

20th Anniversary Year

# THE JEWISH OBSERVER

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*Breathing "Neshama"  
into the  
American Yeshiva*

**The Light of Reb  
Shraga Feivel  
Mendlowitz**

זצ"ל

●  
Summer  
Camping in  
the USA

*Special Report:*  
Summer Strife  
in Jerusalem

כתיבה וחתימה טובה

September 1983						
SUN.	MON.	TUES.	WED.	THURS.	FRI.	SAT.
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4	5	6	7	8 Rosh Hashanah	9 Rosh Hashanah	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17 Yom Kippur
18	19	20	21	22 Sukkot	23 Sukkot	24
25	26	27	28	29 Shmini Atzeret	30 Simhat Torah	

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A talmid's impression of Reb Shraga Feivel Mendlowitz, *זכר צדיק לברכה* on his thirty-fifth Yahrzeit, culled from the years spent with him, from the stories of older talmidim and from some readings.

## Ohr Shraga— The Light of Reb Shraga Feivel

### The Gift

What was the debt we owe Reb Shraga Feivel, so acknowledged by prominent personages of two such different schools? Perhaps it can be understood through an incident that took place forty years ago in the Eish Das Rabbis' and Teachers' Institute in Monsey, N.Y. Reb Shraga Feivel was seated on a lawn chair surrounded by his students on a green slope near a rock garden. He asked a *talmid* to quickly turn over one of the large stones that had been firmly embedded in the ground for many years. Once he did so, the group saw swarms of insects scurrying about. Said Reb Shraga Feivel: "See those creatures? All their lives under that rock they believed the world to be a dark, dreary place. By overturning that rock, you have revealed to them a whole new world: one of light and beauty. You have shown them the sun and the sky, and have thus given them a new dimension in life. Your task in life as *Rabbonim* and *mechanchim* is to remove the rocks from the Jewish *neshama* and allow the light of the *Shechina* to illuminate its life."

Reb Shraga Feivel was convinced that the stone *could* be overturned, that the *neshama* of the American child *could* be reached by Torah, and that this was his task in America.

Because of Reb Shraga Feivel's dreams and initiatives, and the spiritual richness he transmitted to his *talmidim*, few stones have been left unturned in the effort to bring the light of Torah to every Jewish soul. He was an inspiration and moving force for virtually every genuine Torah movement in America.

### I. The Years of Preparation

Reb Shraga Feivel ben Reb Moshe and Bas-Sheva Mendlowitz was born in the year 5647 (1886) in the village of Vilag on the border between Poland and Austria-Hungary. His mother died when Feivel was 10 years old and his father soon moved to Rimanov.

At the age of 12 young Feivel began studying under Reb Aaron, Dayan of Mezo-Laboretz (home of the *Bnai Yissasschar*), who considered him to be his most gifted *talmid*. He then studied under Rabbi Moshe Greenwald, Rav of Chust, who was so impressed with him that he never began a *shiur* without first inquiring, "Is the boy from Mezo-Laboretz here?", while his classmates nicknamed him "the *masmid*." Rabbi Greenwald had en-



When Rabbi Isaac Sher, Slabodker Rosh Yeshiva, met Reb Shraga Feivel during a visit to America, he greeted him by saying, "So you are the famous Rabbi Mendlowitz I have heard so much about!"

Taken aback, Reb Shraga Feivel replied, "I am not Rabbi Mendlowitz, but Mister Mendlowitz."

Responded Reb Isaac Sher, "Be that as it may, but I have heard that you have accomplished much more than any rabbi in Israel."

The Klausenberger Rav (Rabbi Yekusiel Yehuda Halberstam), a leading Chassidic figure, remarked at Reb Shraga Feivel's funeral in 1948, "Until the end of generations, Jewry will be indebted to Reb Feivel."

Rabbi Chinn, a talmid of Reb Shraga Feivel Mendlowitz, is rabbi of the Gemilas Chesed Congregation of McKeesport, Pennsylvania.

trusted Reb Shraga Feivel with the task of reviewing his *sefer*, *Arugas Habosem*, before it was sent to print. In fact, his *Rebbe* assigned Reb Shraga Feivel the task of editing the laws of *Mikvaos*, one of the most difficult sections of Jewish law.

At 17, Feivel went to Unsdorf to study under the famous Rabbi Shmuel Rosenberg, author of the *Be'er Shmuel*—a disciple of the *Ksav Sofer*. Reb Shmuel Unsdorfer made the deepest impression upon young Feivel and later served as a model for his own *derech* in teaching. By that time, Reb Shraga Feivel had learned through most *sugyos* (topics) of *Shas*. His *hasmada* and love for learning never failed him and his extra-curricular studies were phenomenal. One year he undertook to complete *Rambam's Yad Hachazaka* with key commentaries; another year all of *Tur Shulchan Aruch* with *Beis Yosef*; and so on.

Rabbi Shmuel Kushelevitz זצ"ל, Rosh Yeshiva at Mesivta Torah Vodaath, told the family during Shiva that over their many years together, they had discussed Talmud numerous times. "Each time," said Rabbi Kushelevitz, "the topic was as fresh and clear to Reb Shraga Feivel as if he had just learned it."

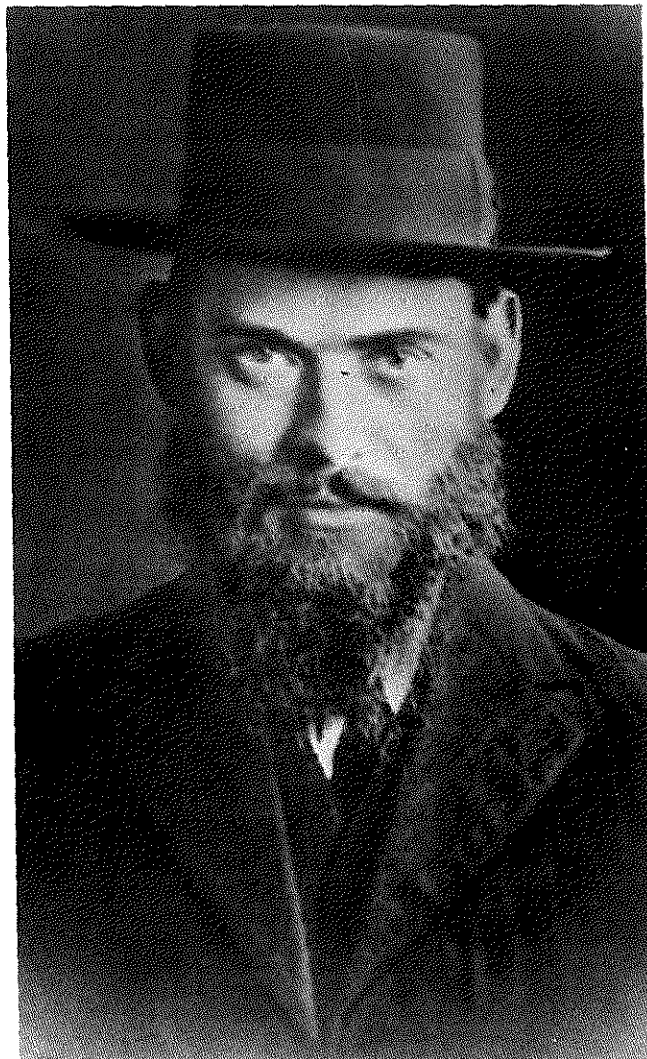
Years later, Reb Shraga Feivel related, as he was about to cross a Scranton street, the image of Reb Shmuel appeared to him and commanded him to stop. Reb Shraga Feivel quickly halted and realized that had he not done so, he would have been struck down by an oncoming car. Again, the night before his wife gave birth, his *Rebbe* appeared to him in a dream and told him, "Tomorrow you will have a son." Reb Shraga Feivel named the boy "Shmuel" in his honor.

After receiving his *semicha* at Unsdorf at the age of 18, Reb Shraga Feivel continued his studies in the Pressburg Yeshiva under the guidance of Rabbi Simcha Bunim Schrieber, a grandson of the *Chasam Sofer*.

Reb Shraga Feivel's personal preparation for his role in life went beyond the formal yeshiva curriculum. He mastered *Tanach*, *Machshava* (philosophy), *Mussar* (ethical literature), *Chassidus* and Jewish history. In fact, he invested a third of his wedding-gift proceeds in the purchase of a set of Jewish history books.

He had little patience with those who had no knowledge of history. Years later, when a student in Torah Vodaath asked him if the Prophets were written during the First *Beis Hamikdash* or the Second, he replied: "First tell me which came first, the First *Beis Hamikdash* or the Second."

At the age of twenty-two, Reb Feivel married his step-mother's younger sister, Bluma Rachel, and settled in Humenne, where his first two children were born. In 1913, at the age of twenty-seven, Reb Shraga Feivel left his family in Europe for America. After several attempts at establishing a business in Scranton, Pa., he became a Hebrew School teacher. Following World War I, he returned to Europe to bring his family to join him in Scranton.



Passport picture (1913).

As a young Talmud Torah teacher, he made his classes so vibrant that to this day, some people in Scranton still remember him. One elderly man recently told Reb Shraga Feivel's son, "I have been taught by many great teachers and inspiring professors, but never did I have a teacher as exciting as your father! *Tanach* lived for us. Whatever *Yiddishkeit* I have today, I owe to your father!"

Although Reb Shraga Feivel never envisioned himself as a trailblazing educator, many of his activities, even apparently trivial actions, served as preparation for his ultimate role—that of shaping the soul of the American yeshiva. He once remarked that when he took his children to the park, people thought he was simply babysitting. "The truth is," he said, "I would sit with them under a tree contemplating *gadlus haBorei* (the greatness of the Creator)." There in a quiet meditative mood, he learned the *Tanya*, unwittingly preparing for the time when his classes in this work would be acclaimed as classical lessons in *Chassidus*.

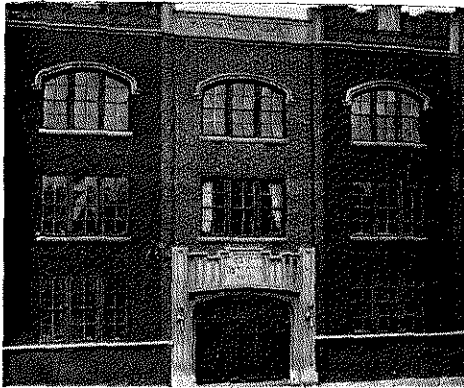


## II The Move to Torah Vodaath

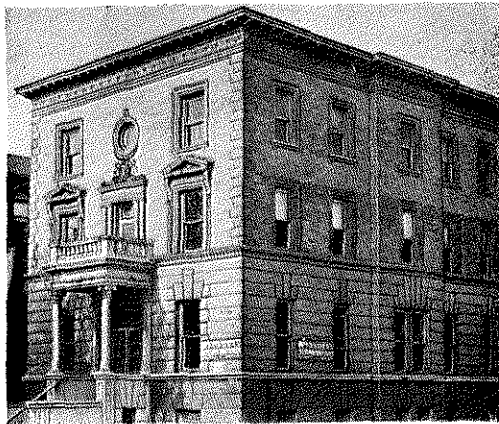
In 1920, Reb Shraga Feivel moved his family to Brooklyn, NY. The Yeshiva Torah Vodaath, at 206 Wilson St., in Williamsburg, founded in 1917, was then a small struggling school. Reb Binyamin Wilhelm ז"ל, one of the founders of the Yeshiva, persuaded the Board of Directors to engage Reb Shraga Feivel as principal in 1921. We must remember that Torah study was not the accepted pursuit for teenagers at that time. There were only three yeshivos in all of New York: Rabbi Yitzchak Elchanan and Rabbi Jacob Joseph, both in the Lower East Side, and Rabbi Chaim Berlin in Brooklyn. In contrast to today, when yeshivos vie with each other in attempting to raise the standards of learning and to elevate the *talmid's* dreams of greatness, in the 20's, 30's

and even the 40's, when I came to M.T.V., it was a battle simply to establish the concept of a higher yeshiva education. Reb Shraga Feivel struggled to convince parents and students of the value of Torah education beyond the elementary years.

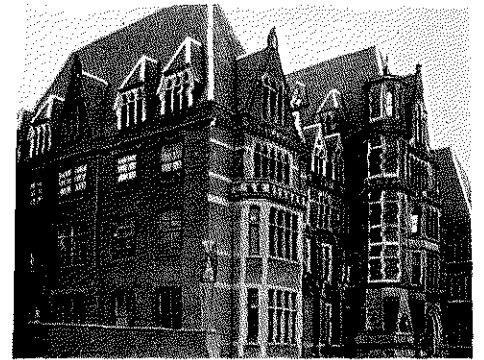
His role could be summed up by the *Chazal* (Talmudic adage) he quoted so frequently: "Why was Avraham called G-d's beloved, *Avraham Ohavi*? Because Avraham made G-d's name beloved to all who came into his company." When Reb Shraga Feivel spoke these words, to us, his *talmidim*, he too was *Avraham Ohavi*, G-d's beloved who helped make the *Shechina* beloved in America. From his position as principal at Torah Vodaath, Reb



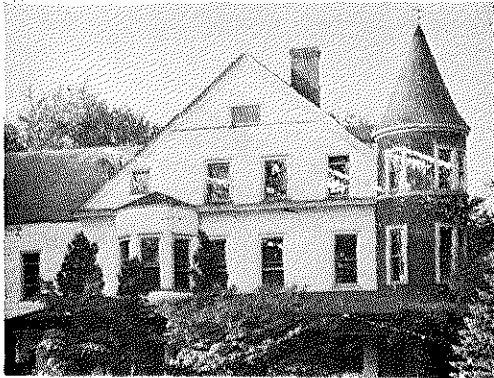
Torah Vodaath: Elementary School at 206 Wilson St.



Intermediate School on Bedford Ave.



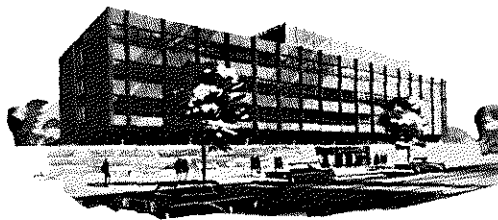
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Shraga Feivel began to lead a Torah revolution which has resulted in the high standards we strive for today.

### The Long Saturday Nights

A *talmid* from those years relates that he was once called into Reb Shraga Feivel's office and asked, "Tell me, what do you and your friends do on these long winter Saturday nights?" Sheepishly the *bachur* replied, "Well, *Rebbe*, the truth is that we go to the movies. You know, we have very little to do in the way of recreation."

Instead of scolding him, Reb Shraga Feivel said, "Why don't we all get together at my home? No learning, of course. We'll just sit and talk."

"O.K., *Rebbe*, we'll try it."

So on Saturday nights they gathered at Reb Shraga Feivel's home and talked about everything under the sun—questions young boys ask about life, death, and religion. Finally, Reb Shraga Feivel would say, "*Ober un gornisht pahst nit* (No study at all just isn't right)," and he would spend a few minutes teaching the *Sefer haChinuch* on *mitzvos*, making the lessons alive and compelling for them. (To this day, that "*bachur*" arises at five each morning to attend a Daf Yomi group.)

One Saturday night, Reb Shraga Feivel asked this group, "What do you think is the most important thing in life?" When no one came up with a satisfactory answer, Reb Shraga Feivel told them, "It's *chesbon*: to account for every deed you do."

### His Own Accounting System

His personal *chesbon* included his *talmidim*. Before going to sleep every night, he reviewed a list of the students of the yeshiva, to consider how he could be of help to each one. He once remarked, "If I can no longer know where every *bachur* in my yeshiva is holding, it's a sign that the yeshiva has grown too large."

Friday nights, when even the busiest father makes time to study with his children, Reb Shraga Feivel taught his children—the *talmidim*—*Mesechta Shabbos*. (He remarked at one of these classes, that if someone studied a *blatt Gemora* without asking the questions posed by the *Maharsha*, he did not yet "know how to learn.")

Reb Shraga Feivel had a weakness for gifted boys, and gave them much more leeway than he would ever have allowed the majority of students.

Yankel, a non-conforming teenager from the Mid West, once secretly picked the lock on a display case in the Mesifita lobby that housed a personnel directory. He rearranged the movable letters to spell out outrageous positions for the Yeshiva's administration, much to the consternation of the *hanhala*. Reb Shraga Feivel quickly found out the culprit, and spent two hours with him in his office, probing his background, ideas, and goals, apparently each enjoying the other immensely—without a word about the crime. A spunky fellow, Yankel needed unorthodox treatment.

Moshe was a brilliant fifteen year old who did not adhere to the Yeshiva schedule. Reb Shraga Feivel permitted him to go to Bais Medrash Elyon, where he could study independently. He tolerated his every aberration and idiosyncrasy in hope that "the light of Torah would bring him back"—until Moshe sold a set of *Rashba* to purchase a phonograph, which so disgusted Reb Shraga Feivel that he let him go: With no appreciation of Torah, the "light" would not penetrate.

