *Day-Morning Journal* printed a news release, received from the public relations department of Yeshiva University, stating that a number of *Rabbonim* and *Roshei Yeshiva* formally called on Rabbi Belkin to urge him to attend the dinner. No names were given in the news release. We challenge the public relations office of YU to remedy this omission—information from the faculty indicates that such an incident *never took place*.

Next, word was spread that at least some of the signers of the letter never actually signed it. This was not only stated from at least one well-known pulpit but even appeared in print:

It must be noted that *Harav Hagaon Rav Moshe Feinstein Shlitah*, whose name appears on this *Kol Koreh* has, we are told, never seen its contents or agreed to the use of his name . . ." HAMEVASER (Official Student Publication of the Religious Divisions, Yeshiva University) Nov. 10, 1966.

Obviously, this fiction could not be maintained, in view of the availability of facsimile copies of the letter, complete with four signatures, and, in consequence, an even more offensive fiction was disseminated: *that the letter did not represent the thinking of the signators and was only signed under pressure*. It would follow, consequently, that it could legitimately be disregarded.

[In view of the incessant circulation of this falsehood—which the staff of THE JEWISH OBSERVER knew to be false—an expression of our

*In a letter to THE JEWISH OBSERVER, Rabbi Louis Bernstein, editor of the official publication of RCA, claims that "the position of the RCA was inaccurately and unfairly presented (by THE JEWISH OBSERVER) . . . The RCA was part of the SCA before the *issur* of the eleven *Roshei Yeshiva* was promulgated. It has no quarrel with those who issued the *issur* or those who adhere to it. Even a cursory glance will indicate that it is directed to the students of these *Roshei Yeshiva* who asked for their guidance. The RCA consists of 800 members . . . It is quite competent to arrive at its own decisions. It is no secret, however, that it accepts the guidance of . . . Rabbi J. B. Soloveitchik. This well-known fact should clearly spell out

his position . . . I might suggest you survey his writings and in which areas he does participate for a clearer understanding of his position." It is, of course, clear that the *P'SAK DIN* concerning the SCA was not only issued by the eleven *Roshei Yeshiva*, but by the greatest *Gedolei Torah* then alive; that it was most certainly *not meant* only for their students, but as a general *PSAK DIN*; that it is the greatest effrontery, in the face of this fact, to speak about the competence of the RCA members to make their own decisions; and that Rabbi Soloveitchik has never expressed one word in contradiction to the *PSAK DIN* of his uncle and the other *Gedolim* involved.

(See A STATEMENT BY HARAV MORDECAI GIFTER, on page 7.)

concern with the harm being caused by this rumor was communicated to Rabbi Feinstein. In a written reply dated Teves 16, Rabbi Feinstein stated that the rumors were "nonsensical, and even those who have said these things certainly know that they are absurd." He assured us that there was no reason for concern, since "it is clearly known that I signed" the statement.

It would by now be clear that to deny Reb Moshe's participation in the protest was a lie; to oppose it—a serious breach of *Emunas Chachamim*. For the Jew loyal to *Daas Torah* there is only one alternative—to accept the position of the *Roshei Yeshiva*, and to uphold it.]

There have been those who have argued that opposition to the SCA dinner involved disrespect to Dr. Belkin; and it has been argued, in reply, that the failure to accept the original PSAK DIN involves an even greater disrespect to the greatest rabbinic authorities of our time. But, far beyond the question of proper respect for Torah opinion, we see here emerging an even more serious problem: How will *Klal Yisroel* ever, in the future, be able to benefit from the guidance of *Gedolei Hatorah* if their statements can be nullified, with impunity, by rumor and insinuation on the part of anyone not willing to accept their views?

This, then, is the first point which must be made with all forcefulness: *Any efforts to discredit the statements of Gedolei Hatorah can only lead to total chaos in Jewish life.* If respect for the *Godol* does not forbid such efforts, simplest consideration of the consequences for the future does.

Distortion of Daas Hatorah

NATURALLY, the efforts to deny that the letter of the *Roshei Yeshiva* represented their actual views could not succeed in the long run. Great efforts have therefore been made to discredit their views, as those of men removed from the realities of the Jewish scene, not concerned with reaching the estranged masses, and in fact lacking in basic *Ahavas Yisroel*. A tragic effect of such statements can be seen in a moving editorial in the OBSERVER, student publication of Yeshiva University's Stern college, on December 20:

... it would seem that these *Roshei Yeshiva* are not being realistic. It would seem that they unwittingly ... have cut off those who need 'our help' from the very source of help ... I must reconcile this idea ... with my understanding of the 'hierarchy' in our religion. What is a *Godol*? To whom do I turn when I need advice on a Jewish matter of great importance? To whom do

I turn for inspiration? ... Where can I draw the line and say, until now I've considered him a *talmid chochom* and I've acted accordingly. From this point on—I will ignore his advice ... The *Godol* no longer agrees with me, so he's no longer a *Godol* to me.

In these lines we perceive the struggle between the *Emunas Chachomim* which has always been at the root of our religious tradition, and the influence of those who arrogate to themselves the right to sit in judgment on the wisdom of our *Gedolim*—all too often, as in this case, misunderstanding or misrepresenting their teachings.

We do not refer here to such incredible statements as Rabbi Joseph Lookstein's (*The New York Times*, Nov. 27) that speaks of "those who would smash the unity" of American Jewry and describes their motives as "institutional jealousies directed chiefly against Yeshiva University and its renowned rabbinic school, the Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary, which trains more rabbis for the American Jewish community than all the other Orthodox seminaries combined." (It is remarkable that there was an outpouring of wrath against the Rabbinical Alliance for using *The New York Times*, in a paid advertisement, to disassociate itself from the SCA dinner—after *The New York Times* had been used for years to build up the myth of SCA "universality"—but none against Dr. Lookstein for his infinitely more damaging and slanderous statement to that newspaper.)

Rather, we are concerned with the effort to identify participation in the Synagogue Council ("after all, only for matters on which we are all united, before the outside world") with love for *Klal Yisroel* and interest in our estranged brethren. The fact is that none of these claims can stand up to scrutiny.

SCA participation is only for external and non-religious purposes? The Synagogue Council was officially represented by a delegation, headed by its executive vice-president, at the recent General Assembly of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in Miami. Many of its actions, even though ostensibly directed toward the outside world, deeply compromise the convictions of Torah Jewry. Above everything else, however, the very association of the "three trends" as equals in the SCA "cannot escape the logical inference that Conservative and Reform movements are recognized by the Orthodox members of the SAC as belonging within the fold of true Judaism, differing only in degree or in minor details ..." (Lubavitzer Rebbe's statement, Tammuz 15, 5719). This, as Rabbi Yechezkel Abramsky pointed out in 1956, in supporting the *p'sak din* of the *Gedolim*, is particularly true because

it is not lay individuals or organizations that are associated in the SCA but specifically synagogues and rabbis.

The logical conclusions were drawn in an editorial of the *National Jewish Post* (Nov. 25, 1966) which declared that "Rabbi Belkin's courageous appearance" at the SCA banquet:

is not the beginning of the fight in the Orthodox camp to recognize that the Reform and the Conservative communities also are Jewish. It is rather the end. The fight is over in the United States . . . It is not over, however in Israel. But it is much advanced . . .

Can the Orthodox establishment in Israel, which has been refusing to acknowledge even Reform and Conservative marriage pretend that its case is ironclad with the same vehemence and imperiousness that has marked it heretofore? We doubt it. There will be a slow erosion of this stand and others, in Israel too . . .

The writer takes note of Rabbi Belkin's reservations stated at the dinner, but he is not too impressed. His conclusion is: "that wall will fall too."

AND AT THIS POINT WE MUST ASK: If halachically we were able to choose, which way do we do more to bring our estranged brethren closer to Torah—by lending an aura of acceptability to congregations and spiritual leaders whose every principle and practice is a denial of Torah—or by making it clear that, *close as we feel to them as Jews, and eager as we are to help them to a full realization of their Jewishness*, the words *Judaism, synagogue, rabbi*, can only have one legitimate meaning? The latter course is a difficult and painful one—everybody likes to be a 'good fellow'—but in setting up clear standards we provide a rallying point and the inspiration which a seeking youth needs. The other course—where are its fruits? We have pointed out some of the compromises which it has entailed; can we also point to the gains? Yes, Orthodoxy has become more acceptable in many circles; but perhaps this is also due to its having become a little too close to the other two 'trends.'

Seen in this light, it is obvious just how far the so-called separatist position of the *Roshei Yeshivah* is from *Sinas Yisroel* (G-d Forbid) or even from separatism. *The simple fact is that the greatest contributions to regaining American Jewish youth for Torah were made by men like Rabbi Shraga Faivel Mendlowitz of Torah Vodaas and Torah Umesorah fame and Rabbi Ahron Kotler, whose Beth Midrash Govoha, with its offshoots, has contributed so enormously to the proper appreciation and growth of Torah scholarship in America. The lasting influence of these men, which through the Day Schools and Mesivtos, has spread across the*

width of the country, was exercised not by linking up organizationally with other trends in American Jewry, but by bringing the undiluted message of Torah directly to America's Jewish youngsters.

What moved such men to give their very lives for the spreading of Torah was their profound love for every fellow-Jew. How offensive, how presumptuous, to identify *Ahavas Yisroel* with the readiness to join the SCA or kindred organizations! How much more offensive, and even dishonest, when the position of the 'separatists' is distorted to imply that they want to have nothing to do with the non-observant Jew! In the above-mentioned *New York Times* statement, Dr. Lookstein claims to have heard "the cry that it is contrary to Jewish law to associate with those who theologically and ideologically differ from traditional Judaism"; *Where has he heard this?* Or, as the outburst of the president of the RCA at the convention of VOJCA suggests, do the rules of sympathetic understanding and love for one's fellow-Jew apply only to the non-Orthodox, and not to the Orthodox?

Our Sages point out that he who is merciful when he should be stringent will turn out to be stringent where he should be merciful. *Ahavas Yisroel* certainly would dictate a different attitude toward *Gedolei Hatorah* and their followers than has been evidenced by some leaders of RCA—and the same *Ahavas Yisroel* also demands an uncompromising attitude toward institutions and organizations dedicated to the preservation of Torah Judaism. A *Pinchos*, an *Eliyohu*, a *Yirmiyoh*, were also accused of lacking loyalty to *Klal Yisroel*, because they stood up against the stream and ventured to break "national unity"—but it was they who kept alive the spirit which preserved and can alone truly unite the nation of the Torah. "He who spares the rod, hates his son—and he who loves him, castigates him every morning" (Proverbs 13, 24). It is by the easy tolerance of subversive trends and organizations, in actions if not in words, that we deliver innocent Jewish souls into their power and ultimately break the bonds of the nation.

THIS IS THE SECOND POINT that we seek here to emphasize: *the rationalizations offered in defense of SCA participation involve a distortion of the views of the Gedolei Hatorah and a dangerous misunderstanding of what Ahavas Yisroel and Kirov Rechokim mean.* If there is to be a continued misuse of these terms, it will erode even further the *Emunas Chachomim* of American Orthodoxy, and increase the influence of those who work against Torah.

Opening the Floodgates

THE BITTER FACT IS that the outburst of explanations and rationalizations in defense of the SCA dinner has created utter confusion in Orthodox ranks and has

opened the floodgates to further inroads of the three-equal-trends philosophy. The above-quoted editorial of the *National Jewish Post* is—unfortunately—likely to be prophetic on this point.

Recently the mail brought an announcement about the renewed publication of *The American Rabbi*, “a publication by and for Rabbis,” which boasts of a tripartite editorial board that includes Reform, Conservative and Orthodox Rabbis. On January 22, the annual dinner of *Hado'ar* (a Hebrew-language weekly frequently hostile to Orthodoxy), according to a statement by the dinner chairman, will honor representatives of the “three branches of Judaism”; Rabbi Norman Lamm will be the representative of Orthodoxy. Can anybody still maintain that the “three branches” concept is only accepted by its Orthodox proponents for representation before the outside world?

The extraordinary impact of the dinner itself was foreshadowed by the president of SCA when he hailed it as paving the way for the “long overdue unification of these three branches of Judaism.” Small wonder that shortly after the dinner the Orthodox rabbi of a Virginia community was called by the local Conservative rabbi with the request that, *finally*, he join the local

rabbinical organization. When the request was once again refused, the Conservative rabbi rather angrily declared: “Now that Dr. Belkin went through with the SCA dinner, I won't accept it that your refusal is a matter of principle.” Such pressures, in different forms, will be manifest in many places; on many occasions.