### The Time of Our Lives

Reb Shraga Feivel valued every minute. He once remarked that he learned *hasmada* from Reb Aharon Kotler ז"ל.

Leaving a meeting, he walked alongside Reb Aharon to the elevator, overhearing him mumble to himself, "Now I understand the Reb Akiva Eiger's *kushya*." Reb Shraga Feivel was overwhelmed with Reb Aharon's ability to immerse himself totally in Torah thought immediately after being involved in a pressing communal need.

Regarding the verse, "The days of our years—*bahem*—among them are but seventy years," he said: "In a few days of our years, *bahem*—in them—you can compress what ever you've accomplished in seventy years." Only a '*vort*,' yet it reveals his appreciation for the value of time. His *talmidim* shall forever remember his plea, "*Bachurim, nitzt zich ois de tzeit*" (Boys, utilize your time well).

To him, time was the most precious gift G-d has given man, especially when its use affected others. For instance, his *Tanach* class met in the auditorium from nine to nine thirty a.m., and for a student to be late was to commit a serious crime. At five to nine, he was already sitting in his chair, ready to teach, impatient to get on with his work. . . . Who can forget Reb Shraga Feivel standing in the hall facing the front door, with his pocket watch in his hand, as he watched the students and the *rebbeim* file into the building? No word was needed to chastise the latecomer. One look and you knew.

### The Shabbos and Yom Tov Approach

When a Yom Tov approached, he made certain that the boys from the poorest families were outfitted with new suits. And he also made sure that the growing needs of the *neshama* were met. He taught us how to sing a *niggun* and how to shed a tear, how to dance and how to cry. He often remarked, "If you can't dance on Simchas Torah with what you've got, you can't cry on Yom Kippur for what you're missing."

My first exposure to Torah Vodaath was as part of a visitation organized by a group of Pirchei leaders in Baltimore (one of them now a leader of the world Agudah movement). The dancing and singing so captivated us that they gave us the impetus to leave home to learn in the "big city."



Singing "Mimkomcha" at daughter's wedding (1947).

The walls of the *Beis Hamidrash* vibrated with the spirit of the season. Reb Shraga Feivel would direct the singing and the dancing—not a wild release of energy, but a leap of the spirit. "You can't jump from *niggun* to *niggun*," he would tell us. "You must wring the last drop out of a *niggun* like you squeeze juice from a lemon." I can still hear his voice ringing in my ears as he led us in the song, *Im Ani Kahn, Hakol Kahn*—If I am here, all is present (see *Succah* 53a): "*Bachurim, tantzt Rashi's p'shat*" ("I" referring to G-d). Then later: "*Bachurim, tantzt Tosfos' p'shat*" ("I" referring to *Klal Yisroel's* presence).

A Lithuanian colleague of Rabbi Shlomo Heiman from his days in the Slobodka Yeshiva asked him how he could serve as Rosh HaYeshiva for Torah Vodaath when it did not even have a formal *Mussar* program. Replied Reb Shlomo: "Reb Shraga Feivel's *Shalosh Seudos* is the equivalent of *Mussar*."

And an extraordinary experience it was! Reb Shraga Feivel graced the head table while the rest of us, with only a crusty piece of *challah* or a piece of *matzah* in hand, sat in the enveloping darkness and felt as if we were in Gan Eden. Young students cried from the depths of their souls while singing the *Shalosh Seudos Zemiro*s, "May we merit to see children and grandchildren engrossed in the study of Torah and *mitzvos*." . . . People had said that the stones of America were *treife*. But Avraham Ohavi—Reb Shraga Feivel—lifted the stones and bathed his *talmidim* in the light of *deveikus*.

### III. Curriculum for *Klal Yisroel*

#### The Meaning of Preparation

One day he arrived late for his Tanach class. He sat down, opened the *sefer*, then closed it, and said, "No class today. I had

set aside time to prepare for this class, but a Jew came with a tale of woe. I would not stop him, and he took away all my preparation time. Truth of the matter is that I could give a class with no preparation, and you'd probably find it more interesting, for when one is not prepared, ideas fly through one's mind; but that's not teaching. A teacher must know exactly what he wants to say to his students and what he wants to leave out. Since I am not prepared, I cannot teach today. Class is over."

Can there be a better class on teaching than that episode?

He came to class prepared to teach with a wealth of Torah at his finger tips. The vast resources of Chazal were integrated into his personality, yet with his genius, he concealed it. Reb Shraga Feivel never tried to be *mechadesh* new thoughts, but rather to make the old live again. I once had access to his *seforim*—his *Yalkut Shimoni*, *Pirkei Avos*, his *Tur Shulchan Aruch* were filled with check marks, indicating the passages to be used in his classes.

And what classes they were! The old became new, and was indelibly etched into the *neshamos* of all who sat spellbound as he wove his ideas with poetic phrases into a tapestry of beauty and harmony. Whether the text was *Tehillim* or *Sefer haChinuch*, *Mesillas Yesharim* or *Derech HaShem*, *Sfas Emes* or *Shamshon Refael Hirsch*, the words sprang from the pages to become part of your life.

He found the writings of Rav Samson Raphael Hirsch an invaluable source for transmitting Torah to new generations. He told his family, "It was worthwhile to learn German just to be able to understand his writings." (Hirsch's works had not yet been translated into Hebrew or English.) *Tanya* (the *Chabad* classic) according to Hirsch may sound strange or impossible, but Reb Shraga Feivel thought of both as guides to a way of life, not as philosophies of the abstract. Since both were authentic Torah thought, they overlapped, and each could—and did—shed light upon the other. He brought together the teachings of all ages and all schools of thought, and made each revered and relevant in his quest to spread holiness.

How he prepared! In a *Tanya* class he once remarked, "Do you think I shook that interpretation out of my armsleeves? It took me twenty years to arrive at that *p'shat*." He tried to teach us how to think and to be open to new ideas: "*Di sechel iz elastish* (the mind is elastic); it can be stretched from one extreme to another if you are intellectually honest with yourself."

#### Unspoken Lessons

He taught with "*kol atzmotai tomarna*—All my limbs speak of G-d's glory." The veins in his forehead bulged and pressed outward, and his face would become flushed as he immersed himself into the subject matter. Reb Shraga Feivel never taught *Iyov* (Job). He was afraid that if someone were present one day when he taught *Iyov's* questions, making them burn with immediacy, and then would miss the next day's lesson when the answers were given, that *bachur* would always remain with the questions nagging his mind.



The auditorium was filled as the bachurim settled back for Mr. Mendelowitz's Tehillim shiur. "Kapital 84" . . . He reached the third pasuk: "נכספה וגם כלתה נפשי לחצרות ד'." . . . My soul yearns, indeed it pines for the courtyards, of G-d. . . גם צפור מצאה בית ודרור קן לה Even the bird found a home, the wild one a nest." The contrast between the wildbird and the homeless Jew, between the ever-presence of the nest and absence of the Beis Hamikdash, was too much for him. The tears poured down his cheeks. He could not regain his composure, so he closed the Tehillim. "I'm sorry," he apologized. "I cannot continue." The class was over, but not forgotten.

### Without a Text

Many of Reb Shraga Feivel's most compelling lessons did not come from seforim.

Once when talmidim began gathering in Reb Shraga Feivel's modest office for a class in Tanya, two of them found that they had no chairs. They went to fetch some and as each entered the room with his chair, Reb Shraga Feivel chided them saying, "Shleppers! You brought a chair for yourself and you a chair for yourself, so what are you? Shleppers! Now if you had each brought a chair for your friend, you would each have performed an act of chessed. But as it is, you have only shlepped chairs. That's why I call you shleppers."

Reb Shraga Feivel once surprised a class by asking them to enumerate all 613 mitzvos, which of course no one could do. "If you don't know the mitzvos and are not aware of them, how can you expect to perform them if and when the occasion arises?"

Reb Shraga Feivel's classes started many Torah revolutions. Today, wearing kosher tefillin is as natural as keeping Shabbos. Out-of-town talmidim had come to Torah Vodaath with their Bar Mitzvah tefillin, usually purchased from the local Jewish bookstore or from itinerant Jewish peddlers. After Reb Shraga Feivel's classes on tefillin, in which he delineated the halachic requirements (such as *rebu'a*—perfect squareness) and *hidurim* (embellishments, such as *gasos*—heavier leather, *me'or echod*—one piece of leather, etc.), everyone rushed to the sofer to have his checked—and, usually, replaced.

Contemporary issues were brought up from time to time in Reb Shraga Feivel's classes: "Are you expecting social justice in the great democracies? or perhaps in the workers' paradise?" he'd ask, and then proceeded to expose the built-in hypocrisy of man-made social systems.

Reb Shraga Feivel encouraged his talmidim to read the Yiddish press, both to identify with Jewish problems and to serve as a hedge against assimilation.

One of his talmidim told him that he preferred to read *The New York Times* on the subway train to his office. "Read the *Times* if you must," said Reb Shraga Feivel, "but wrap it in the *Yiddische Morgen Journal*."

In his respect for the power of the printed word, Reb Shraga Feivel joined forces with Chazan Yossele Rosenblatt in 1923, to produce *Dos Yiddische Licht*, a short-

lived English and Yiddish language weekly that included articles of comment and inspiration. It eventually became a daily but was forced to discontinue publication in 1927, because of financial difficulties. In fact, Chazan Rosenblatt went on a year-long concert tour to pay back the monies owed to creditors.

He did not hesitate to speak out on any topic, no matter how delicate or controversial. Today, a *mechitza* is standard at a religious wedding, yet forty years ago, he had to speak out against the mingling of boys and girls at social events, decrying mixed swimming and dancing, which were accepted practices among so many in those days.

He encouraged talmidim who were about to get married to make the public room in their new apartments a dining room instead of the standard living room: a living room is the setting for relaxation, reading the newspaper, *batola*—an American phenomenon, while the dining room is the place for the family to gather together for a Shabbos and Yom Tov meal, where a man can open a sefer and learn with a *chavrusa*.

Nor did he spare his own: A son-in-law who was in the rabbinate told me that on Shabbos mornings when he returned from *shul*, all swelled with pride for having delivered a stirring sermon, Reb Shraga Feivel would rise in mock reverence and say, "Nu mine Rabbi, vos host du heint geplapelt?—So, my Rabbi, what have you prattled about today?" He wanted his son-in-law to understand the responsibility of preaching a sermon. Regarding rabbis who based their talks on nothing more than popular ideas or newspaper articles, he'd ask, "Is there nothing in our own literature on which to base a sermon?"

In the early years of Torah Vodaath, the Yeshiva sponsored a course in homiletics taught by Rabbi Fortman ז"ל. Reb Shraga Feivel sat in on one of the classes when one of the better students, now a prominent rabbi, delivered a great address. When the bachur asked Reb Shraga Feivel for his opinion of the *drasha*, he said, "It was a great sermon, a good speech. You spoke about G-d, religion, faith, etc., but what was Jewish about it? A *galach* could have delivered the same talk!"

### Language of the Soul

Reb Shraga Feivel was keenly aware of the obligation of a teacher to reach the talmid's soul. Two of his talmidim became teachers in an out-of-town yeshiva where they attempted to change the language of instruction from English to Yiddish, thinking this would improve the school. When they lamented their failure to Reb Shraga Feivel, he told them, "If I knew I had ten more years to live, I would learn English."

"But why, Rebbe?" they protested. "All of your talmidim understand Yiddish."

Reb Shraga Feivel replied, "True, but English is their mother tongue, their *neschama lashon*, and to reach talmi-

dim, you must address them in their own language.\*

"The words from the *Shema*, 'And these words which I command you this day shall be *ahl levavecha*—on your hearts, and you shall teach them to your children.'—How? They shall overflow your heart and then you'll be able to teach them to your children, from your heart to their soul!"

And how he understood the language of the *neschama*! When Yiddel Turner would soulfully play "*Keili, Keili, Lama Azavtani*" on his violin, Reb Shraga Feivel would close his eyes in a deep concentration that put him into a spiritual anguish, which in turn aggravated his ulcer condition, causing him acute physical pain.

### Business Angles

Having been part of the business world, he understood life's realities; having tasted the bitterness of debt and failure, he was well prepared to guide his *talmidim* prudently and wisely. He considered each *bachur's* talents as well as what the Torah world needed before giving them his advice. Thus, many were encouraged to enter *chinuch*, while others were directed into business—either way, to promote Torah. His own rapport with the businessmen on the Board of Directors of Yeshiva Torah Vodaath was further indication of his ability to appreciate the various roles people play in life, and how they could be used for Torah.

Since Reb Shraga Feivel was involved with the purchase of many buildings for Torah Vodaath—school buildings and dormitories in Williamsburg, Bais Medrash Elyon in Monsey, and Camp Mesifita—he made sure to understand the transactions. He was one of the first to point out the *ribis* (interest) problems with mortgages.

He had planned to build a swimming pool on the grounds of the Bais Medrash Elyon, during the time of the Eish Das program. Reb Shraga Feivel told a *talmid* that when the architect comes to survey the grounds to locate the proper site for the pool, "Don't forget to show him the rise near the main building. I think that may be the right spot." After completing his survey, the architect exclaimed, "Why of course that's the perfect site; it has the right drainage, sunlight, privacy, and protection."

### The World as a Siddur

• Reb Shraga Feivel always endeavored to enlarge his awareness of G-d's omnipresence. Reb Moshe Aaron Stern recalled hiding behind Reb Shraga Feivel's home on a Friday afternoon. Reb Shraga Feivel stood on the porch, looking heavenward and repeated again and again the words from the *Zohar*: "*Memaleh kol almin, soveiv kol almin, v'leis asaar pahnui menai*—His glory fills the world,

\*Yet, at his Shabbos table, he did not permit the family to speak one word of English, only Yiddish.



surrounds the world, and there is no place free of Him" . . . , striving for a total *deveikus* in Hashem.

• He saw G-d in nature and loved all things that grow. He scolded a *bachur* for ripping a leaf from a tree: "That leaf was saying *Shira* to Hashem; why did you have to destroy it?" When another *talmid* absentmindedly tore up a blade of grass, Reb Shraga Feivel chided him: "The *Gemora* relates that every blade of grass has a *malach* (angel) in heaven that says 'grow!' and you say 'no!'."

• He selected the site of Camp Mesifita high on a Ferndale mountaintop commanding a magnificent view with the purpose of inspiring reverence for G-d, as it is written, "Lift up your eyes and see who created all this."

• A layman once commented, "Why does he daven near the window and always look out?" Reb Shraga explained, "*Er meint az ich kook arois; der emes iz, as ich kook arein*—He thinks I'm looking out; in truth, I'm looking in."

*Davening* was sacred to him. Woe to whom ever he caught talking during the *davening*! I still quake when I recall how he came running to a *bachur* sitting near me who had disturbed the sanctity of the hour. "*Arois!*" he shouted, "*ven du vest veren baalabus vest du reddem.*"

He once asked Reb Mannes Mandel (the *ba'al tefilla* on Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur for many years), "Out of all the long hours we spend together *davening*, how much time do we really daven with *kavana*? A few minutes? So please tell me why the *davening* takes so long!"

Though he chided us for the length of our *davening*, his own *davening* was a drama of *hishtapchus hanefesh*, an outpouring of the soul. At his seat up front, on the left side of the *Beis Hamidrash* near his window (the right side was always reserved for the *Roshei Yeshivos*; he would never sit there) he stood before his beloved Creator as *Avraham Ohavi*, as a child speaking with his revered Father. No airs, no theatrics, no outward manifestations or external movements, but a silent cry, an inward yearning that made all present recall the words "*Tzamah lecha nafshi*—my soul thirsts for Thee." Words they

heard him sing with so much longing at *Shalosh Seudos*, words they witnessed and could actually feel.

### "Nistar" Mendlowitz

*Reb Shruga Feivel once related that a disciple of the Ba'al Shem Tov asked, "Rebbe, if the '36 righteous men' are secret, hidden tzaddikim, does this mean then that you, the Ba'al Shem Tov, whose fame is renowned, cannot be one of them?" The Ba'al Shem Tov replied, "The world thinks it knows what a tzaddik is, but the righteousness of famous tzaddikim is far greater than what the world can imagine. Even those who are famous can be hidden tzaddikim!"*

While it is true that the name of Reb Shruga Feivel became a byword in the Torah world, he tried to hide his greatness. Indeed, the Ponevezer Rav, Rabbi Yoseif Kahaneman, referred to Reb Shruga Feivel as "NISTAR Mendlowitz," the secret, hidden man. He had brought his *semicha* from Europe, but he kept the document hidden away. A cleaning lady in Scranton chanced upon it and said, "Oh, so you are a Rabbi!" Reb Shruga Feivel promptly tore the document into shreds.

NISTAR MENDLOWITZ! He dressed conservatively in the fashion of the day—suits, neckties, the normal garb of an American businessman, to remove from himself any vestige of *Rabbanus* . . . apparently he could not part with his black velour hat. He wore his *tzitzis* over his shirt, but we rarely saw them, because he wore a vest on top of them. Long *peyos*? Yes, of course, but neatly curled and almost hidden from view. He was always immaculate, well-groomed, with the outward appearance of a contemporary man, but beneath was the humble spirit of a *tzaddik* who walked with G-d.