There have been those who have expressed a feeling that the *Gedolei Hatorah* acted hastily and without proper study of all angles in forbidding membership in the SCA and similar groups. Quite apart from the fact that *Gedolim* do not pass on problems in such fashion, it should by now be obvious that, as always, they have evidenced the clearest insight into the problem and the likely consequences for the future Torah Jewry. Of course they have had the advantage of historical halachic and ideological precedents.

There is, then, the simple fact that *the disastrous confusion of the minds resulting from this SCA dinner and its accompanying manifestations, and the danger of ever further involvement in 'tripartite Judaism,' must be met by a sustained effort for public enlightenment. We must make sure that the historic cry, "He who is for the Lord, to me!" will find a resounding response in the hearts of American Jews.* □

A Dissident Speaks Out

A Statement by Harav Mordecai Gifter

I AM ONE OF A GROUP in Jewish life who have derisively been called fundamentalists and dissidents. One young man in the American rabbinate has recently declared that the fundamental which obsesses us has become “a dull obsessive litany.” Yet this “dull obsession,” we are told, threatens to split American Orthodoxy. We are urged to avoid this tragic consequence and to become “acquainted with the facts of life.” One young man in the rabbinate even preaches to us on the halachic principle involved.

What is this fundamental which has become so obnoxious to so many within American Orthodoxy? It is the fundamental affirmation of the Jew of *Torah* and *Emunoh* that there is no such monstrosity as ‘one tree of Judaism with three branches,’ or ‘one bird with three wings.’

Jewish life is governed by *Torah*, and *Torah* dictates what Judaism is. Any understanding of Judaism contrary to *Torah* is not a branch or wing within Judaism; it is *non-Judaism*.

One of the basic tenets of *Torah* and *Emunoh* is the principle of *Torah Min Hashomayim*, which means that

every word, letter, jot and tittle from *B'reishis* to *L'einei kol Yisroel* was spoken by *Hashem Yisborach* to Moshe Rabbenu together with the exhortation that it is to be committed into writing—*Torah Shebiksav*—and that together with this, Moshe Rabbenu received *Mipi Hagvura*, the *Mitzvah*—the explanation of *Torah Shebiksav*, the *Mishna*—*Torah Shebealpeh*. (MISHNAH SANHEDRIN XI, 1; SANHEDRIN 99a; B'ROCHOS 5a; RAMBAM: PEIRUSH HAMISHNAH (SANHEDRIN, *ibid*, and: Introduction to PEIRUSH HAMISHNAH). Any deviation in the slightest form from this tenet of EMUNOH denies one his portion—*Cheilek*—in *Olom Haboh*. This should be taken very seriously and not dismissed as something trivial. The Mishnah states: *Kol Yisroel yeish lohem cheilek Lo'olom Taboh*—“All members of Israel do have a portion of *Olom Haboh*.” Those to whom this portion is denied have in this Mishnah been placed in a separate category as Jews. In this sense they are in the category of the apostate. (RAMBAM: *T'shuva* III, 6.)

NOW, IF THIS IS CLEAR, as it should be to those professing to be Torah Jews, there can be no recognition as

Judaism accorded to any movement deviating in any way from this tenet. We are not dealing here with the vast majority of those Jews affiliated with congregations and synagogues throughout the country outside of Orthodoxy. Most of them are disinterested, or unaware of the philosophies of their respective spiritual leaders, just as the same holds true, in great measure, for the vast majority of Orthodox affiliations. We deal here with the *movements* as such and their respective spiritual leadership. A *movement* which denies or seeks to distort the very fundament upon which Judaism is built and from which it draws its eternal strength is in essence non-Judaism.

We must clearly differentiate between 'religious movements *within* Judaism' and 'religious movements *among* Jews'. A religious movement which does not subscribe to the basic precepts of Torah is not a movement *within* Judaism. It is a movement among Jews. To lump together, in one breath, the differences of opinion, such as *Bais Shamai* and *Bais Hillel*, *Chassidim* and *Misnagdim*, and (lehavdil) *Z'dukim* and *Prushim* displays a basic lack of understanding of the very essence of Judaism. Recognition of movements among Jews as movements within Judaism is detrimental and dangerous for the continued purity of *Torah* and *Emunoh*. It brings confusion and havoc for it does not involve differences but rather separateness. Light and darkness are not different entities. They are separate entities for they are contrary to each other. So also are Torah and non-Torah separate entities for they are contrary to each other.

Working With All Jews Nothing New

THE POSSIBILITY of acting together with Jews of all beliefs and creeds in matters of common interest to all Jews has always been a fact, and is not something new born of the facts of American life. There have been differences of opinion as to the form and manner of such common cooperation. Kehilla life in Eastern Europe saw the Aguda and Mizrachi at one table with the Bund. In other communities, where Torah-loyal Jewry had its own autonomous Kehilla, there were avenues of rapport and cooperation in matters affecting the two separate organized bodies within the community.

There was, however, never any question on the part of Torah Jewry to ascribe to non-Torah Jewry recognition as a voice of religion within Judaism. Cooperation in communal bodies never involved religious commitment and the members composing those bodies were not there as representatives of religious views and ideologies. The religiously committed members, the Torah Jews in communal bodies sought to guarantee the needs and rights of communal nature specific to the life of the Torah Jew.

The Synagogue Council of America is an organization composed of religious groupings in American Jew-

ish life. Participation by Torah Jewry in this organization is recognition of non-Torah views as being *within* Judaism, part of the religious concept of the Jew. The decisions of this organization are presented as those of the Synagogue—a religious center in Jewish life. Participation implies recognition of the ideological leaders of these non-Torah religious movements as being religious leaders within Judaism. *When the non-Torah president of the Council speaks, he is then the voice of religion for Orthodoxy participating in the Council.* Thus was participation viewed by those *Roshei Hayeshivos* who, a number of years ago, delivered their *p'sak din* against participation of Orthodoxy in the Synagogue Council and in similar organizations.

Those who favored and practiced participation, and to whom the *Roshei Hayeshivos* became merely "dissidents," unaware of the facts of life in American Jewry, defended their participation on the basis of comparison to the European Kehilla pattern. They denied that SCA was the representative of the voice of religion in American Jewry, absurd as this may seem.

"Not A Matter of Substance"

I have been told by leaders in American Orthodoxy* that "it is not a matter of substance, but of degree which is at issue. The Jewish community must frequently marshal all its resources. We have found the Synagogue Council to be a good agency for doing so. Why do you feel that having a secular organization speak to the non-Jewish world for Jewry is preferable to an organization like Synagogue Council." (April 10, 1959).

Another leader of the participants writes: "Due to circumstances it [participation in SCA] became a question of accepting the position of our own *Moroh D'asroh*, namely Rabbi Soloveitchik and our Halacha committee and following the position of the RCA or stepping out. . . . I believe that there is much to be said for continuing the SCA. In fact, I am convinced that if there were no such agency, we should devise ways and means to form one. . . . I still believe that a re-assessment should be made and a way found whereby our sensibilities should be protected and an agency that can stand on guard to protect the day-to-day interests of the American Jewish community should exist." (April 10, 1959).

"The practical problem, however, is whether we can afford a complete separation or whether we must pay some kind of a price for a semblance of a united front on the American scene." (March 22, 1959)

"I hope I can make you understand that the SCA is not an individual membership organization but a coordinating agency for all those groups representing the Jewish community, finding it necessary to function in areas *Klapei Chutz*, vis a vis government and other non-

*All quotations are from personal correspondence. M. G.

Jewish religious groups, to watch over and protect the rights of every Jew in America, and to represent him when his common interests are involved." (March 27, 1959).

The above quotations from correspondence of various leaders in American Orthodoxy indicates clearly that the participants themselves felt that they were paying a price but that the *semblance* of a united voice in American Jewry was worth the price, since the SCA was merely a Kehilla vehicle for American Jewry. *I have never understood, even according to their viewpoint, where there is one united voice in the common interests of all Jews when, besides SCA, there are so many other agencies each speaking in the name of American Jewry: American Jewish Congress, American Jewish Committee, Bnai Brith, to mention just a few.* The reasons why there cannot be one united Kehilla agency for all of American Jewry are too numerous to discuss here.

This defense of participation on the basis of comparison to a non-religious communal body has now disappeared. In his remarks at the SCA dinner, Dr. Belkin stated that he was there as head of a great yeshiva, not merely as president of a university, making it clear that he was participating in his capacity as a Torah personality of great stature and as a representative of the Yeshiva-world which heretofore had never been involved in SCA. In the course of his remarks he stated that since he was not a separatist he saw a vital need for SCA as the united voice of *religious Jewry* in America. Finally, the truth was spoken. SCA was not a Kehilla vehicle, but rather the voice of religious Jewry. *And participation was urged upon this basis.*

It is important to remember that even if the dissidents were but a few—and this is untrue—even participation by the majority does not determine the validity of such participation. *What is right or wrong in Jewish life is not determined in such fashion.*

THE CHRISTIAN WRITER on religion in *The New York Times*, John Cogley, seems to have sensed the purpose of this dinner in its true perspective. He wrote on Sunday, September 11: "In an era when ecumenism is in the air throughout the Christian world, it is not surprising that Jewish leaders are thinking more about unity in Judaism." He saw in the dinner an expression of a new movement in the air, a neo-Orthodoxy which speaks in ambiguous terms about basic tenets in *Emunoh* in order to make them palatable to non-Torah Jews. It is a movement which seeks to teach that the Halachic scholar proceed and change or modernize the Halacha by first applying the principle: "What are the ends of the Law which G-d or nature ordained and how can we be guided by these ideal ends in developing the Law." *This is the language of Reform.* The leaders of this neo-Orthodoxy are obsessed with "the area of freedom preserved for the Jew in his religious

commitment." This makes it most difficult for them to recognize and accept the *Daas Torah* of *Gedolei Torah* and "they have grappled through many a sleepless night with the problem of authority in Judaism and the measure of freedom that it does permit." The discussion revolves about the question of what makes one the *Godol Hador*, and what is the area in which there can be "freedom of expression and even freedom to act in a non-juridic capacity." Because of this lack of understanding and acceptance of the basic concept of *Emunas Chahomim*, it is possible for them to say of a world renowned *Godol Batorah* that "he may have more consistency, and even more integrity, but these two virtues may be his together with naivete," whereas another personality "articulates his position so that I myself can evaluate it and I must, therefore, prefer his opinion." Acceptance of Torah authority, they say, is based upon yet another premise: "By the same token that our forebears studied astronomy, even the astronomy of non-Jews, in order that they might arrive at correct calendar computations, so our *Gedolim* must thoroughly comprehend every philosophical school, for example, before they articulate what is even a definitive doctrine of the Jewish creed." By such token they summarily dismiss the opinions not merely of the *Gedolim* of our age but of many past generations also. None of them, we are told, could articulate a definitive doctrine in *Torah* and *Emunoh*.

Now, then, are we to wonder that such men in the Orthodox Rabbinate talk about 'expanding and developing' the Halacha. And these are the leaders who determine the validity of participation in SCA and make of non-participants 'dissidents,' far-right 'fundamentalists' and 'separatists.' It is from these leaders that we are bid to accept the facts of American life. We are supposed to be naive and removed from the mainstream of American Jewish living and they in their involvement recognize life for what it is worth.

We shall not be naive enough to be overwhelmed with the danger of a split in Orthodox Jewry. It is our holy responsibility to proceed forward in forging the chain of Torah tradition from Sinai to our present day and age, to be governed in our lives by an unbending subservience to *Torah* and *Emunoh*, fostered and nurtured by the study of Torah unadulterated by a desire to synthesize it with non-Torah ideas and culture.

The present state of affairs in problems of *Emunoh* is part of a process of gradual crystalization of the position of pure *Emunoh* as our forebears handed it down to us. It is the confusion of the generation and period of *ikveso dimeshicho*. G-d grant us, hastily, the fulfillment of the words of the prophet: *And the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of G-d as the waters do cover the ocean.* It is our fervent hope that our brothers who now speak of us in derision and contempt will then see Torah in its true light. □



The Beis Medrash of the Mirer Yeshiva in Shanghai

Chuna Herzman

From Mir to Shanghai

It is now twenty six years since students and rabbis of the Mirer Yeshiva, escaping from the advancing German armies, found themselves stranded in the city of Shanghai, where the Yeshiva was re-established. RABBI CHUNA HERZMAN, author of the following recollections of yeshiva-life in Shanghai, is a well-known educator and writer. Several of his works were published in Shanghai; his more recent works have been published in New York City where he now lives. Photographs were supplied by Rabbi S. Wolkin and David Kranzler from their personal collections.

IN THE GLORIOUS HISTORY of the Jew's devotion to Torah Study, the remote, exotic city of Shanghai had no place. Yet, in the years of World War II, while European Jewry and its Torah centers were being consumed in one massive flame, Shanghai served as the Torah capitol of the world, where the great Yeshivos of Mir, Lublin, Lubavitch, Kaminetz, Telshe and Navaredok, raised the banner of Torah, and carried on their work.

The Talmud tells us that Rabbah Bar Rav Huna designed a ship's mast and banner for himself, that he might always remember a miracle that had saved his life at sea. So too, must each of us make some record or reminder of an event in life wherein we experienced a particular act of divine assistance, for it is just such

an event which offers the opportunity for deeper insight into the miraculous and mysterious ways of our Creator.

Nevertheless, it is man's duty in this life to sharpen his spiritual senses, to refine the various facets of his soul which form his very being and which ultimately determine the state of his relationship with the Almighty—to bring himself to the level where he is able to see miracles *always*.

Consider the Divine Wisdom, the Design which is manifest in the power to see. The physician must spend years studying the mechanics of sight; yet even then he rarely achieves a grasp of the far more wondrous psychological and spiritual aspects of the simple act of 'seeing.' And this is equally true of each of the other four senses; the human body is a vast collection of

miracles, brought together to make it possible for man to serve his Creator.

How better can we express this than in the words of the Shabbos morning *tefilo*:

Were our mouths filled with song as the sea; our tongues a melody like its mass of waves; were our lips filled with praise like the wide stretches of Heaven—we would yet be unable to thank You and bless Your Name for even one of the thousands upon thousands of kindnesses that You have done for our fathers, and for us.

We look back, after twenty years, to those miraculous days, and we wonder: If only there could have been some way in which to have captured the essence of yeshiva life in Shanghai—the words of Torah, the *tefilos*, the *Tehilim* for the sick, the *Mussar Shmusen*, the chants, the sounds, the cries that went up from the *Beis Medrash* on Museum Road, the soulful yearning, the tears shed over the anguish of our people, the suffering of our friends and the people with whom we shared life in the ghetto—could we have preserved this essence in the manner of the chemist, what a wondrous tonic it would be for us today.

WE WAITED EACH DAY for news of the world we had left behind and the voices of our parents came to us as an echo floating through the air in our *Beis Medrash*.

in your hearts. Fill your minds with Torah, your hearts with the Fear of G-d, that wherever your destiny will take you, Torah and Mit-vot's will shield you from the frost of alien winds.

Life in Shanghai offered few comforts; confined to the ghetto we could not see out to the world. But in the study of Torah we found windows through which we could see all the glories of Earth and Heaven.

Learning From Our Teachers

It is easy to speak of *mesiras nefesh*, to urge others on to self-sacrifice. The mouth, the pen, form the words with no strain. Our *Rebbes* knew this; they did not preach at us; they wept under the *talis*, for none but their Maker to see. Yet enough of their spirit escaped from under the *talis* for us to sense the intensity of their *Avodas Hashem*. The impact on us was powerful; silence can be more eloquent than words.

We studied our *rebbes* as intensely as we studied the *seforim* which we had managed to print in Shanghai. We absorbed into our blood-streams their way of life which was a function of their profound grasp of Torah. We learned from their example, how much we must work, how much energy we must invest, for every breakthrough, for every bit of upgrading of our *neshomos*. We became ever more aware that man in rela-

IN WRITING for and editing THE JEWISH OBSERVER, a number of problems arise which are unique to the exposition of Torah concepts in the English language and are not covered in the normal manuals of style and usage. One such problem involves the use of classical terms in the Hebrew language. If we use such terms, we risk losing the attention of those of our readers who are not familiar with these words and expressions. If we resort to translations, even when they are adequate, we risk the loss of the flavor of tradition which only original terms offer.

In this adaptation, we have used classical terms in deference to the subject matter, which goes to the heart of the Yeshiva world and in particular the concepts of *Mussar*. For those readers unfamiliar with this world, we offer the following glossary of terms, which will

make possible a richer appreciation of the theme, and will—in some measure we trust—introduce them to a world which every Jew must know, and every Jew must strive to live in; a world which every Jew, regardless of his own background, must open to his children.

TEFILO: 'Prayer' in its broadest sense.

MUSSAR: While the word means 'admonition' it here refers to the movement in the Yeshiva world instituted by Reb Yisroel Salanter, calling for a systematic program of examination of one's spiritual status, with a view to detecting weaknesses in character, and correcting them.

MUSSAR SHMUSSEN: Talks to guide and inspire the listener in the pursuit of *Mussar*.

AVODAS HASHEM: Service of G-d.

NESHOMO: Soul.

YEITZER HORA: That force in man which

pulls him toward evil, in contrast to the *Yeitzer Tov* which pulls man toward the fulfillment of his divine task.
MENAHEL RUCHANI: Spiritual Adviser; a member of the yeshiva faculty whose responsibility it is to guide each student in his spiritual and ethical development.

OLE MALCHUS SHOMAYIM: The Yoke of the Sovereignty of Heaven, the acceptance of which is daily affirmed in the reading of *Shema Yisroel*.

MESILAS YESHORIM: *The Path of the Righteous*, a classic *Mussar* text written by R' Moshe Chaim Luzatto.

MASHGIACH: Supervisor of a yeshiva's *Beis Medrash* (Study Hall), who keeps a close watch on the work and progress of each *talmid* and assists them in their learning program.

MAARIV: Evening prayer.

SHURIM: Lectures on Talmud.

Dear children: You need not longer write to us. Stop worrying; stop running to the consulates to beg for visas for us. There remains but one thing you can do for us now: Say Kaddish, and mourn. Tear your garments to mark your grief, but heed the words of the Novi Yoel: "Tear your hearts and not your clothes alone." And as you must never repair the tear in your garments, so too must you never seek to cover over the tear

relationship to the tension which exists between his soul and his yeitzer hora, is like a lion-tamer in a cage with a wild beast—every action, every motion, every gesture must be measured with microscopic precision, lest the beast become bold and strike.

Surrounded by sickness, by disease and deprivation, it became our goal in this laboratory of sorrow, not merely to help the sick, not only to understand their plight, but in the spirit of our *Mussar Rebbes*, to work

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toward actually *feeling* the pain of a *chaver*; to drop a tear not *for* him, but *with* him. It was in this sense that we were taught to understand the Torah imperative: *You must love your fellow as if you were he.*

EVERY EVENING, before *Maariv*, we studied *Mussar*, to probe our shortcomings, our faults and foibles; to clarify in our minds and hearts the high standards that Torah demands of us, and to measure ourselves against those standards. How we cried aloud at the painful discoveries we made. And as dusk turned to night, we declared together: *V'hu Rachum y'chaper awvone, v'lo yashchis . . .*, "And He, being Merciful, will forgive sin, rather than destroy us . . . The King will answer us—on the day that we call." We continued into the *Shema*, eager to affirm our subjection to the Sovereignty of Heaven, to accept the *Ole Malchus Shomayim*.

The *Mussar Shmussen* in our *Mirer Beis Medrash* in Shanghai were given by R. Yechezkel Levinstein, who is now the *Menahel Ruchani* in the *Pohnevezher Yeshiva* in Israel. His words lifted us out of our daily preoccupation with sustaining our bodies and healing our ills; the warmth of his thought and its profound simplicity, carried us above the mounds of our troubles and helped us to overcome the anguish of knowing we had become orphans in a hostile world.

Reb Yechezkel, whose small room was just above the *Beis Medrash*, would rise early each morning to devote himself to the study of *Mussar* before *Shacharis*. At times I stood outside his room, listening to his sing-song repetition of the opening words of R. Moshe Chaim Luzatto's *Mesilas Yeshorim: Y'sod hachassidus v'shoresh ho'avodah . . .*, "The foundation of righteousness, the root of Divine Service, lies in man clarifying for himself, and becoming convinced of the truth of, what his obligation is in this world."

We *davened* slowly—carefully—one word at a time. If at times a plaintive note could be heard, it was the anguish we felt for our dead mothers and fathers. The bulk of our time was of course devoted to Torah study, and we listened eagerly to *shiurim* by R' Chaim Shmulewitz. His work, however, went beyond giving *shiurim*; he was in constant contact with the sainted R' Avraham Kalmanowitz, and together they grappled with the problem of sustaining the Yeshiva in Japanese-occupied Shanghai while the United States was at war with

Life in Shanghai...



Celebrating *Sheva Brochos*

...and death



Burial of a bombing victim



Japan. It was the work of R' Kalmanowitz and the leaders of Vaad Hatzalah in America, that made possible the survival of Mir in Shanghai.

It has been said that "the town of Mir was located on the outskirts of the Yeshivas Mir." Neither the town, nor the physical plant of the Yeshiva enjoyed any special distinction, except that they held in their confines, at one time or another, the spirit of R' Eliezer Yehuda Finkel, the son of *Der Alter* of Slobodka; his brother-in-law R' Avraham Comay, R' Yeruchem—the *mashgiach*, and later—R' Yechezkel Levinstein. This same spirit lived on, none the worse for its transplantation, on Museum Road in Shanghai, China.

THE IDEALS of Mir, and the spirit which pervaded in Shanghai as well, are more clearly understood as we focus on the personality of one of the Yeshiva's most outstanding and most loved talmidim, who died several years ago in New York: R' Shmuel Charkiver. R' Shmuel's keen insight into people, developed by the study of *Mussar*, would quickly detect the slightest uneasiness in the bearing of the younger *talmidim*. He would sit with a young man in a quiet corner of the *Beis Medrash*, or—hand over his shoulder—go for a stroll with him. His probing mind usually was quick to discover what was bothering the boy, and with his noble soul he was able to point up some of the young man's finer traits, making it possible for him to stand on his own and meet his problems with strength drawn from within himself. R' Shmuel would keep a discreet eye on the boy, and would encourage others to help.

On *Simchas Torah*, R' Shmuel articulated the joy we all felt that it was our lot to study G-d's Torah. The singing, the dancing, was spirited, and R' Shmuel would stand on a table urging us on to greater enthu-

siasm in melodies which penetrated into the closed areas of our souls. Snapping his fingers in rhythm, R' Shmuel would sing:

*Du traibt men unz arois, du luzt men nit arein;
Zug'ge Tatenu, biz vanet vet dos zein!*

They drive us out from here; they won't let us in there;

Tell us Father Dear, how long will this go on.

In our joys, R' Shmuel was the life-spirit. When a *talmid* married, no father could have celebrated more—have felt greater happiness. He used to say: "To feel another's happiness is a greater achievement than feeling another's pain."

Never did R' Shmuel manifest any sense of personal importance, any thought of self. He would give away whatever he had for a *chaver*; he would give of his heart and soul. And . . . having no thought of self—he found the whole world was his. Who knows if we will again see the likes of him; may his memory be blessed.

The lesson of Mir and Shanghai is clear; clear as the truth of Torah itself. Torah being eternal—the Jewish people the people of the Eternal G-d—cannot be confined by geographical or any other limits. There is no piece of soil on the face of this earth, no matter how hard it may be, that will not yield to the study of Torah. There is no Jewish soul, no matter how hardened to Torah, that will not soften and grow spiritually rich, under the impact of Torah study. The miracle of Mir and Shanghai, is the miracle of New York and Lakewood, of Cleveland and Baltimore, of Memphis and Phoenix; it is the miracle which is Torah, Morosho K'hilas Yaakov, the heritage of the Jewish people.

The Source

A Critical Analysis

Morris Bekritsky

The influence of the mass media on the thinking of Americans is so vast, that we can only guess at the full scope of its total effect. This much is clear: the mass media are responsible for re-shaping American values in such areas as social behavior and morality to the extent that the old values of our society have been radically altered.