Reb Shruga Feivel forbade his picture to be taken. The few pictures we have were snapped without his knowledge. I remember how he pursued a *bachur* who had photographed him, insisting the boy hand over the film.

NISTAR MENDLOWITZ: Ours may be called the age of the tape recorder. Yet there is not one recorded word of Reb Shruga Feivel! What I would give, just to be able to hear his voice once again say, "Avraham Ohavi." But he would not permit an outsider into his classes, much less allow himself to be taped. He was even upset with those who wrote notes in class.

*One night, I was in the Beis Hamidrash recording the day's lectures in my notebook, when I felt the desk being pushed hard into my stomach. Looking up, I was startled to see Reb Shruga Feivel leaning over me, saying, "Yitzchak, kasveim al luach lebecha" (write them on the tablets of your heart).*

In his humility, before beginning a class in the *Beis Midrash Kattan*, on South Third St., he would look around the room and say, "*Lomdim, arois* (scholars, leave)." Reb Yosef Levitan ז"ר (recognized as one of the outstanding *lomdim* of his time) would duck behind me, so that Reb Shruga Feivel would not ask him to leave.

NISTAR MENDLOWITZ: Opening a yeshiva high school with secular studies was a novel idea that Reb Shruga Feivel would never have undertaken without first ask-

ing a *she'eila*, so he consulted many of the *gedolim* in Europe at that time, i.e., Rabbi Chaim Ozer Grodzenski, Munkatcher Rav, Rabbi Elchanan Wasserman, and the Ragotchover Gaon. The written replies, which the family has in safekeeping, are all addressed to the late Rabbi Gedalya Schorr ז"ר. Apparently Reb Shruga Feivel had asked Rabbi Schorr to send the *she'eila* so his name would not be known to the *Gedolim* in Europe.

When Yeshiva Ner Israel dedicated its building on Garrison Blvd. in Baltimore, Rabbi Yaakov Kamenetzky—as a father of two *talmidim* there—attended the ceremony. He recalled how during the dedication, the Master of Ceremonies called out, "We will now hear a few words from Rabbi Feivel Mendlowitz." Everyone turned toward the rear and waited for him to come forward. Reb Shruga Feivel said, "There must be some mistake. They must mean someone else, for I am Mr. Mendlowitz, not Rabbi Mendlowitz," and he refused to ascend to the podium. He did give permission to announce his pledge of \$800, but remained adamant in his refusal to speak. This was Reb Yaakov's first contact with Reb Shruga Feivel, and marked the beginning of a long warm relationship, culminating in serving as Rosh Yeshiva of Mesifita Torah Vodaath.

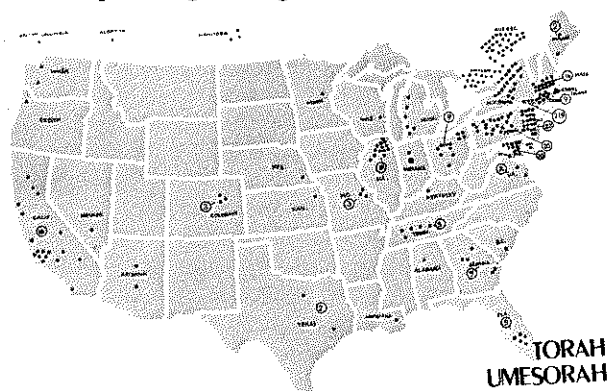
### Above Institutional Loyalty

Rabbi Yaakov Ruderman, Rosh HaYeshiva of Ner Israel in Baltimore, tells of the time when his yeshiva was in danger of closing. Suddenly a Jew from New York arrived, placed a handsome sum of money on his desk and left without saying a word; Reb Shruga Feivel at work! Similarly, after the Bobover Rebbe had arrived in America, Reb Shruga gave him \$10,000 to help him start his *Beis Midrash*. When the Satmar Rav came to America, Reb Shruga Feivel was there with another \$10,000 gift of seed money; and the Klausenberger Rav, too, received \$10,000.

These sums—\$30,000 in all—from a man who was burdened with the herculean task of supporting his own institution, and in fact, was forced to borrow this money! During his last days on earth, he discussed with his family ways to pay off this personal debt. As one of his *talmidim* put it, "He was an institution above all institutions." Torah was the goal, regardless of who did the task.

Even more generous than financial support of Torah was his willingness to send outstanding *talmidim* to start Lakewood's Bais Midrash Govoha—as he did for the Yeshiva Chachmei Lublin in Detroit and for Telshe in Cleveland. In addition, he refused to accept *talmidim* from the Brownsville area in Brooklyn because the Yeshiva Chaim Berlin was situated there and needed *talmidim*. When taken to task by the lay leaders of Torah Vodaath for giving away his best students with whom he had toiled so hard, Reb Shruga Feivel answered simply, "If that is where they will grow best and Torah will best be served, what difference does it make to me where they learn—in my yeshiva or with Reb Aharon?"

## Spreading the Light: Torah Umesorah



"A Hebrew Day School in Every Jewish Community in America."

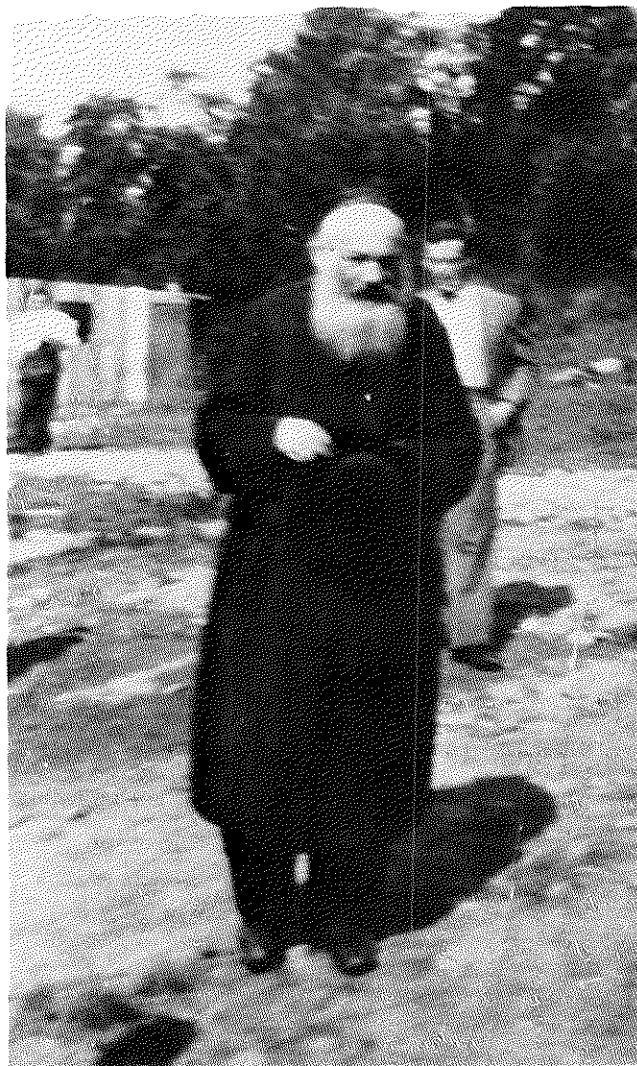
Reb Shrager Feivel dreamed of spreading the light of Torah study. Thus he founded Torah Umesorah to found Day Schools all over America, often calling Torah Umesorah "Mein Liebling." A prominent educator wrote, "The best way to send information is to wrap it up in a person." Besides wrapping many packages, Reb Shrager Feivel had great plans for staffing all the new yeshivos he dreamed of establishing. He would open a special school for teachers where yeshiva graduates would develop their ability to transmit Torah: "Eish Das," an institute to service all yeshivos, where every Rosh Yeshiva would send his graduates for the "finishing touches." Rabbi Aharon Kotler, and Rabbi Reuven Grozovsky backed the enterprise and had wanted Rabbi Yaakov Kamenetzky to head the institution. Alas, other yeshiva leaders did not fully appreciate the plan. As Reb Yaakov commented, "Zei hobben Reb Shrager Feivel nit farstahnen"—others could not believe that there could be such a person not thinking of his own self-interest. Reb Shrager Feivel did open Eish Das for a short while at the future Bais Medrash Elyon site in Monsey, in the hope that it would become a school for *Rabbonim*, *mechanchim*, and *schochtim*. Had he been successful, who knows how much improved Torah life would be today!



Rabbi Reuven Grozovsky, with Reb Shrager Feivel at daughter's wedding.

## Summer Growth

In spite of some frustrations, many of Reb Shrager Feivel's plans did materialize. He knew the world outside of the yeshiva, and was keenly aware that everything accomplished with his students could be dissipated in the summer months on the streets of New York. Thus Reb Shrager Feivel organized America's first yeshiva summer camp, Camp Mesifta, in Mountindale, N.Y. Reb Shrager Feivel carried the financial burden of the camp and found numerous ways to keep the camp going in spite of the lack of funds. *Talmidim* would compare notes: "Did you see Reb Shrager Feivel early Friday morning helping the camp cook clean the chickens for *Shaabos*?"—an economy measure laced with love for his *talmidim*. When Camp Mesifta moved to Ferndale, N.Y., it became the summer home for thousands of boys from all yeshivos during its many years of existence. *Gedolei Yisroel* also stayed there: Rabbi Elchanan Wasserman *z"l* visited the camp for several weeks; Rabbi Shlomo Hei-



Rabbi Elchanan Wasserman at Camp Mesifta

man's summers were spent there, and later Rabbi Yaa-kov Kamenetzky as well as other *Roshei Yeshiva* graced its grounds.

While Camps Torah Vodaath and Ohr Shraga are the direct heirs of Camp Mesifta, the scores of religious summer camps across North America are also carrying on its legacy.

#### IV. Eretz Yisroel

Much as he appreciated the American scene, Reb Shraga Feivel never really "established residence" in the United States. His home on South Second Street was sparsely furnished with only bare necessities. Above the wall of his dining room, facing his chair, was a painting of the verse: "If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, may my right hand forget its cunning." Whether sitting in his dining room, or in the classroom in Torah Vodaath, this was the focus of his thoughts.

When he taught "*Al Naharos Bavel* (On the Rivers of Babylon, there we sat and wept)" in *Tehillim*, or "*Vili Yerushalayim*" in *Shemone Esrei*, he rarely got beyond a word or two without being so overcome with emotion that he was incapable of continuing. It was one thing for us to read about Jerusalem and its destruction; it was quite another to witness its impact on a man in our midst. Much as we have seen Jews weep for the suffering of others, share in their pain and their hope, whom else did we ever see cry for the *Golus* of the *Schechina*? . . . After a class that pulsed with love for *Eretz Yisroel*, he remarked, "And the world says I am not a Zionist"—a fatal flaw in the eyes of American Jews of that time. Zionist he was, but without the capital "Z"; an *oheiv Eretz Yisroel* as taught by the *Ramban*, as expressed by the *Shira* of Reb Yehuda Halevi, as defined in his many *Kuzari* classes.

*The halacha forbids leaving an uncovered knife on the table during Brikas Hamazon, for fear that the despair one feels during the paragraph dedicated to Yerushalayim may drive a person to take his life. On the Friday night in the summer of 1948, when word reached America of the fall of Jerusalem, Reb Shraga Feivel was struck down at his Shabbos table by a heart attack, while reciting "Uv'nei Yerushalayim"—the beracha regarding rebuilding Jerusalem. During that illness, I was privileged to serve him at his home and I vividly remember him under the oxygen tent, pounding his hand against the bed, murmuring over and over, "Vos vet zein mit Eretz Yisroel?"*

He often repeated: "Each country is best suited by its very nature to bring forth certain products. Polar bears breed best near the North Pole; Torah grows best in *Eretz Yisroel*."

He was a committed member of the Agudath Israel and thus his love for *Eretz Yisroel* and the people of Israel was directed by Torah guidelines, and was beyond political considerations. He encouraged Rabbi Shlomo Heiman זצ"ל to become the Vice President of the Agudath Israel of America in 1938, when the movement was

scorned by most Orthodox Jews, and personally raised large sums of money for the *Zeirei Agudath Israel's* *hatzala* programs during the war.

When the State of Israel was declared, he said that while he does not know what will become of it in the future, at its founding it would serve as a haven for countless refugees, and that in itself is cause for rejoicing. Adding, "Only those who moan with Israel can understand her joys as well."

When asked why the State of Israel was brought into being largely by so many non-religious Jews, he answered, "*Ki lo yidach mimenu nidach!*—G-d does not want to lose any Jew and gives every Jew some thread by which he can hang on to his Jewishness. Zionism has kept otherwise assimilated Jews identified with the People of Israel, at least remaining within the Jewish fold."

Rabbi Berl Greenbaum ז"ר, his late son-in-law, preserved Reb Shraga Feivel's cogent *mashal* about the birth of the State: "In a normal birth, the child emerges head first. A breech birth, when the child comes feet first, is a difficult, even hazardous birth, but the child can develop normal and healthy. If the State of Israel had been born head first—that is, led by *Roshei Am* (its Torah leadership)—its stability would have assured. But even now we can hope."

In the very early years of Torah Vodaath, a group of people had wanted to place the blue and white flag in the Yeshiva. Said Reb Shraga Feivel, "If only they would have added the *pasuk*, '*Zichru Toras Moshe avdi*' to the flag, I would have no problem putting it in the yeshiva."

On the Saturday night following his reaction to the establishment of the State of Israel, a leading Chassidic figure of that era called for Reb Shraga Feivel and upbraided him in no uncertain terms for his "Zionistic" leanings. When he returned home, his family asked him what had happened. Reb Shraga Feivel told them, and added, "I could have answered him *Chazal* for *Chazal*, *Midrash* for *Midrash*, but I did not want to incur his wrath, for he is an *Adam Gadol*, a *tzaddik*; and besides that, he has a fiery temper."

#### Reaching Across Oceans

In his book *Zichronos Shel Bnei Brak*, the late mayor of the city—Yitzchok Gerstenkorn, included a chapter "In the Shadows of Torah Vodaath," in which he tells of his visit to New York in 1929. He had come to the States to raise money to found a religious *Yishuv* in the Tel Aviv area—Bnei Brak. After many difficulties, he chanced upon Reb Shraga Feivel who extended a generous hand of friendship and helped him raise \$6,000, a huge sum of money in those years. Gerstenkorn writes that he never met a person with such love for *Eretz Yisroel*: "Everytime I mentioned *Eretz Yisroel*, tears welled up in Reb Shraga Feivel's eyes." When I visit Reb Shraga Feivel's grave in Bnei Brak, I find solace in the knowledge that he is buried in the Torah community he helped to create.



A day before his *petira* (passing), Reb Shraga Feivel called his son-in-law Rabbi Alexander Lincher to his bedside and instructed him: "*Tu eppes far Eretz Yisroel.*" Reb Shraga Feivel added that if Hashem would give him life and strength, he would move one of his institutions to *Eretz Yisroel*. Rabbi Linchner kept that bequest and founded Boys Town and Merom Zion Institutes in Jerusalem, where today hundreds of underprivileged Israeli youths are given a Torah education and are prepared for a productive role in industry as well.

Even though he had packed and was ready to go to *Eretz Yisroel* several times, Reb Shraga Feivel never made the trip—why not? A member of his family suggests: "My father would never have been able to recover from the experience of standing before the *Kosel*! His soul would have fled from his body."

### Fighting Illness . . .

It should be noted that all his life's accomplishments were achieved under the pressures of ill health and pain. Even as a young man, Reb Shraga Feivel had been afflicted with a serious lung problem. His doctor in Europe had callously written him off—to his face. Legend has it that he responded, "Let the fellow say what he wants, I'll outlive him!" ("*Ich vell dem schlack überleben!*")—and so it was. This was typical of his determination not to let anything interfere with his plans for *Avodas Hashem*.

Racked with pain due to a severe ulcer problem, he often masked his suffering with a joke or sharp saying. He once confided in a *talmid*, "The pain can be awesome at times, but so what? Life is made up of a long string of individual moments. Pain for the moment can be withstood. As for what's ahead, there's no sense in suffering what one does not yet feel."

His memorial stone carries the inscription, "*Somach b'yessurrin* (rejoiced in pain)" for good reason. Even when the pain was so severe that the doctors ordered complete rest for a full year, without any book study, he used his time to develop his philosophies of life. Among his writings from that period was a comparison between the schools of *Mussar* and *Chassidus*. (Pointing to his own bed, he once quipped, "*Chassidus* is like a hospital bed, it lifts you up.")

Typically, he said: "*Mussar* stresses: 'I have set my sins before me'; *Chassidus*—'I have set the Lord before me.'"

### . . . to the Last Day

Tuesday, September 7, 1948, third day of Elul, 5708, was a black day for Torah Jewry. Reb Shraga Feivel breathed his last in his home, next door to Bais Medrash Elyon, Monsey. When we heard the shocking news—he had been improving, we had been told—a group of us traveled to Monsey to have the *zechus* of participating in the *tahara*, which was conducted in the *mikvah* of the

main building of Bais Medrash Elyon. (Reb Shraga Feivel saw to it that his yeshiva always had a *mikvah* for the *bachurim*.)