As we have noted frequently, this creates a unique set of problems for the Jew who has chosen to live by the values of Torah. While we have witnessed an upsurge in observance stemming directly from the increased literacy of our yeshiva-trained youth, they have by no means escaped the impact of the amoral society which surrounds us. Among our non-yeshiva youth the amoral influence is more evident in the rising rates of drug addiction, alcoholism, and other social ills.

One of the strongest influences—popular fiction—because it reaches a relatively smaller audience, is often not recognized for the threat that it is. A novel which is read by young people—and particularly those that become 'in' for the high school and college student—may very well be a stronger influence on a young mind, than the home or school—assuming that the latter are wholesome influences to begin with. On the adult level, these influences may be less potent when they confront the mature mind, but they are powerful nevertheless.

Again, for the Jew, the problem exists in greater measure. No more revealing case history exists than James Michener's novel, *The Source*. Purporting to be fiction based on historical facts, this bestseller has literally become a 'source' for many Jews, of Jewish tradition, teachings, and history. Rabbis report that congregants have taken issue with them on matters of religious law, quoting as *their source—The Source*. It is impossible to assess the damage that this book has done, and it is impossible to undo all but an infinitesimal measure of this damage. Yet, we trust that the following brief study of the book will counteract in some small way the distortions which Michener has foisted on America's reading public.

THE EDITOR

FOR ALMOST A YEAR, James Michener's *The Source* headed the bestseller list throughout the nation, and its paper-back edition will swell its number of readers. The sustained interest of the American reading public in a book of Jewish interest is phenomenal. To some Jews, this has been a source of gratification. Though the book makes a pretense of accuracy in the fields of archeology and history, and though Michener is said to have spent years in researching his subject and several years living in Israel, it is nevertheless only archeological and historical *fiction*. And herein lies the danger: The compelling manner in which the book is written will induce the average reader to accept the historical trimming of the novel as historical fact.

How far a writer of historical fiction has the right to stray away from historical accuracy is debated by literary critics. But Michener strays very far and strays very often, and as we will demonstrate, he creates fictional

Jewish law. As a result, he has produced a book which is anti-Jewish, if not antisemitic.

ORTHODOXY IN AMERICA today is in open season, and Michener joints in the shooting with gusto. But while others are content to direct their salvos at the intransigence of Orthodoxy *today*, Michener begins his attack on Orthodoxy (better, Judaism, since the tri-partite division of Judaism is a modern invention) as of the year 966 B.C.E.

In a brief note prefacing his book, Michener writes:

This is a novel. Its characters and scenes are imaginary except as noted. The hero, Rabbi Akiba, was a real man who died as described in 137 C.E. All quotations ascribed to him can be verified. King David and Abishag, Herod the Great and his family, General Petronius, Emperor Vespasian, General Josephus and Dr. Maimonides were also real persons and quotations ascribed to the last are verifiable.

Akko, Zefat and Tiberias are existing places in

RABBI MORRIS BEKRITSKY has been the spiritual leader of the Orthodox Jewish Community of Portland, Maine since 1948. He is the founder of the Portland Hebrew Day School.

A People Maligned

WE WHO LIVE IN HAWAII were deeply chagrined at the appearance of the book *Hawaii*, with its shameful misrepresentation of the Hawaiian people as ignorant savages and the missionaries as self-serving bigots. Soon after its publication, author James Michener left Hawaii rather than face the scorn of the people he had maligned.

The Hawaiian people were one of the most intelligent, tolerant, and happy

racess on this earth. They have been cheated, corrupted, infected, and misled, but not by the missionaries. Their literature was impressive, though unwritten, characterized by a sensitivity of feeling and precision of expression which are rare today. Many examples of that early culture were destroyed, not by the missionaries but by overzealous converts and by the Hawaiian kahuna (priests) who wished to avoid desecration of their relics.

Now the long-awaited movie version

of *Hawaii* is here, and is found to be tedious and boring despite beautiful scenery and excellent acting. We wish that all of the four million people who bought the book and all those who will see the movie could be made to understand that it is wholly fictional.

Hawaiian Historical Society.
EMERSON C. SMITH

Honolulu, Hawaii

—A letter to the SATURDAY REVIEW
December 3, 1966

the Galilee and descriptions of these towns are accurate, but Makor, its site, its history and its excavation are wholly imaginary.

Thus, Michener sets the stage for his novel by creating a fictional place which is the site of fictional archeological excavations down to various levels; but he makes the claim of historical accuracy in many significant areas, even to the extent of quotations ascribed to the Rambam. Preceding each chapter are historical notes, illustrated with drawings, maps, and diagrams, giving the book something of the appearance of a text-book and the air of authenticity.

IN THE ACCOUNT of Level XII—called the "Psalm of the Hoopoe Bird," Michener introduces a man named Hoopoe, who is a Baal worshiper, while his wife Kerith is faithful to the G-d of Moses. Kerith, mother of two children, nurtures the hope that she will one day visit the holy city of Jerusalem. Her husband is engaged in building a phenomenal tunnel, and Kerith prays that her husband's success in building the tunnel, which will have military value, will come to the attention of King David who would then appoint him to a position in Jerusalem.

Michener then introduces Abraham, an escaped murderer, a player of the lyre, who found sanctuary at the altar in Makor. At the same time, King David comes to visit Makor. Michener portrays King David as a half-insane, vengeful king who kills a man in cold blood. He describes David's religious belief in these words: "The Judaism that King David inherited was often a cold religion, rigorous and even forbidding." The King disregards Hoopoe's tunnel, and takes back with him to Jerusalem the murderer Abraham so that he may enjoy his talents on the lyre.

Manipulating his fictional characters, which is his privilege, Michener uses them to demonstrate his bias against Judaism, which is deplorable. He has Kerith, the woman of valor, the worshipper of the true G-d, betray her husband, abandon her children, and run off with the murderer Abraham in order to achieve her goal of being in Jerusalem. With this, he leaves the reader with the impression that the religious woman

hypocritically betrays her family for the sake of her religion.

The Creation of the Talmud

In Level VII, *The Law*, Michener describes in detail the creation of the Talmud. Again, using fictitious people and 'historical' detail, Michener presents a man named Yohanan who defies Rabbi Asher by marrying a woman whose husband has disappeared and left her without divorcing her. Since she is still an *aishes ish*, a married woman, her new marriage is of course adulterous, and her son has the status of *mamzer*, that is, a child born of an adulterous union, who "may not enter the congregation of the Lord" (Deuteronomy 23:3). Michener, who supposedly probed into Jewish law, and takes great pains to be precise in archeological details, demonstrates total ignorance of the laws concerning *mamzer*. Rashi notes on the passage cited above, that the *mamzer* is restricted in choosing a wife, yet he retains all other rights of a Jewish child. The Talmud indeed declares in *Horiyos* (III:8) that a *mamzer* who is a scholar takes precedence to a High Priest who is unlearned. Michener seems to deliberately—how else can we explain it in the light of his claim to accuracy—ignore the facts, and creates fictional religious law, a literary license he has no right to take.

This makes it possible for Michener to write a highly dramatic sequence, which is ludicrous, anachronistic, and might even be amusing, where it not such a distortion of sacred Jewish practices.

Rabbi Asher glumly advises the boy, as he is about to reach his thirteenth birthday, "You may not enter the congregation of the Lord, neither now or to the tenth generation." The author explains the boy's dilemma.

... at thirteen—that critical age for Jewish boys—he was to discover in full measure the nature of his taint. This was the year of initiation when he should have entered the synagogue dressed in a new set of clothes, climbed to the rostrum where

the Torah was read on Shabbat morning, stood before the sacred scroll and chanted for the first time in public a portion of G-d's word. At that moment, in the presence of the men of Makor, he would cease being a child and would state with assurance, "Today I am a man. The things I do from this day on are my responsibility and not my father's."

Michener should have been astute enough to know that the Bar-Mitzvah formula: *Today I am a man*, is a purely American invention, and today evokes ridicule even from the less-sophisticated Jew. It is even questionable whether the Bar Mitzvah ceremonial as it has evolved today, was extant in the time Michener writes of.

"The Harsh Old Law"

In the same chapter, Michener describes the birth of Christianity. Father Busebius, a priest, befriends the outcast boy, takes him to his bosom and tells him:

The harsh old law is no more and in its place has come the new law of love and redemption. If this night you tell me that you are willing to joint . . . [us], your sin will vanish forever. The boy replies in a whisper: No longer can I bear my portion of sin, accept me.

What Michener is doing here is even more transparent than his other distortions. He is perpetuating the fraud that Judaism, which denies a boy the right to put on a new suit and have a Bar Mitzvah, is cold, legalistic, even ruthless, and that it had been improved upon, if not superceded, by the warmth and love of Christianity.

The Men of Safed

In Level III, Michener discusses the saintly men of Safed, the city of the Cabbalists; the home of the author of the *Shulchan Aruch*, R. Yoseph Caro, the *Ari* and other saintly scholars. Speaking of these men he writes:

Because our Jews in Europe are forced to lead far from perfect lives, I must not leave the impression that Safed is a paradise. If we must depend upon the purity of this city to lure the Messiah back to earth we may have to wait a long time. The men of Safed like women and they like wine. . . .

So vulgar, so abusive are the words which follow, so filled with vicious inuendoes against scholars whose memories will forever be cherished by Jews, that we dare not commit them to print. Were there such an instrumentality as an anti-defamation league concerned to protect the good name of the Jew, there would have been an outcry when the book was published.

Michener, here and in the episode of the woman Kerith cited above, uses the sure-fire success formula for creating a best-seller: a liberal mixture of religion and sex. Not only does this boost sales, it also makes it easy for the author to maintain the interest of the reader, and helps to assure a sizeable sum when the film rights to the book are sold to Hollywood.

MICHENER'S DESCRIPTION of a Seder is less offensive, but no less distorted. He places the opening of the door after the Kiddush; he adds to the Four Questions: Why do we leave the door open. And why do we pour the extra glass of wine? He writes that the participants were "required to answer in the lovely fairy tale nonsense of tradition that the door was left open for the prophet Elijah to come and join the feast and by tradition all turn to watch the open door to see if just once Elijah might appear." Had Michener attended a Seder, he might have avoided this insulting parody.

"The Source" on Modern Israel

Bringing his epic up to date, Michener makes capital of the existing religious tensions in the State of Israel. He makes it clear where he, a non-Jew, stands on this Jewish problem.

Michener cleverly concocts several 'case histories' which he offers to the reader as examples of the medievalism of the rabbis. The following is one such case history.

A Gentile German woman married to a Jew comes to Israel, with her husband and their children. She had suffered under the Nazis, and of her own volition wore a Star of David on her clothing. Now she wants to be converted. But . . . there is a complication; after the war she became an atheist. The rabbis declare, in Michener's words, "*Trudi Ginzberg is a Gentile. Worse, she is an atheist, and we cannot permit her conversion. Therefore neither she nor her children can be Jews.*" Michener's formula is simple; the victim: a sincere woman who wants desperately to become Jewish; the villain: medieval rabbinism. But can Michener cite a single religion that will accept as a convert a professed atheist, no matter how heroic and unfortunate the candidate may be?

With all this—and the examples cited are only a small part of the indictment that could be drawn up, *The Source* has been acclaimed by Jews, and Jewish groups throughout the country have listened to enthusiastic book reviewers hail the book and declare Michener to be a hero for his contribution to publicizing Jews and the Jewish State. This reaction is, tragically, an indication of the low state of Jewish self-esteem and integrity, and the willingness to accept a slap on the back from a non-Jew, even though it takes the wind out of us. □

An Editorial Epologue to "The Source"

Several months ago, we spoke to an editor of *The Source* at Random House. When we told her of the inaccuracies that readers of THE JEWISH OBSERVER had called to our attention, she expressed surprise, and told us that the Jewish community had so warmly accepted Mr. Michener's book, that he had been invited to address meetings of Hadassah all over the country. She admitted that several 'minor errors' had been corrected since the first edition, and said that if other errors were pointed out, they would be corrected in subsequent editions, *if they did not involve major revisions.*

The most revealing aspect of our conversation concerned Michener's sources of information. Through the good offices of the Israeli Consulate in New York, the publisher's representative told us, Mr. Michener had been granted the cooperation of the highest government officials in Israel, who placed themselves at his disposal.

We will be pleased to meet with the editors and publishers of *The Source* to further document our claims against the book, and will keep our readers informed.

Leo Levi

Science — Slave or Master?

The Sphere of Science

"Nothing succeeds like success." This American adage can well be applied to science today, whose spectacular successes have gained it wide popular acclaim, probably greater than any ever before accorded an intellectual endeavor.

But, well founded as this acclaim may seem to be, those caught up in it may do well to pause to ask themselves whether they are not being carried too far.

The impact of science is felt strongly in the area of philosophy, and loud voices demand a revision of our moral code to conform to the results of scientific findings. It is taken for granted that science contains the answer to *all* questions, whether they concern natural phenomena or moral obligations.

LET US INVESTIGATE the area of competence of science. Science concerns itself exclusively with the behavior of the world as guided by an assumed set of 'laws of nature.' It is, therefore, purely passive. It is concerned

with what *was, is* and *will be*, but never with what *should be*. It can show no goal and, by itself, can indicate no course of action nor provide a basis for value judgment. Only after we have chosen a goal on some other basis, may science be of importance—possibly of utmost importance—to attain it. Science provides us with the vehicle; the map which indicates the road to follow must come from somewhere else.

Whenever science is cited as indicating a course of action in general or a code of ethics in particular, some goal not implicit in science must have been tacitly assumed. The code stands and falls with this tacitly-assumed goal and it is therefore this goal which we must examine carefully before accepting the code.

The truths just stated are self-evident. Ordinarily they would not have required statement. It is unfortunate that the obvious success of science in its proper field of competence has so blinded men to its limitations that any doctrine proposed in the name of science is uncritically accepted by large segments of the public, so that such claims of scientific sanction have become a very popular sales technique. Therefore, let the buyer beware!

DR. LEO LEVI is a consulting physicist in New York City, and Assistant Professor of Physics at the College of the City of New York. He is the author of several texts in his field, and has contributed numerous papers to scientific and halachic journals.

The Reliability of Science

Science is limited not only in scope, but also in substance. Let us therefore examine the fundamentals of science. We will not here investigate the area of epistemology (the study of what is knowable) a wonderland from which no traveler returns. We simply wish to analyze objectively the basis on which science rests, assuming that our senses give us a reliable picture of the world around us.

The scientist observes the workings of nature and discovers certain general rules which individual occurrences seem to obey. If the behavior follows the predicted course in all test cases included in this generalization, the rule is termed a 'law of nature.'

So far, natural laws are, strictly taken, only a statistical record of nature's behavior in a given case, and the expectation that it will continue to behave that way would merely be an act of faith.

The fact that a body has acted in a certain way a hundred or a thousand times during the past is in itself no evidence that it will continue to act that way in the future. Because a clock has ticked every second for the past twenty four hours, does not mean that it will tick the next second. It may be a twenty-four hour clock. In addition to the record of past performance, we must accept the major premise, that nature acts uniformly. The fact that we have observed uniformity over a long period, proves this uniformity only up to the present—as in the case of the clock.

Stating that laws of nature have a statistical basis does not help either, since statistics as a method of prediction require the same major premise of uniformity as 'laws of nature.'

Nor should words like CAUSE and EFFECT blind us to this fact. It is an interesting psychological phenomenon that, as these rules become more and more general, the concept of causality steals into our minds. Instead of antecedent and consequent, we talk about cause and effect. In looking for an explanation for a natural law, the best the scientist can hope for is to find a more general law. But, again, there is nothing observable in nature which accounts for this law. The reliability nature exhibits with respect to 'laws of nature' simply means that it is obedient to these laws. While the *fact* of this obedience is the basis of science, the *source* of this obedience is beyond science.

There is, of course, nothing wrong with believing in 'laws of nature.' Nature certainly does not contradict such a belief. But we should be aware that this belief has no logical basis in our observation of nature's consistent performance.

A scientist was able to formulate the law of inertia: a body in motion remains in motion when no force acts upon it. But—who moves it? That is the question science can not hope to answer in its ultimate form. And thus we see that the very foundation of science is built on a faith in the obedience of nature, a faith which is—within science—without basis. To a scientist who is an agnostic, it is an arbitrary faith and his attempts to make it rationally more palatable are bound to fail. The Jew, on the other hand, is more fortunate. Once we accept our tradition, laws of nature and science become meaningful—indeed, they become necessities as we examine their functions.

The Function of Science

THROUGH OUR DIVINELY-REVEALED Torah we know that G-d commands nature and that nature obeys Him unswervingly. Or, in other words, laws of nature are the plan by which G-d wills to run the world, and to question: *Who maintains a moving body in uniform motion?* we simply answer, *G-d!*

And so the next question arises. To what end does G-d act in such a consistent manner? Why does He move the raindrop according to the same rules that govern His motion of the planets? What role do laws of nature play in the world as pictured by the Torah?

In order to understand the function and importance of natural forces, we need only picture our lives as they would be without such laws. Without the laws of gravitation and inertia, we would lose all control over our location. Without the laws of chemistry and biology, all physical activity would be similarly removed from our direction. It requires little imagination to see that

intentional accomplishment in such a world would be impossible; man's existence would be wholly passive. We conclude that, if man is to be capable of responsible activity, there must be a dependable set of natural laws; or, in other words, reliable natural laws are prerequisite to a moral code of law. We find this idea clearly expressed by the prophet Jeremiah¹—"If my covenant (i.e., Torah) was not day and night, I would not have established the laws of heaven and earth." Not only heaven and earth, the *laws* of heaven and earth are a necessary corollary to the giving of the Torah.

However, the mere existence of such laws is not enough. In order to use them, we must be aware of them. To a great extent this awareness may be subconscious. But, if we are to make efficient use of the means at our disposal, conscious, specific and thorough knowledge of the laws of nature is necessary.

We need not here go into the question of what specifically is man's task on earth; regardless of what it is—as long as it involves some physical accomplishment—this world and a knowledge of the laws governing it are vital to the accomplishment of this task. Thus, for instance, we are exhorted to be² “clever in our fear of G-d.” How much³ “stronger than a lion” and “more fleet than an eagle” can we be in the service of G-d, if our knowledge of nature's laws enables us to build modern machines and means of transportation!

The first divine command to man was⁴ “Be fruitful and multiply, fill the earth and conquer it!” Here “conquest of earth” can mean only the full exploitation of the means it offers—and such exploitation presupposes a full knowledge of the laws governing its behavior.

THIS ROLE—as means to an end—is the proper task of science. In this role it becomes an essential factor in man's progress. If emphasized beyond this role, science may become the source of destruction instead of fulfillment.

Incidentally, it may be interesting to note that our explanation of the laws of nature implies that they need be obeyed only when a human observer is present. Surprising as this may seem, there would be no reason to expect natural laws to hold when the deviation would be undetectable. This would explain the Rabbinic dictum that⁵ “Blessing [i.e., spontaneous increase] occurs only in that which is hidden from the eye”—a dictum which has direct consequences in *Halacha*.⁶

Conclusion

Let us now summarize our discussion.

- First, we noted that the area of competence of science is restricted to an analysis of what is and could be, and that science by itself can give no indication of what should be.
- We then proceeded to analyze the basis of science and found that without some faith it can never be more than a mere record of past happenings.
- Finally, we found that through our Torah we can recognize laws of nature as an important creation of

G-d and use science as a significant tool in our service of G-d.

1. Jeremiah 33:25.
2. Talmud B'rochos 17a.
3. Mishna Ovos 5, 20.
4. Genesis 1:28; cf. Rav S. R. Hirsch Commentary.
5. Talmud Ta'anith 8b.
6. Shulchan Arukh, Orach Chaim 230, 2. (This conjecture should be examined, however, in the light of Mishnah B'rochos 9, 3 *Keytzad*.)

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Time For A Change

A Hard Look at Yeshiva Attitudes to Science

AS AN ACTIVE participant in an ever-growing group, the Association of Orthodox Jewish Scientists (AOJS), one can easily become overly optimistic about the growing numbers of Orthodox Jews who are leaders in their chosen secular professions. This optimism can be destructive if it leads to complacency about the American yeshiva education that has yielded such 'hybrids.'

Let us examine the background of the American Orthodox Jewish scientist. At the risk of over-simplification, I would suggest that the average AOJS member emerged from one of two types of educational background. One of these could reasonably have been expected to produce an excellent scientist or other secular professional, but with marginal religious observance, at best. By this background I mean education at day schools where secular and Hebrew 'culture' are stressed, with little emphasis on the practical observance of mitzvos. In a graduate of these schools the *Orthodox* outcome represents a miracle, so to speak. In contrast, another group of AOJS members emerged from schools whose graduates were expected to be *Shomrei Mitzvos*, but could not reasonably have been expected to become scientists. From these schools, the emergence of a *scientist* represents the miracle, since the prevalent attitude toward secular education is often one of *bitul*.

The AOJS is a freak, since there are few institutions which are geared to turn out Orthodox Jewish scientists. Your response at this point might be, "so what," and if the absence of a sizable group of Orthodox Jewish scientists were the only result of the dichotomy of educational institutions, such complacency might well be justifiable. But, I feel that this educational vacuum is symptomatic of far more serious problems.

Since I am convinced that the future of Judaism in this country lies primarily in the second type of institution, I will confine my comments to this group of schools. The shortcomings of the first type of institution are clear to most readers of this publication and need no further elaboration.

DR. SEYMOUR M. GLICK is the president of the Association of Orthodox Jewish Scientists and Assistant Professor of Medicine at the Downstate Medical Center. He also serves as Chief of the Department of Endocrinology at the Coney Island branch of Maimonides Hospital.

WE MUST ACCEPT the premise that most of the readers of this magazine, most of the educators in the yeshivas we are discussing, and certainly most of the parents sending their children to these schools have made a decision to attempt to live within the fabric of modern American society.

The decision was made at the moment when they rejected the choice of living in a community like Squaretown. The *wisdom* of this decision is not, at the moment, under discussion, but certainly they have chosen to live with English-language newspapers and magazines, radio, and in most cases, television. For them it is no longer possible to recreate the small village of 19th-century Poland in which a pious Jew could be born, live and die without significant exposure to an alien culture. Having made a choice, and having recognized that such a choice has been made, one must learn to live intelligently with this choice. It is foolish to make a decision and then guide one's actions in a manner that suggests that the opposite decision was made.

It is, I believe, self-defeating and unwise in our society to try to resolve conflicts between Torah and science by teaching children, or intimating to them, as is sometimes done, that science and secular knowledge is foolish, that scientists are fools, and that their theories are silly. We *should* point out that secular knowledge takes second place behind Torah knowledge, that scientific training, unlike Torah training, does not bring with it *Hishtalmus Ho'odom*; that scientific theories, unlike Torah, are hypothetical, ethically neutral and limited in scope. But to belittle and ridicule science and scientists, as was done in a recent popular book by a Torah educator, invites in turn ridicule by the teenager. An intelligent ten-year-old is now sophisticated enough to reject allegations of the foolishness or evil of science and scientists, and if his *rebbe* tells these to him, *the student is apt to reject not only these ideas but perhaps other more basic concepts.*

The educational system of yeshivos adopting such an approach will, at the very least, produce laymen, rabbis and teachers who are ill-fitted to cope with problems posed by their children, their congregants and their students. It yields not only a paucity of scientists, but much more important, it does not adequately pre-

pare its graduates to deal with modern society, and may therefore, unwittingly, have a significant share in the responsibility for the defection of some of those yeshiva graduates that are lost to Torah.

TO AVOID ANY misunderstanding, I want to make it clear that I am not advocating a general increase in time allotted to secular studies, and that I am not denying the absolute necessity for students, at various times in their lives, to devote full time to Torah-learning for long periods of time. I am discussing only an attitude toward secular studies that are presently on the curriculum. I am attacking only the prevalent attitude that secular studies are undertaken only to placate governmental requirements and that they are basically a waste of time.

Obviously, this attitude is partly motivated by the very important consideration that we want the student to be primarily concerned with Torah learning and Torah scholarship. But we will not jeopardize this objective if we accept the fact that secular studies also have a contribution to make as, say, the Vilna Gaon pointed out. In fact, is it not more flattering for Torah learning to be deemed far more important than secular studies if secular studies are themselves considered valuable than if secular learning is considered *shitus*?