From Monsey, the funeral cortege made its way to the Mesifita in Williamsburgh, where thousands had gathered to pay their last respects. His *aron* was brought into the Beis Midrash, where *Tehillim* was recited. Over the years, whenever he attended a funeral with his son-in-law, Rabbi Linchner, Reb Shraga Feivel would tell him how he wanted his own funeral conducted: No eulogy, with one exception—Reb Yaakov שליט"א, at the graveside. . . . Amongst the many buses chartered for Reb Shraga Feivel's funeral procession, the bus carrying Reb Yaakov somehow got lost and arrived at the cemetery after the internment. No eulogy was held, probably in keeping with Reb Shraga Feivel's innermost desires.

His last will to the leadership of the Mesifita is a revelation of his soul: "*Ir zolt hitten dos Hur Vahr un dos bissele Chassidus.*"—Safeguard the thread of truth and the touch of *Chassidus*.

### Epilogue

Two years later, a small group from the *Chevre Kadisha* (I was privileged to be among them) gathered at his gravesite to exhume the casket, and transfer it to Israel for burial. In 1948, when he was buried, travel to Israel was almost impossible so that at the internment, a *tnai* (conditional burial) had been made to allow disinternment in the future.

His grave in the Zichron Yaakov Cemetery in Bnei Brak, not far from that of the Chazon Ish, is next to that of Reb Eliyahu Dessler (*Michtav MeEliyahu*) and Reb Isaac Sher, Slabodker Rosh Yeshiva—men who changed the world.

His modest monument is only one stone high and bears the following inscription:

ל'רנ  
החסיד  
ר' שרגא פייוויל  
ב"ר משה זצ"ל  
מענדעלאווין  
עבד ה' באהבה שמח ביסורין  
הרכיז תורה ברבים  
ורבים השיב מעון  
נפטר ג' אלול תשי"ח באמריקה  
והובא לקבורה (בב"ב כא"י) י"א באב תשי"ח  
תנצב"ה

בחוריה! ניצט זיך אויס די צייט!

\* \* \*

"Shraga" means light—hopefully his *talmidim* and admirers will kindle new lights so that his efforts to illuminate the darkness will continue to shine on in the future, perpetuating the work of "*The Hofchi Hatzur*," the one who overturned the rocks to allow the light to enter.

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# Around the Sanctuary They Shall Dwell

*The concept of spiritual centrality in Jewish life as delineated by RABBI YAAKOV KAMENETZKY שליט"א, at the 61st National Dinner of Agudath Israel of America.*

**Rabbi Yaakov Kamenetzky** is a member of the *Moetzes Gedolei HaTorah* (Council of Torah Sages) of Agudath Israel of America.—Translated and prepared for publication by RABBI LAIBISH BECKER, director of *Zeirei Agudath Israel*.



*keeping the  
"Shevatim"  
in Egypt*

When "the children of Israel went out of Egypt with a mighty arm," and they approached the *Yam Suf*, with the Egyptian army in close pursuit, G-d cut a separate path in the sea for each *Shevet*—each tribe—opening its own road to safety and redemption. This was an affirmation of the *Shevatim* system which was created and perpetuated by *Yaakov Avinu*, who had conferred a different, distinctive blessing on each son. Thus was the integrity of each son and his progeny guaranteed, with each of *Yaakov's* sons' individual characteristics complementing those of the others, forming together one harmonious whole. Throughout their long sojourn in Egypt, the Jews took pains to maintain their family allegiances, keeping the *Shevatim* intact even to the moment of the Exodus.

This integrity of the *Shevatim* leads us to an interesting observation. *Sefer Bamidbar* commences with the counting of the Jewish nation in the beginning of the second year of their liberation from bondage. Following the census, the Torah recounts G-d's instructions for the proper placement of the *Degelim*—literally “flags,” referring to the four subsections, consisting of three *Shevatim* each, which flew their own group flags, and moved and camped as individual units. Why did G-d wait until the second year of the wandering in the desert to implement the *Degelim*? Surely they could have been placed in their respective locations grouped round the *Degelim* as soon as they left Egypt.

Actually, the *Degelim* could be understood as a factor for divisiveness amongst the Jewish people. Every grouping of three *Shevatim* became a separate unit unto itself. This factionalized the Jewish nation into four distinct geographical and administrative entities: Whereas the people formerly conceived of themselves as being part of a *Shevet*, that, with the others, constituted *Am Yisroel*, their self-perception then centered on their belonging to *Degel Machne Efraim* or *Degel Machne Reuven*, splintering the nation, as it were, into four entities.

To gain some insight into the Torah's dealing with this aspect of Jewish unity, both the chronological sequence of the events as well as the order in which the Torah deals with them must be taken into account.

*Sefer Vayikra* interrupts the historical narrative recorded in *Shemos*, which is resumed again in *Bamidbar*. The major part of *Vayikra* is concerned with the Divine service in the *Mishkan*, the traveling sanctuary in the desert.

The *Mishkan* was of crucial significance in preparing for the *Degelim* that followed, for the presence of the *Mishkan* actually negated the potential for divisiveness within *Klal Yisroel* that otherwise could have been engendered by the *Degelim*. Once they achieved *מבית למשכן ישכנו*, with the *Mishkan* serving as the central point around which the four *Degelim* of *Klal Yisroel* coalesce into a single unit, this became the means for achieving spirituality and Divine service as the nucleus of our peoplehood; under such circumstances, individual or group self-serving would not be a problem. Nation-wide unity could be preserved. With the *Mishkan* serving as a unifying spiritual factor, the *Degelim* could be instituted, for then all eyes would truly turn to the spiritual core of *Klal Yisroel*, represented by the *Mishkan*.

*Baruch Hashem*, we are privileged in our time to see the Torah leaders of *Klal Yisroel* gather together in one place through Agudath Israel, which serves as a spiritual unifying factor for our people. Indeed, Agudath Israel of America offers our people, diversified as they may be, a central spiritual core around which they can identify. The movement's leadership has adhered with extraordinary fidelity to the founding ideals of Agudath Israel and fulfilled its mandate in a manner consistent with its Torah *hashkofa*. It serves as a central address for *Klal Yisroel*, where workers for *Klal* labor to fulfill all of the community's needs with utmost devotion and no considerations of personal glory and honor. Indeed, parochial interests are put aside for the overriding benefit of the *Klal*.

If we would succeed in gathering together all Jews under one banner, the benefits would be incalculable. A taste of this was ours at the recent *Siyum Hashas* of *Daf Yomi* which imprinted on all who attended that gathering a lasting impression of *Kiddush Hashem*. The best format for *Klal Yisroel* to unite today is through the ranks of Agudath Israel of America. May it be so in *Eretz Yisroel* as well: that all *Klal Yisroel* become one without any element of disunity whatsoever.

why the  
year-long  
wait

a factor  
for divisiveness

interrupted  
by the *Mishkan*

spirituality  
as a unifying  
force

Agudath Israel—  
the spiritual  
core



*Camping in the Carpathian Mts. (circa 1930)\* ...  
... and in the Catskills today.*

Rabbi Nosson Scherman

## Summer: A Season for Growth

### *An Overview to Camping in America*



*\*Photographs of European camping are from the Orthodox Jewish Archives of Agudath Israel of America.*

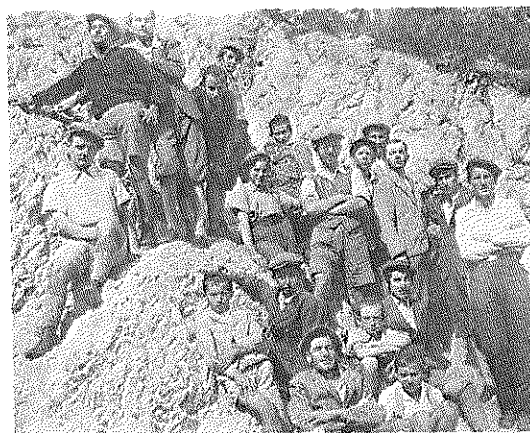
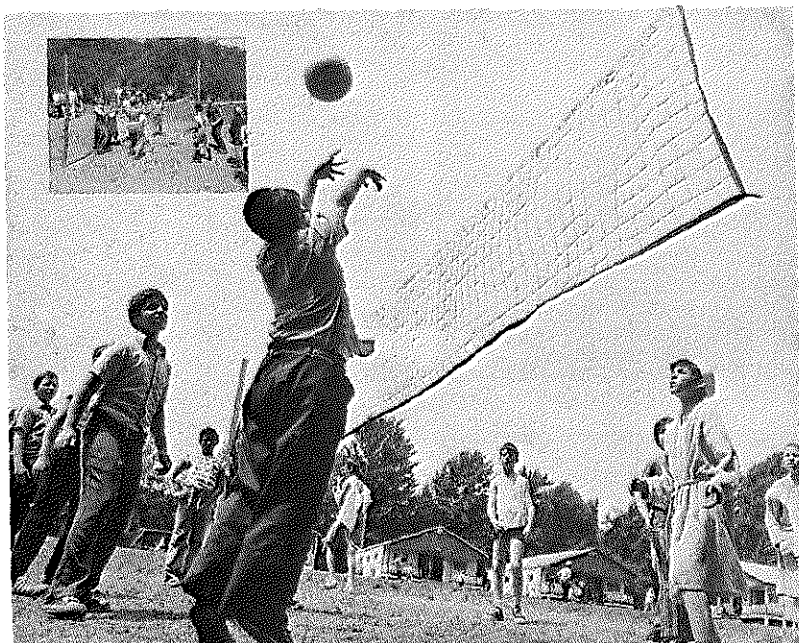
Summer vacations—especially the overly long ones inflicted on our children by the American educational system—are a time of both frustration and opportunity: Frustration, because ten weeks of unproductive amusement undo at least 25% of any school year's accomplishments; and opportunity because the long days, warming sun, and unpressured atmosphere open new paths into the mind and heart of a child.

**Rabbi Scherman**, editor of *ArtScroll-Mesorah*, editor of *OLOMEINU*, and a member of JO's Editorial Board, was a camper in Camp Mesifta, counselor in Camp Agudah, head counselor in Camp Torah Vodath, and is married to a former counselor in Camp Bnos.

Necessity, imagination, and affluence have fashioned the creature called "summer camping." Although it has had its pre-War, European forerunners, as evident in the pictures on these pages, in its present incarnation, camping is almost uniquely an American phenomenon.

Lest we make the mistake of decrying grass, trees, and free time as oppressive debris in the life of a child, let us recall the great and visionary educators and molders of yore who saw in the easy living of summer an unparalleled avenue for molding and educating through use of the subtle "book" of life, feeling, faith, and behavior. Sarah Schenirer in Poland, Reb Shraga Feivel Mendlo-





Clockwise from upper left: Camp Agudah, Ferndale, N.Y. (1976); (inset) Camp Agudah, Highmount, N.Y. (1942?); Camp Zeirei Agudah, Schwarzenbach (near Vienna—1934); Camp Sdei Chemed, Israel; Camp Agudah, Highmount (1950)—note then-Mayor Wagner seated in center, Reb Elimelech Tress ז"ל at left, founder of Camp Agudah and Camp Bnos.



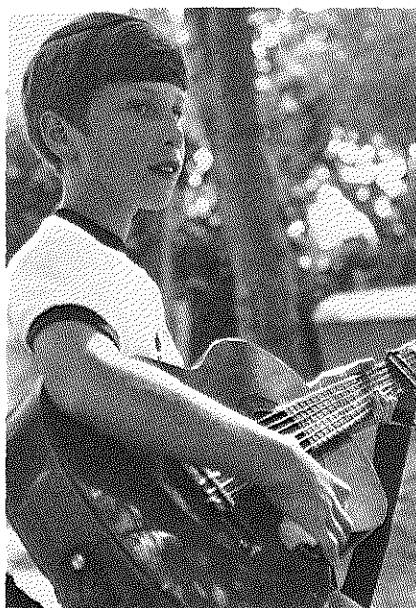
witz in America, and Rabbi Yaakov Teitelbaum in both Austria and America knew what could be done with a summer. They *did* it, and in the process, created precedents, set examples, and laid foundations for the *chinuch* phenomenon that camping has become in America. Such virtuosi of the soul as those mentioned, and many others who still exercise their spiritual magic, have played major roles in refining and enhancing Torah life in America through camping.

### Reaching the Untouched

All parents and teachers know that the home reaches

areas of the soul that the yeshiva cannot touch, and vice versa. The same is true of a properly conceived and executed camp program. The camaraderie and informality of an isolated spot of green have a potential for education that is different from any other. How does it work?

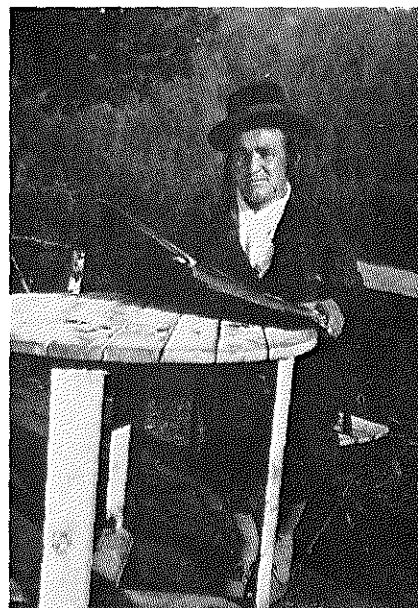
It may be the tranquility and implicit harmony of natural surroundings. (If so, they cast their spell in spite of the heel-dragging of city youth, many of whom still view a weekly nature hike as a sentence to exile from comforting concrete, relieved only by "the best Kosher Pizza this side of Thirteenth Avenue" awaiting the first



Above: Camp Sdei Chemed.



Vienna Agudah Youth Camp, Ferienheim, Austria (1930).



The late Emil Adler at Schwarzenburg (1934) in a play.



Zeirei of Vienna on visit to Zemmering (1934).

Below: Mesivta Rabbi Chaim Berlin's  
Camp Morris, in Woodridge, N.Y.

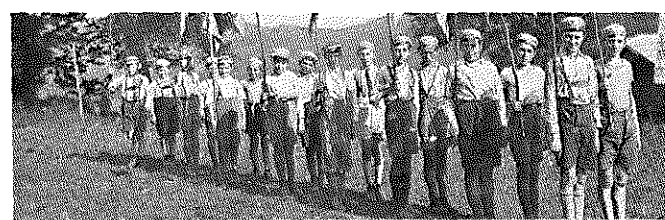


troops to reach Swan Lake. No matter, fresh air, blue skies, and clear waters voice constant, exhilarating testimony to the marvels of Creation, even if the kids pretend to block out the call with silly putty in their ears.) Somehow, in natural surroundings, and with like-minded friends, many kids permit themselves to feel more deeply, *daven* better, and explore ways to achieve self-awareness and self-improvement.

A well-run camping experience also promotes healthy independence and self-reliance for children who, for ten

months of the year, are dressed, fed, buttoned, and bused to school before they've managed to pry open their eyes. ("My Blimie made her bed? *Herself?*") More than this, girls' camps—and boys' camps, too, although to a lesser degree—distinguish themselves by expanding the horizons of both staff members and campers by showing how creative talent can be utilized in the service of Torah content and values. School is so overwhelmingly a scholastic experience that it allows little opportunity for growth and recognition for other types of talents





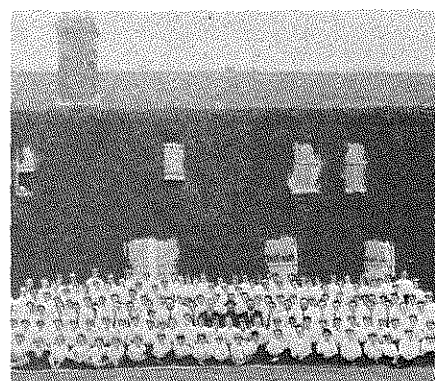
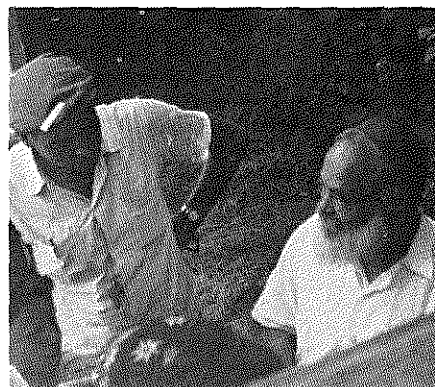
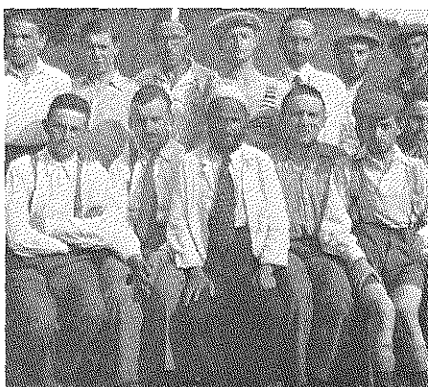
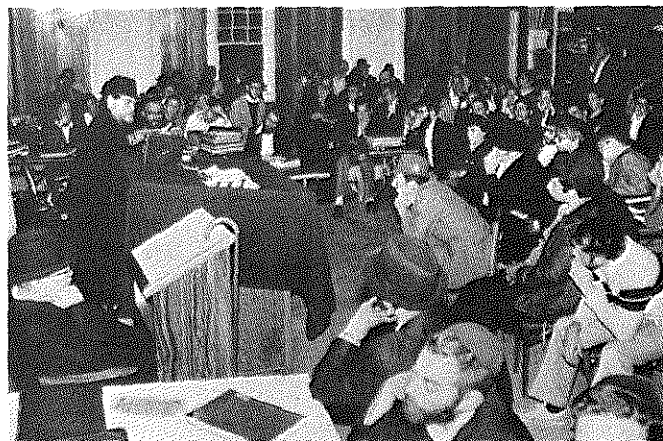
From top, left to right: Opening the season in Camp Munk by bringing the Sefer Torah to shul (1965); Camp Bnos (1978); Camp Agudah, Port Carling, Ontario (1972); Camp Mesifta, Ferndale (1957); domestic skills (visitors' day-eve), Camp Bnos; raising the flag, with Mayor Wagner, in Highmount (1950); Chassidei Gur, So. Fallsburgh, N.Y.; Camp Bnos (1950); Stollberg, Austria (1936).

and achievements—in sports, the arts, organizational skills, what-have-you—which are important for the full-blossoming of the personality of non-academic students and book geniuses alike. Color war, carnivals and night activities all have potential for creativity as well as expression of Jewish themes.

### A Sense of Family

Finally, camping brings together children of diver-

gent background and from various parts of the country. Originally, some say, religious summer camp was conceived of as a means for creating a sense of community among our youth—so lacking in the American scene, where we have so few genuine *kehillos*. Now that even the nuclear family is threatened, camp experiences offer children a sense of extended family often not available elsewhere . . . Mid-winter reunions thus often seem like family circle gatherings of old. So many



*Clockwise from top left: Visiting camp in Spital, Austria (1935)—second from right—Rabbi Shmuel Vosner (now in Bnei Brak), Rabbi Yaakov Teitelbaum, Rabbi Yeshaya Furst, Rabbi Blech; Rabbi M. Gifter, Camp Agudah (1983); Rabbi Yaakov Kamenetzky, Camp Mesifita (1957); Camp Agudah in Bexhill-on-Sea, England (1983); Rabbi Y. Ruderman and Rabbi Yaakov Perlow, Camp Agudah (1983); Rabbi Gifter, Agudah (1983); Rabbi Y. Teitelbaum, Schwarzenbach (1934).*

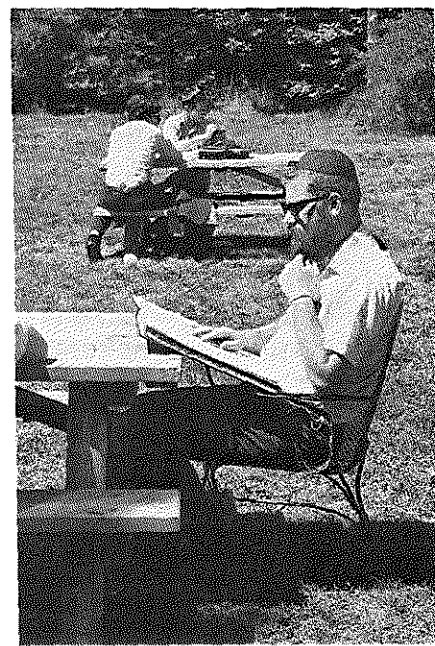
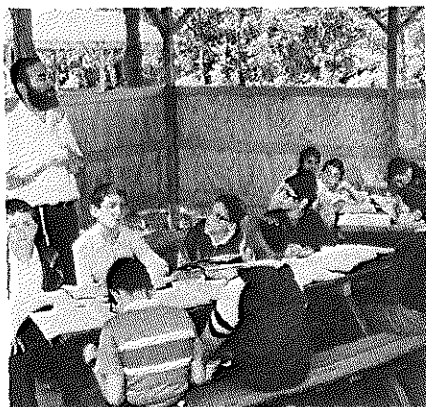
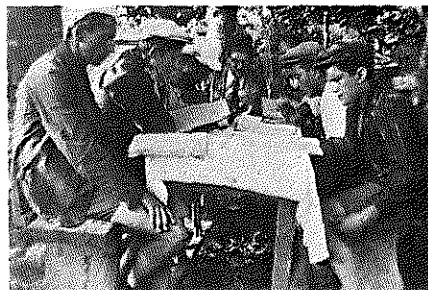
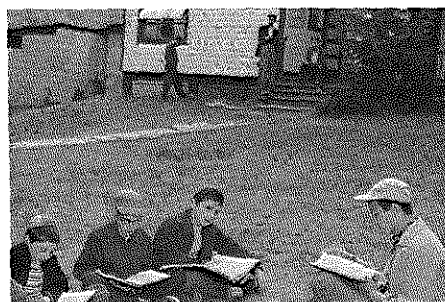
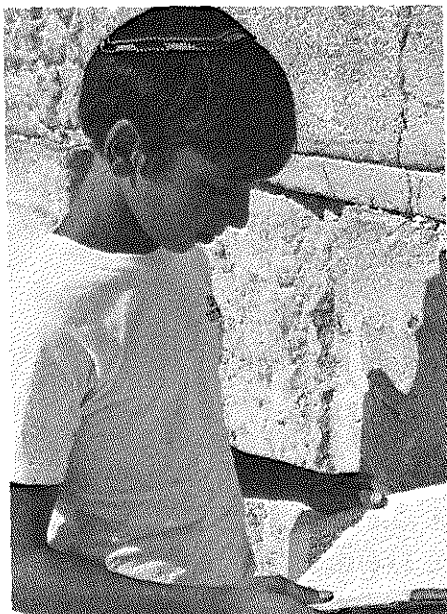
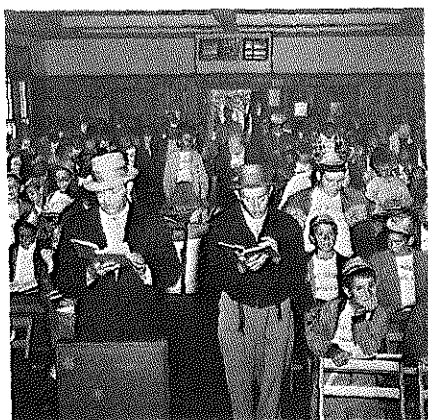
children—especially from smaller Jewish communities and from foreign countries—find the two summer months a mainstay for their Yiddishkeit the entire year.

### **From Sugar Coating to 100% Hasmada**

And the learning itself? Thirty-five years ago, only one camp in the United States had as much as an hour of learning as part of its program—and most people said it constituted an impossible demand to make of children

on vacation. Twenty years ago, the directors of a camp noted for its capital investments in athletic and other physical facilities found reason to declare, "The entire camp is a sugar-coated learning program." Indeed, a model for successful sugar-coating has been Camp Agudah's Cocoa Club, with young campers arising a half-hour before official wake-up to warm one hand with a mug full of hot chocolate and the other with a *Mishnayos*. Today, there is hardly a yeshiva-oriented boys camp with less than three hours a day of struc-





*Clockwise from top left: Camp Agudah, Ferndale, N.Y. (1960); Camp Sdei Chemed; Camp Sdei Chemed; Schwarzenbach (1934); Camp Morris; Mezuzah on new bunk, Munk (1963); new learning pavillion in Camp Agudah (1983); Camp Ma-Na-Vu, Liberty, N.Y.; center: Camp Agudah, Highmount (1950).*

tured teaching, a variety of programs to encourage extracurricular Torah study, and a *masmidim* program for older students who devote the major part of the day and much of the night to Torah study.

In fact, many urban yeshivos and large Chassidic groups maintain summer yeshiva programs in the country. As a result, many of our finest young talents prefer to spend the major part of their summers in full-time learning programs. While this deprives youngsters of the personal influence of potentially superior

counselors—and prevents the young scholars from achieving the specific growth that comes from teaching and living up to the example they must set for young campers—it is nonetheless an enormous boon for American Jewry that the yeshiva regimen continues uninterrupted all year round.

In sum, camping has come a long way. No longer is it simply a refuge from steaming asphalt and unwholesome city streets. It is a positive force for learning and total absorption of Torah's values in every area of life.



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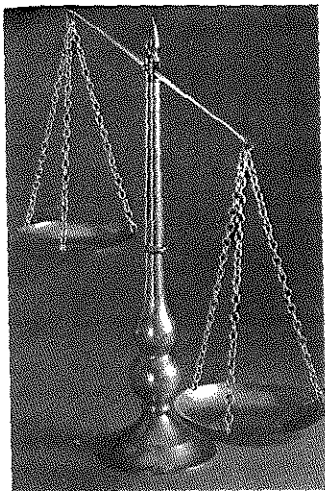
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Beryl Gershenfeld

# Hidden Beginnings: the Process of Discovery

## A Rosh Hashana Essay

### Why the Ambiguity and Concealment?

*Speak to the children of Israel saying: In the seventh month on the first day of the month, you shall have a day of rest, a *teruah* of remembrance, a holy gathering. (Vayikra 23:24)*

The reference to Rosh Hashana in *Chumash* is characterized by ambiguity and an air of concealment, in contrast to the other holidays, which are clearly described. The Torah informs us that the 14th day of Nissan is called Pesach, and we are commanded to eat matzah and retell the story of the Exodus on its first night. Similarly, the sixth day of Sivan is identified by the Torah as the holiday of the first fruits and a new offering. The 15th day of Tishrei, Succos, is also described in the Written Law with great clarity as the day we are obligated to sit in booths to remember our wanderings in the desert.

In contrast, the first day of the seventh month alone stands silent. What is the purpose of this day or rest? What is its name? What is a *teruah*? With what instrument do we sound this note? (*Ramban D'rush l'Rosh Hashana*). Yes, we know the day as Rosh Hashana, the Day of Creation, the Day of Judgment, but in the Written Law, its identity is well hidden; its name and essence, its majesty and its awe are revealed only in the Oral Law. Why? The written Torah is so explicit at times, why in regard to this crucial day is its call muted? (*Rabbeinu Bachya, Vayikra*).

To attempt to answer these questions, two preliminary concepts would require clarification: First, why is Rosh Hashana, the anniversary of creation, also the Day of Judgment? This duality is surely not haphazard coincidence, but must represent a complementary expression of one single concept. What interrelationship binds these two together? Second, what is the relationship between the Oral and the Written Law? Why did G-d purposely include vague and ambiguous passages in the Written Law—passages which require study of the Oral Law before their meaning becomes clear? He surely could have made the points clear in the Written Torah.

*Beryl Gershenfeld, a native of Philadelphia, lives in Jerusalem, where he studies in Machon Shlomo. He spends his summers in Moodus, Connecticut, where he is on the faculty of the Torah Institute.*

### Perceiving the Lack of Understanding

To arrive at some understanding of Rosh Hashana, the anniversary of creation, it would be in place to first investigate some basic principles inherent in creation. Consider, for example, something as commonplace as an apple's fall. What laws govern its downward movement? Does the apple "desire" to return to Earth, or does the Earth pull it? If the earth does indeed assert some sort of pull on the fruit, does this force extend beyond the apple, on through space? After years of thought and contemplation, we uncover an aspect of unity in natural occurrences—the laws of gravity. But we have only discovered a partial unity, for in spite of our searching and probings, we do not perceive the ultimate unity within Creation, G-d, the Creator.

Divine providence, G-d's judgment of His creation, is similarly concealed. Take an unusual event: One wins a lottery. The immediate results are obvious—happiness; but the intention behind the occurrence is obscure. Was it an accident, a "stroke of good luck"? Or was it G-d's involvement in human affairs? If one comes to the realization that—yes, it was an act of Divine intervention, one has yet to understand what took place: Was G-d responding with love to the winner and granting him a gift? Or was He acting in strict justice by rewarding him for past *mitzvos* in this world, so as to disinherit him from the eternal joys of the world-to-come? We may recognize the Hand of G-d in the events of Man, but we do not clearly see G-d, the Judge and Director of the world's events. (This question and much of the discussion that follows is based upon Rabbi Moshe Chaim Luzzatto's *Da'as T'vunos II*).

### Concealment and Creation

An essential aspect of G-d's creation, we find, is that it actually hides G-d's presence. Fittingly, the Hebrew word for world is *olam*, from the root for "hidden": *ne'elam*. Prior to creation, G-d's glory was readily apparent. It is only after creation that it is concealed and so we must search to find Him. On no level—neither the scientific nor the philosophical—are the laws that unite


the universe readily apparent. Much thought and contemplation are required before order and unity can be discovered. All the more so is this true in regard to religious principles that tie the world together.

G-d must have reason for creating a world that conceals His existence, and where but in the Torah would He reveal His reasons. The Torah's opening words reveal as they record: "*Bereishis bara Elokim*—In the beginning, G-d created . . ." *Bereishis*—There is a beginning. There is an order and a plan to creation. "*Elokim*"—this plan is rooted in *Elokim*, which denotes G-d's attribute of judgment, and this plan is purposely concealed.

*Elokim* is normally understood as the attribute of judgment; however, the term's essence is also rooted in the concept of concealment (*Nefesh Hachayim, Shaar III*).<sup>1</sup> This would imply then that His self-concealment and His attribute of judgment are deeply related to one another. What is this relationship?


### Judgment and Concealment: Giving to Receive

G-d's essential will is to be a giver. His desire is to grant man the greatest joy possible—that is, to reveal Himself to Man. Man, however, by virtue of being created in G-d's image, also has a strong desire to be a giver, and experiences shame when placed in the role of being a taker, receiving good he has not earned—*nahama de chasufa*, bread of shame. Would G-d have revealed Himself immediately and constantly to Man, the ultimate happiness would not have been achieved, for as glorious as this revelation would have been to man, his joy would have been tainted with the shame of having received charity, unearned pleasure. Thus, G-d developed a more complex creation based on His attribute of *din*, in which man would earn his closeness to G-d. The world and all the events man experiences are cloaked in an environment that requires man to exert himself to come close to G-d. This exertion and toil to find G-d gives man the feeling that he has "given" to the world and improved it, and thus proved himself worthy of achieving closeness to G-d. For this purpose, G-d chose to conceal Himself in the world and to wait for man to find Him. Concealment is rooted in G-d's attribute of justice.



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## Behind the Concealment

Within the external observable world—open to such a variety of interpretations, which G-d created to conceal His presence—is an internal plan, containing the unity inherent in the external world. The external creation cannot be probed and understood with the eyes alone. Revelation and wisdom are required to unite the diverse and unify the seemingly dissonant, and to reach these, the hidden plan must be consulted. Man actualizes his free will through thought and determination, and brings it to completion in deed; in this way, man justly earns his reward. He must toil in the world in which G-d's presence is concealed, endeavoring to find His essence.

The original Rosh Hashana—creation based on concealment—can be understood, then, if we take into account G-d's essential desire to create a world based on judgment. The advent of Rosh Hashana expresses these two concepts and their harmonious connection year after year. It is the Day of Creation, based on concealment and the Day of Judgment. How apt that *Tehillim* describes the day as *b'kese l'yom chagienu*—the holiday which is hidden (*Targum*), and as *chok l'Yisrael*, a statute for Israel. It is the day on which G-d's concealment began, when the physical world hid G-d's perfection . . . *Bereishis Bara Elokim*.

### Duality Through Ambiguity

The duality of Rosh Hashana now may become somewhat more clear; however, we do not yet understand the ambiguity of the verses in the Written Law. It would still seem that the Written Law could have explicitly informed us of these facts and called Rosh Hashana the Day of Concealment and the Day of Judgment. Why is the lack of clarity in the Written Law essential? What can we possibly gain from this concealment? Let us now investigate our second topic, the essential relationship between the Oral and the Written Law.

"G-d looked into the Torah and created the world." Torah is the blueprint employed by G-d when constructing the universe. This implies that every aspect of creation must be found in the Torah. Thus, within its words and spaces, in its letters and crowns, one would find G-d's desire to allow man to earn his reward in judgment, the duality inherent in requiring the creation of an external world of concealment and an internal world of unity.