One can no longer hide biology from the yeshiva student as it was hidden when I went to a yeshiva high school, because LIFE magazine and television teach ten-year-olds more about evolution and biology than used to be taught in high school. A yeshiva cannot afford to ignore the modern world — only the yeshiva is fooled by this attitude. It is also robbing itself of the opportunity to put its stamp on the direction that secular education is to take under its aegis. Instead it has, by default, abdicated its responsibility in this regard. It is unfortunately true that a good many yeshiva teachers are not equipped for the task I am suggesting. But the possibility exists for them, by a certain amount of reading, to fill the gap in their preparation. In this way, they—and not the secular teachers—can intelligently guide the *hashkofoh* of their students toward their secular subjects.

There will be those in the yeshiva world who feel that any change in approach to education is forbidden. Clearly this is not so, for in our own century we have witnessed the Gedolei Yisroel accept, and indeed direct, a revolutionary change in Jewish education — the founding of Bais Yaakov schools. They moved the education of girls into schools because they realized that the mother-to-daughter educational system that was adequate for hundreds of years was no longer

capable of coping with modern needs if the goals of education, which remain immutable, were to be achieved. It is frightening to think what would have happened to Jewish life in this century without the introduction of the revolutionary concept of schools for girls. I think it is almost as frightening to witness what is happening in this country because of the attempt to apply toward secular education in America attitudes which may have been efficient in the Polish *shtetl*.

The views I have expressed here have considerable support even in some yeshiva circles—although frequently only expressed in private. The time has come for an open-minded review and re-evaluation of the effectiveness of the current approaches in perpetuating the values and ideals which are eternal. It is hoped that the readers of this journal, most of whom live in the secular world and yet maintain strong ties with the Yeshiva world, may provide some of the impetus for such a re-evaluation. □

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Israel Digest

Menachem Greenberg

No End Is In Sight To Unauthorized Autopsies

DESPITE CONTINUED PROTESTS by world Jewry, mass autopsies in Israel continue unabated, with new abuses coming to light every day. On November 7, 1966, Plori Elkaim Ochyon, Bat Yam, wrote as follows to the Bat-Yam Rabbinate, just after getting up from *shiva*:

My mother Deena Elkaim, the daughter of Rabbi Yaakov Aroimi, died in Achilov Hospital on Sunday, October 30, and was buried on October 31.

The hospital refused to release her body to the family and did not sent it to the cemetery until Monday at 1 p.m. When the women entered to perform the tahara, they came out howling and crying for they had found the corpse without eyes, the skull was crushed, and the entire abdomen had been emptied and filled with absorbent cotton, and even the thigh had been opened.

This old woman was the daughter of a rabbi, and her late husband, too, was a rabbi; she was 92 years old and had been in Donnoly Hospital for a month, then three weeks at an institution in Petach Tikva, and the final three days in the Achilov Hospital. The dissection was done without asking even one member of the family and without any permission.

Signed by her daughter, Poli Ochyon,
22 Rothschild Street, Bat-Yam.

Continuous reports by *Chevros Kadisha* and local rabbinate offices indicate that such incidents continue to be prevalent in all Israeli hospitals, with the exception of Shaarei Zedek and Bikur Cholim, two private, religious hospitals in Jerusalem.

Meanwhile, Dr. Kalman Y. Mann, director of the Hadassah Hospital in Jerusalem, told a meeting that about ninety percent of the population of Israel was against post-mortem dissections and that doctors would therefore have to continue their practice of forced autopsies to maintain their supply of bodies. Religious circles reacted with shock at Dr. Mann's call for the thwarting of the will of the overwhelming majority of Israel's citizens.

The Committee for Safeguarding Human Dignity

reprinted an article from the German magazine *Der Stern*, stating that because of an extreme shortage of bodies, several dozen medical students had to work on each one available. According to Dr. Wolfgang Bargman, Director of the Kiel University Anatomy Institute, dissection of only *three-hundredths-of-one-percent* of the 600,000 Germans who die each year would solve the shortage for medical science in Germany. This amounts to 180 bodies per year. The Israeli Committee estimates that in Israel, where 15,491 persons died in 1964, between 5,400 and 8,700 of the bodies were dissected, which is between 50 and 80 percent of all those who died in hospitals.

German law, the *Stern* article pointed out, forbids autopsies without the permission of the deceased and his relatives, and forbids an autopsy even when the deceased consented, if even a distant relative objects.

In a twenty-five-page white paper on the crisis, the Committee noted that the Israeli law "makes no differentiation between a citizen and a visitor, and burial societies have informed us that many foreign citizens are dissected, especially when they had been traveling alone." □

Israel's Dayanim Choose Chinuch Atzmai Schools

BENJAMIN SCHACHOR, Deputy Minister of Religions and a leader of the National Religious Party (NRP-Mizrachi — Hapoel Hamizrachi) conducted a survey to determine to which schools Israel's 80 Ashkenazi *dayanim*, religious judges, send their children. He found that the children of only two of the judges attend the government religious schools, while all the other judges send their children to the Chinuch Atzmai and Bais Yaakov schools. □

Taxi Drivers Create A Peaceful Shabbos

TAXI DRIVERS in Israel went on a one-day strike to gain recognition by the Ministry of Transportation as regular public-conveyance operators. In order to demonstrate that they are indispensable to Israel's transportation system, the drivers struck on Shabbos, the one day of the week when they have no competition from the bus lines. Relative quiet prevailed on the streets during the strike. □

Report 600 Converts Mostly For Marriage

AN ISRAELI-JEWISH convert to Christianity estimates that there are six hundred *meshumodim* in Israel — 500 Catholic and 100 Protestant — but admitted that most of the conversions were for the purpose of inter-

marriage. But another source claims that there are no fewer than 10,000 mixed-couples in Israel, only 100 of them devout Christians.

In answer to a question submitted by Knesset Member Rabbi Menachem Porush (Agudath Israel) as to the number of Jewish children being educated in Israel's sixty-eight Christian missionary institutions, the Deputy Minister of Education replied that the Ministry knew of only eleven such schools with Jewish children and that it was taking steps to accomodate these children in Jewish schools. □

Checkmate

ISRAEL'S PRESS took special note of an incident at a recent international chess tournament in Havana. Bobby Fischer, the young American champion, refused to play a match on Saturday. In a gesture of solidarity, the entire American team joined him in his stand. Israel's team played as usual. □

(See: SECOND LOOKS on page 30)

Israelis Continue to Seek Greener Pastures In U.S.A.

A GROWING SOCIAL problem in Israel is *Yeridah*, emigration from Israel (as opposed to *Aliyah*). A large number of these emigrants come to the United States. In the past ten years a total of 29,059 United States immigration visas were issued in Tel Aviv, accounting for one percent of all immigration to this country. The annual peak was 4,925 *yordim* in 1958. The 1960 U.S. census reported 18,000 Israelis living in New York City.

In the past year emigration to the U.S. dropped fifteen percent from 1,368 in 1965 to 1,083 in 1966. However, the total emigration to all countries has increased from 7,900 in 1965 to 12,000 in 1966, which approximates the *Aliyah* figure for the same period.

A large percentage of those who leave Israel are native-born Israelis and young people.

Shlomo Grodzensky, writing in *Davar*, the Histrut daily, warned that "there live among us hundreds of thousands of potential *yordim* . . . Significant segments of the younger generation — that same generation whose praises are sung as 'the most wonderful youth in the world' — see no reason why they should not leave Israel for countries which promise them better chances for advancement."

On the other side of the ledger, the Ministry of Religion reports that over a thousand young men from various countries are now studying in *yeshivos* in Israel. Of this number, four hundred and twelve are from the United States. □

Alarminglly Low Birth-Rate In Contrast to Arab Growth

THE COMMISSION for Stimulating a Birth Rate Increase has noted with concern Tel Aviv's 1965 rate of 14.5 births per thousand of population as one of the lowest in the world. In the Arab towns of Nazareth and Shefaram, the rate is as high as 44 per thousand, and the nation-wide birth rate for Arabs is 52.5 per thousand. The Commission stated that unless the rate of Jewish births increase, Israel will face the prospect of the Arab minority multiplying to the extent of becoming the majority. Among the corrective measures proposed are: increased tax benefits for large families and tighter control over contraceptives and abortions. □

Supreme Court Rules on Purely Halachic Matter

SOME YEARS AGO a childless widow remarried without having been released by *chalitzah* by her late husband's brother. When her second husband died, she inherited his property in line with Israeli law. The second hus-



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ואלה ביום ששחכם נשבע לבם
היה שחכם
היה שחכם
היה שחכם

band's children contested the inheritance on the grounds that the second marriage was invalid, since Israeli law insists that marriage and divorce is to be regulated by *halochah*. Since the couple was therefore not legally married, the 'wife' could not inherit him, the children argued.

The case reached the Israeli Supreme Court, which ruled in favor of the woman. Chief Justice Moshe Silberg, in the court's decision, quoted extensively from Talmudic and later halachic literature. Thus, while acknowledging that the matter at hand was in effect a halachic question, the judges — who neither have nor claim rabbinic competence—rendered a decision on the basis of halachic sources.

In a related development, the Supreme Court has issued an order to the Chief Rabbinate of Israel and the Religious Council of Tel Aviv asking that they show cause why they have refused to issue Kashrus certification to the chicken-slaughtering operation of Marbek. (Marbek, a packing-house co-operative, was the center of a controversy in 1964 when the Chief Rabbinate withheld certification.) □

Labor Coalition Rebuffs Five-Day Week Proposal

KNESSET MEMBER, Rabbi Shlomo Lorincz, (Agudath Israel) introduced a private member bill to change Israel's work-week from six days to five, and from

forty seven to forty two hours. Rabbi Lorincz maintained that a five-day work-week would:

- raise the worker's standard of living in health as well as socially and culturally;
- increase the worker's span of productive years;
- centralize work patterns and thereby increase production;
- reduce absenteeism;
- improve labor-management relations;
- reduce work accidents;
- spread available employment more equitably;
- and make the observance of Shabbos easier.

Religious leaders are convinced that many more Israelis would observe Shabbos if there were another day available for recreation and traveling.

Rabbi Lorincz's proposal placed *Mifdal* (The National Religious Party — Mizrahi — Hapoel Hamizrachi) in a dilemma. On the one hand, a five-day week was one of its election promises; on the other hand, the Government-coalition (of which *Mifdal* is a member and which is dominated by labor parties) is — ironically — opposed to this social welfare legislation.

The coalition's majority in the Knesset pigeon-holed Rabbi Lorincz's bill. *Mifdal*, whose participation in the coalition prevented it from voting for the bill, abstained, claiming that now was not the time for such a law even though the party supported it in principle.

What they are saying in the Jewish press...

The following are direct quotations from various Jewish newspapers, and press releases which reach our office. In most cases we feel no comment is necessary; otherwise, our comment is indicated.

Bewails 'Splinterism' and Public Relations Rivalry

JERUSALEM—Dr. William Chomsky, chairman of faculty at Gratz College, Philadelphia, . . . bewailed the fact that "the splinterism afflicting American Jewry is nothing more than a struggle between different organizations for power and domination. The issue is which organization is worthy of being the chief spokesman of the American Jewish community. All the discussions between the education bureaus and the different trends in American Judaism should be seen

against the background of public relations and not of ideology."

American Jewish leaders, Dr. Chomsky continued, "preach very nicely about the importance of Jewish education, especially lately, in view of the frightening statistics concerning the growing pace of intermarriage. But they don't practice what they preach. They content themselves with lip service to education.

"With all their fine talk about the value of Jewish education, the Jewish federations and welfare funds continue to support it stingily, to the extent of only 10 per cent of the total expenditures."

While the Jewish community was spending "vast sums" on beautiful new synagogue buildings, "these serve mainly as prayer houses, according to the pattern of the Christian environment, and not as the study houses of Jewish tradition."

"The schools attached to those syna-

gogues and their education programs" are fed crumbs and pennies. Most of these schools serve as no more than Bar-Mitzvah and Bat-Mitzvah factories."

Found: 35 Tzadikim; Just One More To Go

NEW YORK—A special academic convocation honoring the pulpit rabbinate will be convened on Sunday, December 18, by The Jewish Theological Seminary of America. Thirty-five members of the Rabbinical Assembly, each of whom has spent more than three decades serving congregations, will receive degrees of Doctor of Divinity, *honoris causa*, on this occasion . . .