It is in expression of this very theme, then, that Torah consists of the Written Law, an external plan which is

<sup>1</sup>The prophets often speak of retribution and judgment coming from the North because *din* is symbolized on the compass by the Northern Sky. The northern exposure never receives direct sunlight; the sun hides from that sector. The word for North—*tzafon*—is rooted in the word for hidden, *tzafun*, because G-d's presence is expressed there in an indirect manner.

clear to the eye, but confusing to the mind, and the Oral Law, hidden from the eye, but granting clarity to the mind. When studying the Written Law, it is often difficult to perceive the specific concept that a particular passage is communicating. There are many explanations possible for any given verse, and we are unsure of which is correct. The essence, the true meaning, is concealed. The Oral Law reveals the correct understanding of the text, and then the Written Law's message becomes clear. Torah, reflecting the attribute of *din*, was the basis of a material creation based on concealment. But the blueprint contains two faces—the cryptic and the revealed—and so too does the “construction” it produces contain these same two faces. This is the pattern of creation, G-d's design in all things.<sup>2</sup>

### Rosh Hashana's Hidden Agenda . . . Cryptically Expressed

Now perhaps we can gain some insight into why Rosh Hashana is described so ambiguously in the Written Law, for Rosh Hashana is the day of *din*, the anniversary of creation based on concealment. By its very nature, this day of Judgment should find its source in the “blueprint”—the Torah—in a similarly unrevealed manner. Its expression—which is muted in the revealed physical world so that man can have free choice and earn his reward—will be similarly muted in the Written Torah.<sup>3</sup> Its clarity of expression, the revelation of G-d's plan, is only disclosed in the Oral Law.

The ambiguity of the Written Law in relation to Rosh Hashana is now pregnant with meaning. It is our blueprint for dealing with the problems of life. Taken as they are simply stated, these verses concerning Rosh Hashana could be interpreted in any number of ways. We grapple with them to find meaning: What is the essence of the day? We are confused by the myriad alternatives;

<sup>2</sup>If one inquires more deeply into the act of creation, one will note that even the essential building blocks of creation, the Alef-Beis, exhibit this dual structure (revealed, with essence concealed). The Hebrew language is consonantal with vowels only to be inferred. The external face is easily perceived, but difficult to understand. The internal face, the vowels, clarify the external face, the consonants. For example, if English were a consonantal system, then we would be faced by the dilemma of “bt.” What does it mean? Bit, but, boat, bat, bite, boot? Only with the soul of vowels does its meaning become clear.

<sup>3</sup>We can now gain some insight into why *Olam Habba* is not explicitly mentioned in the Written Law. *Olam Habba* is the world of *din*, reward and punishment, G-d's inner plan toward which all of world history flows. If the reward and punishment were clearly expressed in the world, then man would have no test in life. To allow for free will and judgment, its revelation in the world is veiled. Similarly, its expression in the original blueprint, the Written Law, must also be veiled. The *Gemora* (*Pesachim* 50A) similarly notes that this world is a world of confusion (external plan) and that *Olam Habba* (internal plan) is one of clarity. In the Oral Law, *Olam Habba* is clearly stated, while in the Written Law, its expression is muted.

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unsure of beginning, unsure of an end. It is as though we are lost. By contrast, the Oral Law reveals the passage's meaning and we recognize the First of Tishrei as the Day of Creation. We recognize it as the Day of Judgment. And, in a broader context, we recognize the purpose of our existence.

### Learning the Process of Discovery

By hiding the essence of Rosh Hashana and prompting us to search for its essence, G-d, in effect, is forcing us to become aware of our intellectual stance in the world. The Torah has taught us more than mere facts—it has taught us the process of discovery, the process of renewal.<sup>4</sup> We lift our eyes from the text and realize that by their nature, the challenging problems of our world are parallel to the challenges of the text. The search in the Written Law had informed us that we live in a world of *din*, in which G-d's presence and the ultimate meaning of life are hidden. We recognize that the essence of Rosh Hashana—creation and judgment—is the challenge of life. This world, our world, is filled with hints and subtle statements, yet we have not searched for its soul. And, by the same token, we have not sought to discover its Oral Law. We must turn inward to find a new beginning. The time to do so is during the ten days designated for turning inward, beginning with Rosh Hashana.

Rosh Hashana, as vaguely communicated in the Written Law and piercingly enunciated in the Oral Law, awakens man to his own superficiality and directs him to search for his spiritual essence. In a world filled with concealment, we often see and do not think, because the soul becomes lost behind the corporeality of the body. If we but perceive the external world and fail to inquire and investigate the wisdom within it, we are estranged from the essence of creation. We have mentally slumbered... We must introspect. We must awaken and begin the new year.

*Even though the blowing of the shofar on Rosh Hashana is a 'gezeiras hakasuv,' there is a secret hidden in it: "Wake up you sleepers from your sleep and you slumberers from your slumber. Search your actions, do teshuva and remember your Creator."*

—RAMBAM, TESHUVA 3:6.

<sup>4</sup>The Torah notes the problem of personal confusion caused by a lack of introspection in the classic Gemara (Babba Basra, 78b) *Ba'u Cheshbon*, which stipulates the need for a daily personal accounting. Here again there appears to be a great divergence between the literal *p'shat* in the Written Law and the Oral Law's expression of our need to introspect daily. This divergence expresses the process involved in breaking the superficial vision of routinized living, relating only to the external reality. Just as one would never realize that this passage from the Written Law (*Bamidbar* 21:27) expressed this valuable concept, similarly without personal introspection one would miss many essential elements of his own personal essence. The Oral Law teaches us more than just facts. It makes us aware of the need for search and introspection, and reveals how the process of renewal begins.

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# A Strife-filled Summer in Jerusalem

## A Look at An Issue That Prompts Dozens of Questions, But Offers Few Answers

"In front of Mr. Tarler were a series of stone steps, uncovered in the digs since 1978, that archeologists believe led to the hilltop citadel from which King David ruled Judea.

"In the earth below, a 2,000 year-old seal was found bearing the name Gemaryahu Ben Shaphan, an Israelite official mentioned in Jeremiah, chapter 36. The question is what should take priority: religious values or the ability to uncover such relics."

(NY TIMES/Aug. 3)

### Who Will Direct the Conflict?

As predictable as the *chamsin* winds that waft unbearable heat through the streets of Jerusalem, July brings a covey of archeologists to the foot of the Temple Mount, and strife amongst the citizens of the City of Peace. While the *chamsin* winds are borne with *savlanut*, lightened by an awareness that the evenings will bring relief to the stone streets of the city, the strife can only inspire a dozen questions, questions that can be condensed into an overwhelming one that is bigger than this single issue: How will the conflicts between secular and religious forces in Israel be resolved, and by whom?

This particular incident, Chapter "1983" of an ongoing conflict, began with a determination by the *Asra Kadisha* (The Committee for Safeguarding the Sanctity of Burial Places) that parts of the Section "G" of the City of David dig were free of human remains, and could be explored with pickaxes and whisksbrooms, while other parts indisputably covered an ancient cemetery, and should not be violated. A cement retaining wall would be required to prevent spill-over from the sacrosanct area into the dig. The Ministry of Education signed an agreement with *Asra Kadisha* to adhere to these findings, but Yigael Shilo, in charge of the dig, instead erected a wooden retaining wall which, not incidentally, would permit easy access to forbidden grounds. . . . This violation of the signed agreement prompted some people to bring the cause to the streets, and gave impetus to others to pass a law that would better control the archeological situation. Which makes us wonder: Why couldn't Shilo consent to the full request as signed?

### Pressing the Issue

The Israeli media picked up the confrontation and decried the "obscurantism" of the Orthodox who would block "an unobstructed window to the past because of their narrow considerations," distorting the conflict so as to make it appear that the Orthodox are anti-archeology, when they are only pro-*kavod hames*, but back other explorations into the past. Let us ask the media: Do they really believe that inanimate stones are a more eloquent link to King David than the fervent recitation of his *Tehillim* by people to whom his words are alive, and who anxiously await the coming of his progeny?

In the meantime, the Agudath Israel Knesset representation brought up a bill that would remove archeological digs from the jurisdiction of the Education Ministry and put it under religious control. But the digs still continued.

An *Asra Kadisha* delegation was received by the Gerer Rebbe, Rabbi Simcha Bunim Alter, who encouraged all efforts to halt the dig—even to increase prayer on behalf of their cause—but not to resort to physical force. The same directive was strongly voiced by the Ponevezher Rosh HaYeshiva, Rabbi Elazar Shach, and was repeated by numerous Yeshiva heads and religious leaders. Nonetheless, on Rosh Chodesh Av (July 18), Neturei Karta spokesmen called for a public demonstration to march from Mea Shearim to the dig site to say *Tehillim*, and issued a plea for 1,000 volunteers to go to jail, if necessary, for the honor of those buried in Area "G". (By contrast, a 4 a.m. *Tehillim* gathering convened by the Aida Hachareidis one week later with a police permit took place without incident.)

Predictably, the police came out in full force to prevent the unlicensed march. Predictably, some demonstrators hurled stones at the police from an adjacent rooftop and set garbage receptacles and rubber tires afire. And, beyond any precedent, the police responded with unrestrained fury, swinging clubs, indiscriminately bashing heads, making wholesale arrests. In addition, one group of police hurled tear gas bombs into the Mirrer Yeshiva, five blocks from the scene, while others gassed private homes in the Batei Warsaw section. Yet others invaded the Kamenitz Beis Midrash several blocks distant, and dragged away students who—in compliance with their Rosh Yeshiva's directives to shun the demonstration—were sitting and learning. T.V.

Ezriel Toshavi observes the Israeli scene for readers of THE JEWISH OBSERVER.

screens and newspaper photographs recorded scenes of a policeman beating a woman, blood flowing from her brow, another seizing a man by his beard and *payos*, pulling him into a police van. Scores of innocent bystanders were arrested and kept in prison cells with terrorists and street criminals for over a week. . . .

It was not until the Agudath Israel Knesset members held a lengthy meeting with Prime Minister Begin (who expressed shame over the police's unbridled brutality), threatening to bolt the coalition if the situation would not improve radically, that the prisoners' situation began to change. Prime Minister Begin, in turn, pressured Police Minister Dr. Josef Burg to get the prisoners released. This took some prodding, for Burg was being toasted in the media for his strong arm tactics against the restless residents of Mea Shearim. In fact, he was joined by his fellow National Religious Party Knesset members in "strongly condemning the disgraceful acts perpetrated by the so-called ultra-Orthodox"—but not a word did they utter about police excesses. . . . Ultimately, the prisoners were released on bail only after Agudah Knesset members exerted additional pressure.

### Why the Disputes Hit the Street

We are not asking why the Neturei Karta brought the dispute to the violence-prone streets. Their ranks include hot heads who are only too anxious to polarize Israeli society, and will not let an opportunity slip by to antagonize the cops, and trigger massive retaliation of a nature to make any religious Jew despise the government. Their motivation is obvious. They cannot tolerate the gains that are being realized for religious causes within the system, along guidelines formulated by *Gedolei Yisroel*—gains that include the virtual elimination of the draft of religious women into the army, the legal stop to unauthorized autopsies, markedly increased funding of yeshivos, and the like. Such achievements put the lie to their claim that working within the system brings with it compromise of principle and sacrifice of gains possible through street confrontation. So with a good cause, peppered with some well-aimed stones, they can trigger massive indiscriminate police brutality—a sure-fire way to radicalize the Torah community. Then, with more than a little help from the religion-bating Israel press, the gap between the religious and secular communities becomes an unbridgable chasm.

### Where Are the Liberals?

Looking at the police record, one cannot help but wonder: *Why?* Why is blood of religious Jews *hefker*—free for the letting at the whim of brutal police? Why is there no format for civil complaint against wanton police brutality, in marked contrast to other Western democracies? Why are innocents kept in jail for days on end without bail? By what right do *Shomrei Hagvul* (Border

Police) enter a hospital and drag out a friend of an ailing yeshiva student for no crime other than visiting a prisoner?

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Moreover, where are the liberals, who cry so eloquently in defense of poor Arabs who suffer "massive retaliation" for the sins of a few criminals? Where is their outcry of "prejudicial treatment" when a busload of "black" passengers (men in black hats, black suits, white shirts, and modestly clad women) from Bnei Brak is sent back from the Kikar HaShabbos terminal because its passenger load (in their unquestioning judgment) forms a potential threat to the peace? Why do the bleeding hearts suddenly fall silent when their own brethren—religious Jews—are being subject to treatment identical to or even worse than that imposed on Hebron's Arabs?—Because the "crime" of the "black" populace was committed for the sake of religious principles, which the liberals disavow, rather than for political agitation, with which they can identify?

### NRP's Middle Initial

Why do the Government Ministers from the National Religious Party (Mizrachi) fail to live up to the implications of their middle name? Why is Education Minister, Zevulun Hammer, who is in charge of archeological digs, more responsive to the preferences of Yigael Yadin, Shilo, and their colleagues to dig as they wish, than to the religious prohibition against disturbing graves? How can Yehuda Ben Meir call upon the police "to use all means to put an end to this disgrace" (i.e., the Mea Shearim demonstration),\* knowing full well what "all means" can entail? Why does NRP's organ, *Hatzofeh*,

*\*Quoted in Jerusalem Post, July 17-23*

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Cover of NRP pamphlet: "Judaism and Violence..."

protest the excesses of Mea Shearim kids by piously declaring that: "Judaism and violence are incompatible," while it fails to object to police brutality by declaring: "Police protection and violence are incompatible"? Why does Dr. Burg's Ministry of Police flood Mea Shearim with an army of police, in contrast to their total lack of response to the violence in Mekor Baruch, eight blocks to the north, where secular youth gangs threw smoke bombs into the home of the Belzer Rebbe? The youths were protesting against the Rebbe's role in "tipping" the formerly secular neighborhood toward a religious majority. Did the incident prompt the government to add police protection?—not one additional officer. Hardly anyone in the media even bothered to express shock—only sympathy for the outnumbered secular residents of the area!

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In an interview with *Koteret Reishit*, well-known Israeli archeologist Dov Ben-Meir declared: "We intended to dig in our area, which was 150 meters from Area G. We had not yet begun when Rabbi Shimon Anshin of Asra Kadisha appeared and ordered us to stop—there were graves ahead. I proposed that we continue to dig until it is apparent that we've reached graves, at which point we would stop. We wrote out these terms and signed the document—Professor Mazar and I. After several hours of excavations, we came across marked graves . . .

"Later when the controversy over Area G broke out and archeologists signed a claim that there is no cemetery there, I did not sign. I personally had come across graves in direct line with Area G."

reprinted in *HAMODIA*  
12 Menachem Av/July 22

### More Questions

Why must a country in siege fail to recognize that internal harmony is at least as important as international peace, and that one Jew will never come to respect another Jew until he comes to respect "the Jew" in his past, "the Jew" in his national identity, and "the Jew" within himself? When will the secular Jew learn that the

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two terms are self-contradictory? . . . When will the hotheads who seek to precipitate violence—and their well-meaning followers—learn that the roads to achievement are paved, *not* with good intentions alone, nor with rocks hurled from the rooftops? The police carry heavier truncheons, and use them with greater force. The road is paved with the "footsteps of those that preceded them," the *Gedolei Yisroel* who will fight valiantly for their rights, but not with violence. 7

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# second looks at the jewish scene

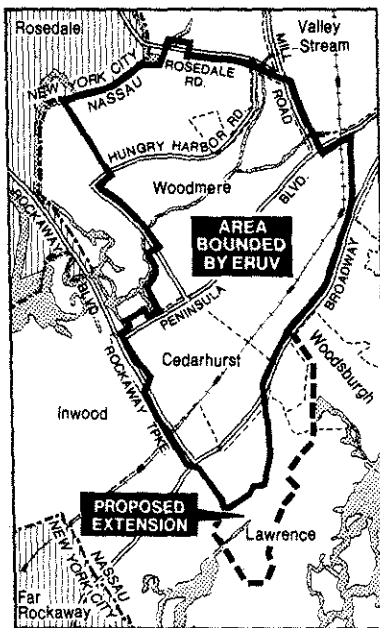
## Liberal Judaism or Jewish Liberalism?

For years, Reform Jews have laid claim to guarding the ethical imperatives of Judaism as the essence of "prophetic Judaism," and as a result have espoused every liberal cause that crossed the Op-Ed pages of our times as being authentically Jewish. But they divorced humanistic sentiments from their Torah sources, and this is in itself, a distortion of truth, and contrary to Judaism. Some of the results of this Liberalism-Equals-Judaism credo, taken on their own terms, have been downright ridiculous. (In support of Cesar Chavez's attempts to unionize California farm workers, they declared: "Lettuce picked by non-union hands is *treifa*.") Other times, the liberalism espoused by the Reform has been anti-Jewish; would it come from other sources, it would be labeled Anti-Semitic.

### The Nylon Trip-Wire

One case in point is a projected extension of an existing *eiruv* to serve the Lawrence area of Long Island. To incorporate the additional area, use would have to be made of public utility poles, and this could only be done with the cooperation of the local municipality.

Enter the local political leadership: The village attorney and all five members of Lawrence's Village Council are Reform Jews; and suddenly the municipality is wary of giving sanction to something they see as purely religious. After all, liberal Judaism—or is it Jewish liberalism?—which has rejected all that is sacred in Judaism, must at all costs



The New York Times/May 10, 1983

### Proposal would increase area bounded by eruv by 10 percent.

protect the sacred separation of church and state. No ordinance should be passed to facilitate the practice of any religion. So last winter, when the question first arose, the board members turned for advice to J. Irwin Shapiro, a former Federal judge who now practices law in Mineola, L.I. In a 20 page memorandum, he wrote that "it would be constitutionally impermissible" for the board to approve the application because of the "principle and primary effect" of doing so would be "to permit public property to be used to advance a nonsecular interest."