An ancient Jewish legend speaks of 36 [*lamed vov*] just men on whose shoulders rests the peace of the world. According to the story, the identity of these men is never known to their contemporaries, for they conduct their lives quietly, outside

the spotlight of fame. In the case of the 35 rabbis being honored by the Seminary, all are men committed to service to their people. Although all have shunned notoriety, and even recognition, each has acquired, in the course of his ministry . . . a personal following of devoted admirers . . .

—From a release by the Jewish Theological Seminary of America

Educators Not Sure How To Teach Group Identity

DR. ELIJAH BORTNIKER, president of the National Council for Jewish Education, said, "the sum total of Jewish education" being given to the estimated 600,000 children who receive some form of Jewish education is weaker than ever.

"For the educator in the field, the immediate problem is the existence of the different religious trends. But a bigger problem is that we don't know what to do about our educational program in general.

"We do not know how to educate for group continuity in an open society where being a Jew is no longer the problem it was in the countries where anti-semitism prevailed."

He finds that the Jewish federations which raise and allocate funds "are becoming more interested" in Jewish education. One reason is the "genuine interest in maintaining viable Jewish life in the U.S.," owing to the fears in this respect that have been roused by the galloping pace of intermarriage.

The second reason is one of "vested interest." Federations found that traditional functions are slipping out of their hand." Such activities as the support of hospitals, homes for the aged, vocational guidance and the like are receiving much greater attention from the government ("the hospitals and homes for the aged expect a boom as a result of Medicare"), and "the only institutions" now left for the Jewish federations are the educational and cultural institutions. As a result, the federations, "naturally wishing to perpetuate themselves, have found it necessary to go into education."

"The pressures set up by these central bodies may counteract the fractionalization of the trends," Dr. Bortniker says.

The problem of Jewish education in the U.S., Dr. Bortniker repeated, is how to educate a minority group to "identification"—to the importance of its continuity—in a country of strong assimilationist power. "I don't think that the separatist trends know the answer to this, either," he says . . .

—A JTA dispatch

COMMENT: Come now, Dr. Bortniker, you HAVE heard of Yeshivos and Day Schools?

N. Goldman Says Israel Was Prematurely Born

TEL AVIV—The daily *Davar*, organ of Mapai, published the following news item in its issue of December 11: "The President of the World Zionist Organization, Dr. Nahum Goldmann, asserted that the proclamation of the State of Israel in 1948 was premature. Dr. Goldmann made the statement at a public meeting of the French section of the World Jewish Congress held in Paris the end of November."

Davar quotes from a report published in the newspaper *Unzer Vort*, the organ of Mapai in Paris: "Dwelling upon the position of Israel, Dr. Goldmann stated that he was among those who argued in 1948, when the State of Israel was in the process of creation, that the proclamation of Statehood was premature. In his opinion, an agreement with the Arab neighbors should have preceded the proclamation of the establishment of the State. He maintains that it was a mistake on the part of those who opposed such postponement in the belief that as time

progresses, the Arabs would become reconciled—assuredly in the second generation. It appears, Dr. Goldmann says, that the new Arab generation hates Israel no less than did the old generation." No confirmation has been received from Dr. Goldmann as to the veracity of the statements ascribed to him by the two newspapers.

— release from the Zionist Information Service

Ecumenical Leader Declares Aim of Vatican Declaration Was the Conversion of Jews

LONDON—One of Britain's outstanding lay Catholics, who is a leader in the efforts to improve relations between Jews and Christians, declared at Cambridge University that the "crux" of the recent Ecumenical Council declaration regarding Jews was the aim of converting Jews to Catholicism. However, he insisted, "the notion that there was a campaign to convert Jews is quite fantastic."

The statement was made by Christopher Hollis, a well-known British au-

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thor, who is head of the Catholic Church Council in this country, charged with implementing a new approach toward friendship between Catholics and Jews in Britain.

Mr. Hollis was one of the speakers at a session of the International Conference on Christian-Jewish Relations, convened recently at Newnham College, Cambridge . . .

"We," said Mr. Hollis, speaking of the Catholics, "hope for conversions. We frankly admit we pray for conversions. But our prime business is not with conversions but with edification of Catholics. Conversion is something that must be left for God to look after."

A number of Jewish participants in the Conference objected to Mr. Hollis' formulation regarding conversion . . .

—Jewish Chronicle News Service

AJ Committee Head Seeks New "Guide"

The following are excerpts from a High Holy Day message by Dr. John Slawson, Executive Vice President of the American Jewish Committee. Our young people may know the history of Greece, for example, and in fact the history of many other ancient cultures, but remain profoundly ignorant about their own religious history, culture and tradition. We find, for example, that when we promote Christian-Jewish dialogues, many Jews remain distressingly silent because of their basic ignorance of Judaism.

COMMENT: Why, then, Dr. Slawson, are these people pitted against Jesuit priests and theology professors, who are far from silent?

The American Jewish Committee has

encouraged exploration into the phenomena of Jewish identity for more than two decades. I fear we have not reaped the hoped-for harvest. We need a special "task force" to work in this area—to consider ways and means of helping make Judaism relevant to the current issues of the day, and functionally meaningful in our contemporary society. We need to devise ways of making Judaism comprehended as a religion, as a tradition and as a creativity.

What is needed today is the development of something akin to Maimonides' "Guide to the Perplexed"; something that will make membership in the Jewish community meaningful and important; that will set down quite specifically what we mean when we speak of Judaism as an ethical and moral system, and the importance of this system in the increasingly materialistic society in which we live . . .

COMMENT: We got tired and bored hearing people call for a new "Guide to the Perplexed." We wonder if some of them have read the 'old one.'

We should keep in mind that a Jew can no longer rely on the non-Jew to tell him what he is. He must decide and affirm this for himself. We must transform being Jewish from a style of life into a way of life; and this represents a much deeper level of functioning.

COMMENT: It should be noted that there have always been Jews around who did not "rely on the non-Jew to tell him what he is," but we certainly agree with Dr. Slawson on this point.

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


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second looks at the jewish scene

Anti-Jewish or Anti-Torah?

THE LATEST aspect of the still-growing interest in the Jew, is a renewed concern with the dynamics of anti-semitism. (The word anti-semitism is a misleading one—*The Oxford Dictionary of English Etymology* (Oxford University Press, New York) offers no clue as to when it entered the language—and it leads to the absurd claim by hostile Arabs who insist, "How can we be anti-Semitic, when we are Semites ourselves?" We have tried to remove some of this objection to the word by dropping the hyphen and the upper case S.). Popular writers, theologians, and historians, in a series of books published within the past year, have focused their attention on the hatred for the Jew which in our time was taken to its logical conclusion by Germany. Not 'Nazi Germany,' but Germany, because there is trickery in divorcing the Third Reich from Germany as a nation. As Rabbi Yeruchem pointed out in our September issue, one might as well speak of an 'ex-killer' as speak of an 'ex-Nazi'—the title the new chancellor of West Germany prefers to that of 'Nazi.'

Out of shame, out of guilt, the non-Jewish world has evolved the Declaration on the Jews; the ecumenical spirit; a willingness to plead guilty to crimes against the Jewish people—even a readiness to admit that some of these crimes were motivated by religion.

Perhaps the new interest in the Jew and the hatred of the Jew, comes from yet another stimulus—

fear. The non-Jew has always felt it was his world, a world in which the Jew had no place. The Jew often capitulated to that feeling. As a child we recall people saying of a non-Jew, in a tone of resignation, "S'iz zein Amerika," "It's his America." We don't hear that expression much these days, because it's no longer his America, it's no longer his world; the smoke rising from Hiroshima and Nagasaki, mingled somewhere in the atmosphere with the smoke from Buchenwald and Auschwitz, and the fallout of fear fills the nostrills of all men.

With all of the sophistication of the new media of communicating ideas and feelings, it is still, strangely, the book, unchanged in form for centuries—sheets of paper impressed with ink and bound by two covers — which reveals best what men are thinking.

EDWARD H. FLANNERY, has written *The Anguish of the Jews* (Macmillan, New York, 1965) which bears the *nihil obstat* and the *imprimatur* of the Roman-Catholic Church. In an introduction by John M. Oesterreicher, the Jew turned Catholic who is a major spokesman of the Church's new attitude to the Jew, he writes, "To the best of my knowledge it presents the first history of anti-Semitism written by a priest." The author, in his introduction, tells of the first impetus to writing the book.

"One evening several years ago, I walked on Park Avenue in New York City in the company of a

young Jewish couple. Behind us shone the huge illuminated cross the Grand Central Building displays each year at Christmas time. Glancing over her shoulder, the young lady—ordinarily well disposed toward Christians—declared: "That cross makes me shudder. It is like an evil presence."

Flannery, speaking of the difficulty of writing on anti-semitism, chides Jewish historians for their lack of 'objectivity,' and Christian historians, among them James Parkes whose work we will discuss later, for their 'philo-Semitic bias.' While Flannery demonstrates a great deal of scholarship, and has written a most needed book, there is throughout his work a common refrain, reminiscent of the statement, "if there weren't so many Jews, there wouldn't be so much anti-semitism," and making the case that the Jews themselves were not such saints in their reaction to the early Christians. The Jews in the fifth century of the common era, he writes:

"were in no sense cowed by the Christian majority but, on the contrary, ready on occasion to strike the first blow. The comment of Blumenkranz, a thorough student of this period, seems appropriate here: "Even the expulsions and other clearly characteristic violence inflicted on Jews by representatives of Christianity LOSE SOMETHING OF THEIR HORROR (our emphasis) when we discover that Jews, when conditions lent themselves, did not hesitate to have recourse to these measures themselves."

IN ANOTHER WORK by a Catholic priest, *The Popes and The Jews in the Middle Ages* (Macmillan, New York, 1965) Edward A. Synan provides us with another scholarly work, in which he points up the friendly attitude toward Jews by a number of medieval popes. He describes the ceremony in which

a newly elected pope, in the 12th century, entering Rome, is received by "a delegation of distinguished Jews" who presented him with a Torca scroll, which the Pope received "with ceremony to symbolize the fact that the Jews have provided Christians with this essential part of their inheritance. Lest the real distinction between Judaism and Christianity be submerged in this proclamation of their continuity, the Pope recited a formula to express his acceptance of the Hebrew scriptures, but also his simultaneous rejection of the interpretation given them by normative Judaism." (Note the phrase 'normative Judaism'). Yet Synan is ready to admit that the lower-echelon Church officials who preached antisemitism and provoked violence against the Jews, were not ready to emulate the example of the popes.

IN RECENT MONTHS, two works by Jews dealing with antisemitism have been published, both based on the famous Beiliss Case in Czarist Russia. In *Blood Accusation* (Alfred A. Knopf, New York, 1966) Maurice Samuel has written a journalistic account of the events leading up to the trial of a Russian Jewish workman, Mendel Beiliss, on the

charge that he murdered a Christian boy in order to use his blood for the making of matzoh. (A similar charge against a Jew in the United States failed to result in a trial when the inept perpetrators of the hoax insisted that the child's blood was to be used by Jews on *Yom Kippur*). Samuel has produced about as thorough an account as anyone could; he spent three years preparing the book and learned Russian in order to read and study every available document on the case.

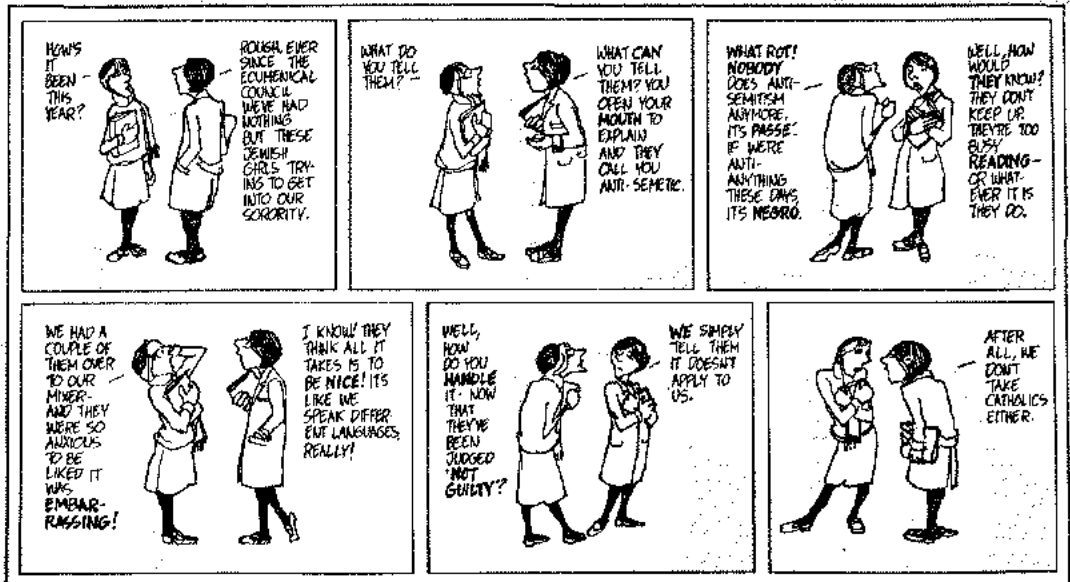
BERNARD MALAMUD in *The Fixer* (Farrar, Strauss and Giroux, New York, 1966) has used the bare outline of the Beiliss case in a fictional account, using elements of other cases and his rich creative imagination. He has, as some critics have noted (we are not here interested in the literary aspects of the book) made it possible for his reader, and himself, to cope with the immensity of the Holocaust and the unfathomable figure of 6,000,000, by relating it to the experience of one Jew, one human being.