Rabbi Gilbert Klaperman—Rabbi of Congregation Beth Sholom, which established the existing *eiruv*

## REFORM JUDAISM

To the Editor of The Jerusalem Post

Sir,—I read the comments of Rabbi Balfour Brickner (A Divided Vision, *The Jerusalem Post*, July 4, 1983) with great amusement. Unwittingly, he serves as the best spokesman for the demise and confusion within Reform Judaism.

Having been raised in America's Reform movement during the 1960's, I recall the pulpit and classroom emphasis on civil rights, Vietnam and the like, while Jewish issues and understanding were sadly neglected. Since then, I have joined the thousands of Reform dropouts to learn what Rabbi Brickner's movement failed to teach.

Values such as Rabbi Brickner's are as devoid of Jewish content as the social action causes he thrives upon. His stance on aliya to Israel as "nonsense" should serve as a clue to his sense of identity.

While the exigencies of the Reform movement have consistently failed to leave room for religious expression, those of use who have taken the path of traditional Judaism have found ample opportunity for secular expression as well.

Jerusalem DAVID HYMAN

in 1973—who teaches law at Hofstra University and is also president of the Rabbinical Council of America, countered that the Constitution permits "passive accommodation" so long as there is "no entanglement" between a municipality and a petitioner.

"The wire's purpose is not religious or social," Rabbi Klaperman said. "All it does is enable a person to move."

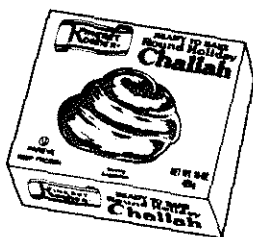
The basis for this counter-argument is obvious: The *eiruv* construction would entail no expenses to the government, no establishment of any religious group, no support of any religious activity. Just permission to string up a nylon cord. But with the *eiruv* rises the spectre of young Orthodox couples pushing baby carriages on the Jewish sab-



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### REFORM: THE BT FEAR

From time to time, the Reform leadership seems to betray a nervousness regarding defectors to Orthodoxy. Hence their nastiness toward *baalei teshuva*. Case in point: Their defense of their opposition to the Agunah Bill is based on the State's alleged coercion of a non-Orthodox Jew to issue a *get* when divorcing his wife. Since this is obviously not the case, the explanation (in an interview with Steward Ain in the *L.I. Jewish World*, Aug. 5-11) was: "The bill requires a Reform Jew who does not believe in a *get* to grant a *get* if his wife insists on it because she is going to marry an Orthodox Jew."

Against the Agunah Bill?  
Blame the *baal teshuva* again.

bath, making their presence an obvious feature in a heretofore WASP-dominated suburbia.

Can Jews who march for black rights in Selma, Alabama, who rally for Gay Rights in New York's Sheridan Square, who lobby for Chicano rights in Texas—can such Jews fight other Jews just to spare themselves the embarrassment of association with Jewish-looking Jews? For the sake of "liberalism"—some even call it Judaism—why not?

### The Agunah Law

More recently, and of greater significance, we have the Orthodox community's valiant effort to relieve the plight of the *agunah*—a woman whose husband has left her but has refused to issue her a *get*—a religious divorce, which is a must for her to be able to remarry.

Agudath Israel of America's Commission on Legislation and Civic Action invested years of meticulous work, with guidance from leading *halachic* authorities and the coopera-

tion of some of the country's most respected legal experts, in drafting a bill to get the *agunah* off the hook. This has finally been accomplished by making the effectiveness of a legal divorce dependent on the parties to the divorce attesting to the absence of any further "barriers to remarriage"—that is, religious divorce, where required.

Introduced to the New York State Assembly by Assemblyman Sheldon Silver, and to the Senate by Senators Martin Conner, John Marchi, and Norman Levy, it passed both houses with near unanimity. Before Governor Cuomo signed the bill into law on August 8, he received a letter, later printed in the Letters page of *The New York Times* and released to the entire press, from the Reform leadership—the vice president of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations and the director of the New York Federation of Reform Synagogues. They asked the Governor to veto the bill because of their "deep concern" about the legislation, which they described as a "blatant violation of the principle of separation of church and state." The bill is a "clear attempt to use the authority of the state to enforce a religious requirement," they claimed.

They added that the bill, if enacted, would be similar to "requiring a baptismal certificate to enter public school... a clear infringement of the first Amendment to the Constitution of the United States and also of the New York State Constitution."

But their arguments are specious. The law is simply designed to make certain that one party to a divorce not secure a strangle-hold on the other party's ability to remarry. The same way in which the government recognizes the binding nature of a religious wedding ceremony, so too would it take into account the religious divorce. The law will not affect the dissolution of Reform marriages. It would put no universally applied requirements for divorce on the general populace. It would only affect Orthodox Jews and others who

believe in the validity of a *get*—and it would help some innocent women move out of a desperate situation and put together their lives after undergoing a tragic phase.

By what stretch of its definition are these misled guardians of the Constitution promoting "Judaism"? And since when is protecting the letter of a man-made constitution more important than helping fellow human beings overcome hardship (being "locked-in" on Sabbath in

Lawrence), or more humanistic than putting an end to a personal tragedy (being locked in an unhappy marriage)? How can these champions of Women's Rights, who backed a boycott of those states that did not rat-

ify ERA, suddenly flip-flop on this issue of such importance to women who are being exploited? Do these die-hard positions in any way reflect either liberalism or Judaism? **E**

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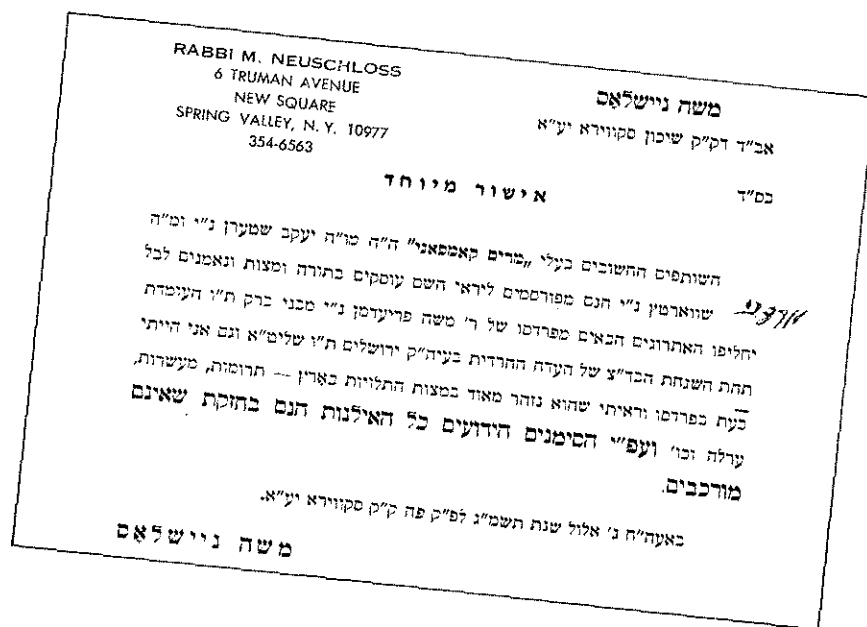
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## El Al and Shabbos: Chapter Two

It was just over a year ago that an Israeli-government-appointed committee determined that the suspension of El Al service on *Shabbos* and *Yom Tov* would have disastrous economic consequences and would cost the financially shaky airline about \$40 million annually. Other estimates ran as high as \$200 million.

The *Moetzes Gedolei HaTorah* (Council of Torah Sages) of Agudath Israel did not listen to the prophets of doom. In a strongly worded decision, they requested that "Jews in Israel and the Diaspora stop flying El Al" until the Airline live up to its responsibility as the Airline of the Jewish nation and cease all flights and other activity on *Shabbos*—even if it meant large financial losses. After all, there are principles that transcend El Al's monetary considerations. (And there was a coalition agreement that said that El Al would abide by these principles.)

The government acquiesced. The El Al workers in the end were forced to give in. El Al stopped flying on *Shabbos*.

After a rocky, strike-marked period, which closed down the airline for half a year, El Al took off again—six days per week. All over the world—even in Frankfurt, Paris, and Zurich, where Saturday had been extremely busy—a "closed for the Sabbath" sign hangs on locked doors.

So what happened? Did the airline collapse from the financial bur-

den? The latest reports are that El Al is having the most successful year in its history. El Al planes fly full—in fact, very often additional planes must be rented from other airlines to satisfy the demand. *Shomrei Torah U'Mitzvos* go out of their way to fly the airline that keeps *Shabbos*. And there no longer is the terrible financial drain of paying triple-rate overtime wages to employees who work on *Shabbos*.

David Schnieder, general manager of El Al for North and Central America commented, "Since we have returned to flying in February, the Jewish community has responded

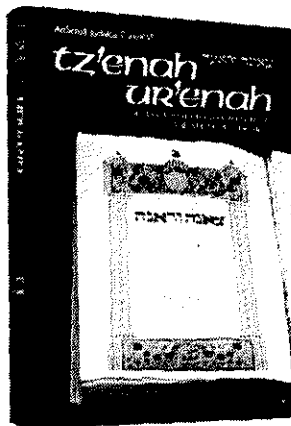
positively and our passenger loads are far above our expectations." He attributed the tremendous response from the Jewish community to the fact that El Al has now closed its operations on *Shabbos*.

An El Al officer in Israel, preferring anonymity, was overheard recently saying, "I don't know how to thank the *Moetzes Gedolei HaTorah* for the service they did for us. I never believed that we could do as well as we are doing now."

Chapter Two to *Shabbos* in the Skies: El Al's stocks are rising. Chapter Eleven is out.

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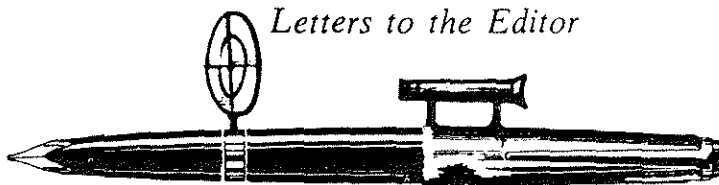
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## Letters to the Editor

### Author Questions Reviewer's Assessment of "Israel Salanter"

The following letter was received in response to a review published in THE JEWISH OBSERVER, September 1982. Unfortunately, its publication was unduly delayed.

#### To the Editor:

Due apparently to delays in the mail, your review of *Israel Salanter: Text, Structure, Idea* just reached me in Jerusalem.

I would have thought that of all publications in the world, *The Jewish Observer* would have been the last to question the propriety of subjecting the words of a *gadol ba-Torah* to "exacting, almost microscopic analysis." Is that not precisely what Jews are supposed to do to the writings of *gedolei Torah*? Is that not exactly what the learning of *Gemora*, *Rashi*, *Tosfos*, *aharonim*, etc. is all about?

If you reviewer, who complains that he did not find any "dynamic" stories in *Israel Salanter*, cannot locate Reb Yisroel's "living personality" in the microscopic analysis of his writings, then I respectfully suggest that your reviewer understands neither the nature of inspiration in Torah learning nor the importance and role of *musar* particularly and Jewish thought generally in a Torah *hashkafa*. *Israel Salanter* showed a new side to Reb Yisroel—Reb Yisroel not the *tzaddik* but the thinker, the truly Jewish psychologist of the modern era. His writings are difficult, complex, and profound. One cannot do them justice by oversimplifying or popularizing them and still less by ignoring them. I am saddened that *The Jewish Observer* seems willing to recommend only books which are biographical or light reading, and seems unable to perceive the "living personality" of a *gadol ba-Torah* only in stories about or sayings by him,

but not in the analysis of his writings. Needless to say, not just the halakhic writings but all of the writings of a *gadol ba-Torah* are infinitely precious, and do not Chazal say that one should not make "souls" out of *tzaddikim*, but that their words are their remembrance?

Your reviewer's view that the terminology and categories of *Israel Salanter* are alien to him (no examples given) seem to represent nothing more than the reviewer's own inability to appreciate just what the careful, loving, and, yes, microscopic analysis of the words of a *gadol ba-Torah* entail.

(Rabbi) HILLEL GOLDBERG  
Author: *Israel Salanter—Text, Structure*,  
28 Cheshvan, 5783  
Jerusalem/Denver

#### Our reviewer replies:

I regret that my very brief remarks—which were perhaps too concise—lent themselves to misunderstanding, as evidenced by Rabbi Goldberg's letter.

I did not object to a painstaking analysis of Rabbi *Israel Salanter's* writings per se. But I felt that the terminology and, occasionally, the categories of analysis were drawn from an academic world essentially different from Torah thought, and—as a result—Rabbi *Israel Salanter's* thought occasionally appeared in a conceptual framework not appropriate or necessary for it. (As a possible example, take this passage from p. 68: "Rabbi *Israel* discusses Divine modes of interplay with man not only abstractly, as theology, but also historically, as determinants of Jewish history. Applied abstractly, the *Salanterian* concept of Divine modes of interaction with man yields a theodicy. Applied

historically, these same modes yield a philosophy of history, understood as one of the two branches of speculative philosophy of history, the elaboration of the main moving powers of history.")

As a further consequence, the reader, who is anyway faced with the intrinsic difficulty of the subject matter, may well feel frustrated in seeking to penetrate to the vibrant essence of Rabbi *Israel Salanter's* teachings. In this connection, it is important to note that, while Rabbi Goldberg's book is dedicated to "the ethics and theology" of Reb Yisroel, he has chosen to deal with his thought insofar as it is reflected in his writings. This was his perfect right; but Reb Yisroel's life, the stories about him and the sayings of his, are not merely revealing of the *tzaddik* but also of the thinker and teacher—and a student of Rabbi *Israel Salanter's* thought may well feel the direct experience of the Master's dynamic and vital impact more strongly in some of his epigrams than in the present volume. That does not mean that only "story books" should be written; but it raises the question whether such a profound analysis of Reb Yisroel's thought, certainly most worthwhile and praiseworthy, necessarily had to be done and presented in this precise form.

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## **Pittsburgh—Fertile Host Community For Advanced Torah Study**

To the Editor:

We were deeply moved—and grateful—by the lead article in your Pesach issue regarding one man's experience with the Pittsburgh Kollel.

The Kollel, however, does not and cannot, as a rule, exist in a vacuum. There is a good deal of ground work that must precede it.

The local Rabbinate and congregations not only took the lead in actually founding the Kollel, but through their own extensive educational and outreach work, prepared the community for the logical next step, e.g. the Kollel.

It was the taste of the outreach and educational efforts of these rabbis and congregations, as well as the over-three-decades of dedicated

work by the two day schools, Yeshiva Achei Tmimim and Hillel Academy, and the several years that the Yeshiva Gedola functioned in this city that whetted the appetite of the community for more.

Mention should be made of the dynamic Rabbi Eliyahu Safran of Congregation Poale Zedeck, who took the lead in the effort for creating the Kollel and whose Poale Zedeck Yeshiva—an ongoing series of courses at the *Shul* for the public—anticipated some of the outreach work of the Kollel and remains active in reaching out to the community: of Rabbi Bernard A. Poupko of Congregation Shaare Torah, Senior Rabbi of this city, actively teaching and educating, who gave his support, prestige and effort to the Kollel; and last, but certainly not least, the well-known highly-respected and popular Rabbi Irvin Chinn of the sister community of White Oak-McKeesport, who brought his community into this effort, and some of whose members

contributed the largest single portion of the seed money, and whose own many years as Rabbi and teacher helped lay the groundwork for the Kollel concept.

Its worth mentioning that a Kollel by its nature is inherently ecumenical and neutral and strengthens the unity of any community.

There are no doubt situations where these do not exist in sufficient measure, and where a Kollel must be the entire catalyst for changing the complexion of the community. But in cities such as ours where there are dedicated rabbis, a few strong day schools, and certainly if there is also some kind of Institute for higher Torah learning, a Kollel can, and indeed must, be created. The city will never be the same, and neither will be countless individuals, such as the author of your article.

(Rabbi) SHAUL KAGAN  
Rosh Hakollel  
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Corrections:  
JO, April (Shavuot) '83

The Reference to *Gevuros Hashem* in the footnote on page 7 should have specified Chapter 31.

Mrs. Perr (page 39) was identified incorrectly; she is a former member of the faculty at Torah Academy for Girls, and currently serves as a guidance counselor there.

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### Lesson From Lebanon: Indifference To World Opinion

To the Editor:

In response to your (March 1983) article 'Jewry-Guilty of being Jewish' concerning Agudath Israel's position of the Kahan Commission of Inquiry, I would like to offer the following comments:

I believe that the real value of the 'inquiry' rests not in what the outside world does with the findings but rather what *we* choose to do with them. I fully acknowledge that it would be impossible to deny that 'external pressures' influenced the Begin government in calling for the commission; but I do believe that present in the minds of the vast majority of Israelis there existed a need and a desire—a responsibility of conscience—to openly examine the events that shocked us all.