Malamud portrays his victim as an irreligious Jew, a skeptic in fact, who stays up nights reading Spinoza in the hope that this will lift him

out of the physical and spiritual poverty which, together with a childless and unhappy marriage, has reduced him to despair. Samuel, in his factual account, notes also that Beiliss was not a religious Jew, adding an additional dimension of absurdity to the *alilas dam*, the blood accusation.

But Samuel's work as well as Malamud's fails to deal seriously with the 'why?' of antisemitism. Indeed, the dust-jacket of *The Fixer*, unwittingly admits that, "Though Mr. Malamud's novel deals with a particular form of injustice, his theme is universal. Any innocent victim of a miscarriage of justice, whether his name is Vanzetti or Dreyfus or Mendel Beiliss or Timothy Evans, would illustrate the theme equally well." But antisemitism is not simply a 'miscarriage of justice,' and while Malamud may disclaim the formulation of the dust-jacket, it does reflect his attitude in the book. Jews, it would appear, are ashamed to admit that antisemitism is more than a manifestation of 'man's inhumanity to man,' perhaps because such an admission smacks of chosenness, a dogma which has been attacked no less vigorously by Jewish intellectuals and Reconstructionists, than by the

A view of antisemitism by cartoonist Jules Feiffer



From: Feiffer on Civil Rights AN ADL PUBLICATION

church. If one believes that anti-semitism is a unique phenomenon, then one is lead to the belief that the Jew is chosen, and from there it is only a few steps to Sinai. It is those steps that the Christian refuses to take, which is his right; it is those steps which the alienated Jew rejects, thereby rejecting—his protests notwithstanding—his Jewishness.

RECENTLY IN LONDON, the Jewish community was shocked, or perhaps we should say, those who can still be shocked, by the remarks made by a Christian to a Jewish audience. James Parkes is a scholar who has devoted himself to an understanding of antisemitism for forty years. His most recent work, *Anti-Semitism*, (Quadrangle Books, Chicago, 1963) has been hailed as "rich in historical detail and in the psychological analysis of group prejudice" and as "a comprehensive examination of anti-Semitism as a re-

ligious, political, and psychological phenomena . . ."

Yet this same Mr. Parkes, who was described by Rev. Flannery as a 'philo-Semite' saw no contradiction to his opposition to antisemitism when he said:

Contemporary Jewish Orthodoxy has committed the supreme Jewish heresy of becoming a religion in which a clerical caste lays down the regulations for a laity. It is no longer a way of life in which the total generation is committed to the understanding of the Divine will for its own life, but has become a clerically dominated Church prescribing for a Jewish laity.

For an exclusive insistence on an exclusive and specialized interpretation of Torah min Hashamayim can no longer be any basis for a common spiritual incentive. It is divisive and what is even worse, it has proved totally

ineffective in giving spiritual leadership to a nation in which such leadership must have enormous importance. (*London Jewish Chronicle*, October 7, 1966)

Let it be clear: We are not suggesting that Mr. Parkes is a conscious antisemite. His work has contributed to a better understanding of the religious roots of antisemitism. But it is sad to note that his attack (the *Chronicle* gleefully headed the story: DR. PARKES ATTACKS RIGID ORTHODOXY) on Jews who insist on the centrality of *Torah Min Hashomayim* in Jewish belief, gives us an insight into the nature of anti-

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It is not the Jew who is the target of the antisemite—Jewish and non-Jewish—it is Sinai, the Torah which was given on Sinai which is the source of hatred of the Jew. Our Sages formulated this fact in the well-known statement: *Why was it called SINAI?—it was on this mountain that SINOH (hatred) descended upon the Jewish people.* And yet, Torah, paradoxically is the only defense against hatred for the Jew. The millions of Jewish dollars spent each year to study, to investigate, to fight antisemitism would do more to combat anti-

semitism if spent to teach Torah to Jewish children.

Let the scholars of the church and the university explore the history of antisemitism; let them attempt to wipe it out; but let them desist from their attack on Sinai and Torah. Or perhaps that is too much to ask. When the Jew rejects Sinai, he rejects his Jewishness; perhaps if the non-Jew stops waving his fist at Sinai he may find himself becoming a Jew. Let there be love between all men; but let there be understanding too.

YAAKOV JACOBS

Shabbos or Sabbath?

AN INTERESTING DISPUTE arose last month in the course of the 17th Chess Olympics which took place in Havana. The American team asked for a delay of two hours for a match scheduled for Saturday at 4:00 p.m. so that American champion, Bobby Fischer would not have to violate the Sabbath. The Russian team refused to accept the delay and the tournament director declared that the Americans had been guilty of a forfeit and awarded four points to the Russians. His decision was appealed and a six-nation council was set up which successfully urged the Russians to forego the

forfeit and accept the delay.

This incident recalled a somewhat similar quarrel at an international chess tournament several years ago. Chess master Samuel Reshevsky refused to play a match scheduled for Saturday—his reason, he is a *Shomer Shabbos*. His opponent insisted that he play or forfeit the match. His opponent?—Bobby Fischer. Has Fischer become a *Baal Teshuva*?—tragically not; he is a member of a Christian sect which observes the Sabbath, and he now demands as a Christian a right which he refused to a fellow Jew when he was still in the ranks. □

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News of Agudath Israel

Orthodox Elite to Participate in 45th Anniversary Dinner

THE ELITE of American Orthodoxy is expected to participate in the 45th Anniversary Dinner of Agudath Israel of America, Sunday evening, February 26th in the Grand Ballroom of the Hotel New Yorker, New York City. Distinguished Torah leaders will address the gathering, which will mark Agudath Israel's emergence on the American scene as a nerve-center for independent Orthodox action.

During the dinner, awards will be presented to three noted New York State Legislators for their service to the Orthodox Jewish community in Albany: Assembly Speaker Anthony J. Travia for his concern with the problems of the religious Jewish community, and Senator Edward J. Speno and Senator William J. Ferrall for sponsoring the Textbook Bill which helps children attending Yeshivos. Last year's dinner cited three United States Congressmen who performed outstanding service in federal legislation in Washington for the Jewish community.

Agudath Israel Hails N.Y. Supreme Court Decision Backing Textbook Bill

AGUDATH ISRAEL of America hailed the decision of the Appellate Division of the New York State Supreme Court upholding the Textbook Bill as a "major victory for justice to non-public school children." While the majority of the justices cited technical grounds to upset the attempt of the East Greenbush School District to void the Textbook Bill, all five Supreme Court justices declared that the Textbook Bill *does not violate* the Federal or State constitutions. This bill

loans textbooks to students of all types of schools from the 7th through the 12th grades, including Yeshivos.

Reuben E. Gross, chairman of Agudath Israel's Commission on Law and Civic Affairs, called the court decision "a vindication of Orthodox Jewry's position favoring government aid to non-public school children." Agudath Israel had submitted a detailed *amicus curiae* brief to the Supreme Court clarifying the constitutional validity of the Textbook Bill.

Agudath Israel Blasts A.J.C. Suit Against Religious School Aid

THE AMERICAN JEWISH community was called upon to "publicly disown the American Jewish Congress for gravely damaging Jewish interests" by spearheading the court action brought on December 1 in New York State and federal courts challenging the use of federal funds to aid non-public school children. This call was issued by Agudath Israel of America in reaction to the announcement of the suit, in which the American Jewish Congress was joined by the New York Civil Liberties Union, United Parents Association and the United Federation of Teachers.

Agudath Israel simultaneously announced that the organization will launch a nationwide campaign to make "crystal clear" to all American citizens that "the American Jewish Congress, despite its high sounding name, does not represent the American Jewish community in this court action." Agudath Israel will take every necessary legal step to defend in the courts the benefits received by the students of non-public schools from federal education programs.

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ATTENTION ANONYMOUS AUTHOR

An article was recently submitted to our office on the subject of Jewish Education. The writer asked to remain anonymous, a request we would have granted had he given us his name. If he will write to our office we would like to discuss his article with him.

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"Can Chinuch Atzmai survive?"

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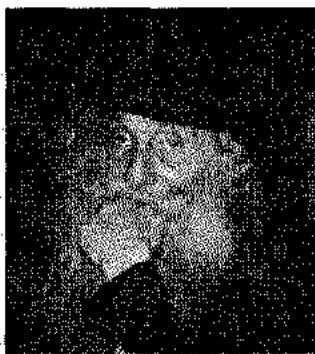
Hagaon Reb Aharon Kotler, זצ"ל, during his final visit to Eretz Yisroel exclaimed, "Our greatest deficit is the 50,000 more children we could save for Torah if we only had the classrooms for them!"

These stirring words continue to challenge us. But in the meantime, the 45,000 children who have already made Chinuch Atzmai a vital part of their lives may wake up one school day, and find that there no longer is a Chinuch Atzma. This we must never let happen.

The Call and Message of the Gedolei Torah

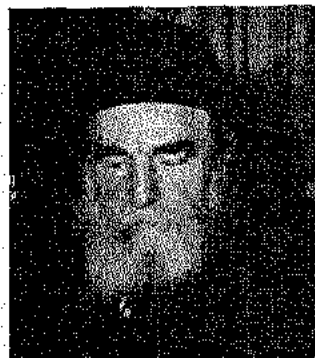


HAGAON REB YECHESKEL ABRAMSKY
CHINUCH ATZMAI is the guarantor and is responsible for Torah in Israel. Religious Jews throughout the world must unite in a massive effort to strengthen this great Torah Chinuch movement.



THE GERER REBBE

The needs of CHINUCH ATZMAI should be the first and foremost concern of all Torah Jews. Acceptance of this obligation represents *צוה למען תיגדלות של בית רבן*



HAGAON REB MOSHE FEINSTEIN

In the name of the Gedolei Torah and Roshei Yeshiva, I proclaim this \$100 Membership Campaign a sacred obligation for everyone of our people, to give CHINUCH ATZMAI a firm base of support.

The Answer

Children in Israel look to Chinuch Atzmai as a trusted friend who safely leads them from a primitive yesterday to a new way of life in a new land.

They look to Chinuch Atzmai as a revered teacher who devotedly protects them from dissuasive influences that might otherwise lead them away from the Torah way of life.

They look to Chinuch Atzmai as the inspiration that guides them to a brilliant future in the advanced Yeshivos of Israel — Ponevez, Kfar Chassidim, Chevron, & Mir.

We must see to it that Chinuch Atzmai never falters. An occasional contribution cannot insure its continuity. A permanent roster of members must be set up, consisting of people like yourself who care enough about the future of Torah in Eretz Yisroel to contribute \$100 annually.

Don't put off your decision. The fate of a generation awaits your reply and the slightest delay can be costly . . . Answer the call of the Gedolei Torah . . . Give heed to the needs of today's children and the pleas of future generations. Fill out the membership subscription below and earn yourself a share in the building of Torah in our time — for all times.

Please clip and mail coupon to:

Torah Schools for Israel
156 Fifth Avenue
New York, N. Y. 10010

YES! I WILL ANSWER THE CALL OF THE GEDOLIM!

I hereby pledge the sum of \$100 as members to save Chinuch Atzmai.

My check is enclosed.

Please bill me Quarterly Semi-Annually

Name.....

Address.....

City.....

State..... Zip Code.....

All gifts are tax exempt. Tax Ref. BK-EO-60