I say: Let the outside world exploit the findings and let them hurl their biased accusations and condemnations. By now we should all be accustomed to such political obfuscations and self serving rhetorical distortions. Why should we concern ourselves with this almost inherent

insidious stream of insults and vomitive slander? Do we have to answer to these self appointed tribunals of moral conduct?

I firmly believe that it was absolutely vital for the State of Israel to openly and publicly demonstrate both the courage and conviction to establish such an examination of the Beirut incident. Maybe we did say the "Viduy" prayer aloud but to have done otherwise would have been a demanding, adverse negation of our Judaic values and virtues.

BRYAN GOLD

San Luis Obispo, Calif.

### Editorial Reply:

As accustomed as we are to other nations' "self-serving rhetorical distortions" regarding Jewry, and as futile as the pursuit of universal acceptance may be, we still must not needlessly expose ourselves to condemnation by other nations. We are in *golus*, Statehood notwithstanding. It is foolhardy to gratuitously hold ourselves up to condemnation of the very nations whose support is so essential to the security of Israel. Independence of mind cannot always enjoy the luxury of public proclamation, or self-examination. —N.W.

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### The Old Mom: Still With Us, Sort of

To the Editor:

Re: "They Don't Make Moms the Way They Used To" and the subsequent exchange of letters:

The original essay by Mrs. Perr was fascinating. Mrs. Perr is agonizing over an age-old dilemma inherent in every human, particularly us Jews. Everybody is a blend of past and present; but who, besides us, holds on to the past so tenaciously? We are enjoined against changing even one syllable of our teachings, even to the extent of being taught "*Minhag Yisroel din hu*"—a custom is as binding as law. It is interesting, therefore, to see the tools of the

present being harnessed onto the concepts of the past, and moving together into the future (as witness Torah Tapes, Dial-a-Daf, computers in yeshivos, etc.).

I marveled at the art work described by Mrs. Perr. Those girls showed remarkable sensitivity. By making scenery out of rope to symbolize חבלי משיח they were able to translate deep feelings into art. I don't remember having such sensitivity at that age. Someone must be doing something right with those girls!

But why is everyone so worried about the new "Mem"? Surely it's only an art form, and in regular usage, the girls still turn to the old "Mem" (there's your old-new blend!). Is a new "Mem" really a symbol of

drastic change and worthy of debate? Working with young girls, I have found, as I'm sure Mrs. Perr has, that there are far more important issues on which to take a stand than the form of the letter Mem. Is it really so important? Does a new "Mom" necessarily follow? And finally, do I detect a hint of disapproval in the educator's connection of a new Mem and a new Mom?

Let's take a look at the Moms of today. Are they new, or old, or do we have our blend? I think the latter. These women carry an age-old responsibility and value system while under the enormous pressures and influences of the present. These women cook and clean and bake and sew while singing to and teaching their *pitzelach*. At the same time, they are either holding jobs outside the home to help their husbands cope with today's tremendous financial pressures or they are the pillars of the *tzeddaka* and yeshiva organizations. And watch these women flock to the auditoriums for the *shiurim!* from *halacha* to *Mussar*; from *Shmiras Halashon* to *Chumash*; from *hashkafa* to courses on improving family relationships—the halls are packed with women constantly striving higher for self improvement.

There's your old-new Mom! No disapproval needed, obviously. Combining the new responsibilities with the old values and teachings, she moves into the future confidently, creatively, and with sensitivity.

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### OK For New "Mems", But Bring Back the Old Moms

To the Editor:

Several things in Mrs. Perr's article "They Don't Make Mems the Way They Used To" (Dec. '82) disturbed me. She so aptly states, "The old is what we are . . . it is what we wish to transmit unadulterated to our children." When will we realize that, amongst the multitude of mothers who yearn to be old-fashioned, many squelch that yearn-



ing; and they are the very reason children cannot gain fascination with the old.

We have deviated so far from our own mothers, who did not *yearn* to be "terribly old-fashioned"—or better yet, wonderfully old-fashioned—but who indeed *were* so. They filled the tummies of their children with warm porridge. They warmed the hearts as well as the hands of their children with a lot more than "hot cocoa."

It is a simple and ageless truth. Children do not do what you say. They do what you do. Our children are being offered "old wine in a new flask" and they do not wish to drink of it. The flask is not all that is new. The old wine has been diluted by the very streams of mothers leaving their children to make careers; or that make careers out of leaving their children. The same mothers who felt a poignant yearning for the old, unadulterated, albeit from the

safe distance of creative self-achievement at the expense of the little children with no porridge and cold hands. Yearning is not enough. "I yearn therefore I am" is as nonsensical as "I earn therefore I am."

To paraphrase Emerson, the world around us is fascinating not merely by its newness, but by finding more affinities and relatedness in what is already there.

We must be able to recognize the tempo and the beat that go against the grain of "*Toras Imeinu*." Then we must firmly follow the *pasuk* that is so appropriate to our dilemma: *Al titosh toras imecha*—Do not forsake your mother's teachings." We must take an unshakable, unadulterated, old-fashioned stand. Bring back the "old Mom." All right; the new "*Mem*," they can keep!

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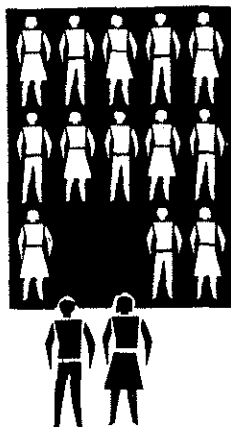
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## Of Holocaust and Imbalance

To the Editor:

In the recent issue of THE JEWISH OBSERVER (Sivan 5743), I found the article by Rabbi Perr on the holocaust a bit short in explanation. His theory is based on the principle that any imbalance must be corrected. This was not substantiated with any proof or even logical explanation. Although the author may feel that it is a self evident truth or axiom, I, not being well versed in the *Darchei Hashgocho*, find it hard to accept such an important and far reaching principle without some kind of corroboration. In fact, the *Talmud Yoma 69b* which he quotes, would seem (at first glance) to contradict this principle. Daniel and Yirmiyahu did not mind the apparent imbalance when they removed the words. The author assumes as fact that preceding the war there was an enlargement of the understanding of the greatness of G-d. To my knowledge it was indeed in that century that non-belief in creation *למך* was at its greatest. (Dr. Bieberfeld recently wrote in a JO how the German philosophers waged an all out assault on the Bible and its truths.)

In other words, the technological advances were creating a greater *hes-ter* and not a manifestation of greatness. Or as is well known from the Chofetz Chaim these advances were there to help combat the erosion in *emuna*, but we do not find that there was a greater awareness.

I would like to conclude with one last point which is often overlooked. The "sheer magnitude of the destruction" was also not without precedent; the decree of Haman (which was sealed in Heaven) was of even greater magnitude, all in one day.

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### Rabbi Perr's Response:

The writer is correct in noting that I consider it axiomatic that the three *midos* must remain equal in

their manifestation. I permit myself this axiom on the basis of the inherent logic of the structure; as I was once told by Rav Aharon Kotler, זצ"ל, "if it fits together logically, this is itself a proof that it is true."

There is, however, a clear proof that a diminution of the *midos* would be considered an absence of those *midos*. At the end of the discussion in Yoma 69B the *Gemora* asks by what right did the *Neviim* eradicate a *takana* instituted by Moshe? Yet the *Gemora* should have asked a far more serious question: By what right did the *Neviim* delete these words and thus remove the Crown itself!

The answer to this question is that although these *Neviim* also knew of the explanation later to be given by the *Anshei Knesses Hagdolah* (See *Mishnas Rav Aharon*—by Rav Aharon Kotler זצ"ל, page 98) still, to them, as *Neviim*, this explanation was lacking in truth. Therefore, the explanation of the *Anshei Knesses Hagdolah* was a diminution of the *midos* from the point of view of the *Neviim*; and since diminution is considered an absence, they were not removing the Crown, for the Crown had already been removed by the facts of history. The only question that remained therefore, was concerning their authority to change the *takana* of Moshe.

The writer also points out correctly that the century preceding the war was a period of all-out assault on the Torah. This is quite true, but we must distinguish between the false sciences of evolution and textual criticism, and the truer sciences of biology, chemistry and physics.

These latter were enthralling to the *maaminim* upon whom the world stands. The Chofetz Chaim saw the technological advances of his day as a teaching tool for Torah. "You see—a person speaks here and it is heard way over there." The Chazon Ish felt one must become a *maamin* from learning about fetal development. (See *Chidushei Agados Maharal Miprag*, Makos 11A. "He who is the greatest in his generation is considered to the community as the

heart upon which depends the existence of all the other organs."), and for any others who wished to hear—and there remained many—how much more magnified was the voice of "The Heavens talk of the honor of the A-mighty and 'the works of His Hands' the firmament tells."

Concerning the last point the writer raises—the decree of Haman—I would like to make three remarks. First, we must distinguish between a decree—no matter how severe—and the reality that took place in our generation. Secondly, Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai, quoted in my introduction, says very clearly that Haman's decree was only in appearances—and thus we have a dispute in this matter. Thirdly, we must ask the question: on what basis did Mordechai say to Esther "an escape and a salvation will arise for the Jews from somewhere else"? Have Jews always

escaped? Did he not himself witness the fall of Yerushalayim and its ensuing bloodshed?

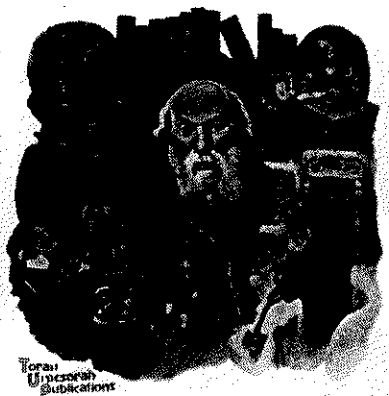
The answer is, I believe, that Mordechai knew that this decree was "*mezuyoff metoch*" (false on its face). The decree was *too perfect*. There was no way to escape by bribery, by emigration, by its being rescinded, or by leaving some over to kill the next day and then not getting around to killing them. The decree therefore meant that there would be a world without an *Am Yisroel*—something which can never be, as the world exists for *Am Yisroel*.

Mordechai therefore said to Esther, this decree is not a danger for *Am Yisroel*—it is only a test for you, whether you are willing to sacrifice your security for the Jewish people. The only danger is for you and your father's house.

(Rabbi) JECHIEL I. PERR

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שנה טובה ומברכת ומוצלחת  
to  
**Rabbi and Mrs. Nachman Mandel**  
upon their acceptance of  
a position in Los Angeles, Calif.  
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<p>Sincerest Wishes for a שנת נאולה וישועה</p> <p><b>Mr. &amp; Mrs. Nochum Fishman</b></p>	<p>כתיבה וחתימה טובה</p> <p><b>Rabbi and Mrs. Mordechai Katz</b> Chicago</p>	<p>לשנה טובה תכתבו ותחתמו</p> <p><b>Mr. and Mrs.</b> <b>Abraham B. Lieberman</b> and family</p>
<p>May תשד"ם bring the best of New Years to Klal Yisroel</p> <p><b>Rabbi &amp; Mrs.</b> <b>Abraham M. Kahana</b></p>	<p><b>Rabbi and Mrs.</b> <b>Israel Fishweicher</b> 759 Wildwood Road West Hempstead, N.Y.</p>	<p>כתיבה וחתימה טובה</p> <p>Happiness, Gezunt, &amp; Nachas to our parents and families</p> <p><b>Moshe Mordechai &amp; Malya</b> <b>Grunfeld</b></p>

### A Note of Gratitude and a New Year's Greetings

On the threshold of the New Year, we wish to acknowledge our deepfelt debt of gratitude to all our dear friends and acquaintances, from near and far, who stood fast by our side during the illness and suffering and untimely passing of our dear departed father and husband—the crown of our family:

**the late Reb Zev (Volvi) Friedman ז"ל**

Our beloved friends who were with us during this difficult period were a source of strength that we shall forever remember with gratitude. We pray that all who had joined us during our tribulations and sorrow be inscribed this New Year for a life full of good health, Nachas, prosperity, and merit to see the redemption of Israel, and the comforting of Zion and Jerusalem.

*The Family of the late William K. (Volvi) Friedman*

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## A Tribute to the Late Rabbi Meir Pantel זכר צדיק לברכה



Rabbi Menachem Mendel of Kotzk once asked his disciples, "Chazal tell us that G-d chose to give the Torah on Mount Sinai because of its humility. Why then wasn't the Torah given in a valley, the epitome of lowliness? The answer," said the Kotzker, "is that to be worthy of Torah one must have all the attributes of a mountain and still be humble..."

On the 25th of Sivan, a most unusual Jew, Rabbi Meir Pantel, passed away. Reb Meir was a Jew who "had all the attributes of a mountain and yet was humble." A man of awesome scholarship, (he was one of the select few to have received semicha from Rabbi Boruch Ber Leibowitz זצ"ל... In Kamenitz the latter had appointed him to repeat the shiurim to the entire yeshiva), yet he chose to live as a simple Jew. His unique gadlus was of the exceptional kind that caught the attention of "mountains."

The late Rosh Yeshiva of Lakewood, Rabbi Shneur Kotler זצ"ל once recalled, "When I was a young student in Kamenitz, my father זצ"ל arranged for me to be in the care of Reb Meir Pantel in Kamenitz."

Reb Meir was so dedicated to truth that it could be termed an obsession. He could not tolerate anything false—false people, false ideas, false hashkofos, and he spoke up unhesitatingly when faced with falsehood.

When Reb Meir arrived in the United States he was a broken, beaten war refugee. Every single member of his family had been killed. While others were preoccupied with the immediate concerns of putting the broken pieces of their lives back together, learning a new language, and getting settled,

Efraim Wachsmann of Brooklyn studied in Mesifita Torah Vodaath, and is now in Beth Medrash Govoha, in Lakewood.

Reb Meir's vision steered him elsewhere. The day he arrived in the country, he walked into the office of Agudath Israel and threw himself wholeheartedly into Hatzalah work. He went to his dispirited, despairing friends and demanded, "Wake up! There is time for your own lives later. The task at hand now is Hatzalah."

For all his diversity, the focal point of Reb Meir's life was unarguably Agudath Israel. In the literal understanding of *mesiras nefesh*, giving one's life, Reb Meir was *moser nefesh* for Agudath Israel. He was more than a practicing Agudist. He lived and breathed its ideology. A respected member of the Vaad Hapoel, may of his ideas and opinions were incorporated into Agudah policy. Himself a Marbitz Torah of considerable stature (he was a Rosh Yeshiva in Yeshivas Rabbi Jacob Joseph for many years; he also taught in Mesifita Torah Vodaath), he was closely acquainted with many members of the Moetzes Gedolei Hatorah, whose respect and admiration for him were boundless. Indeed Reb Meir was ready to be *moser nefesh* for anything that served the cause of Torah.

A short time after the war, Reb Meir visited Eretz Yisroel. Standing at a bus stop in Petach Tikvah, he saw an old acquaintance of his walking down the street holding on to a young Sephardic boy about 10 years of age. The boy was alternating between crying and berating the man, and futilely trying to get out of his grasp. In response to Reb Meir's questioning, the harried man explained, "I managed to snatch this boy out of an irreligious kibbutz. I don't think I can handle it anymore."

Reb Meir put his arm on the boy's shoulder and said warmly but firmly, "Listen here, I'm from America."

The boy, sensing a rich American about to make him an offer, quickly quieted down and listened eagerly.

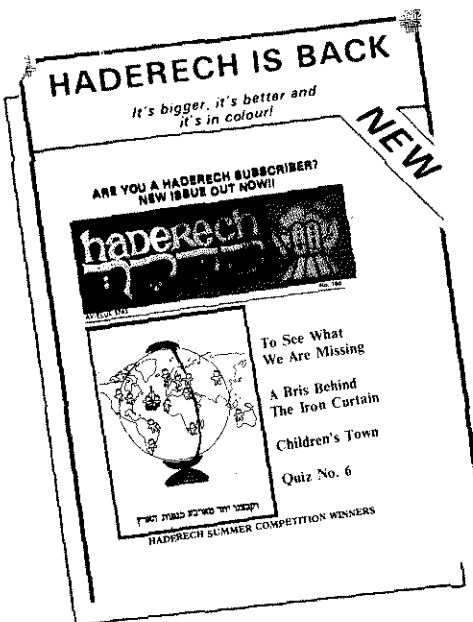
Reb Meir continued, "I am seriously considering adopting you as my son." The youngster's eyes flashed as he probably conjured up images of wallowing in all sorts of luxuries this "millionaire" was ready to offer. "However, I will only do so on the condition that you enroll in a Chinuch Atzmai school."

The boy readily agreed, and Reb Meir did indeed for all practical purposes "adopt" the child. Although he himself was practically penniless at the time, Reb Meir, with extraordinary bitachon, undertook complete financial responsibility for this lost Jewish soul. For years he supported him, paid his way through school, and eventually sent him the thousands of dollars necessary for his marriage. Today he is a fine young religious Jew. Reb Meir refusing to ignore the hashgacha pratis in a chance meeting at a bus stop, was *moser nefesh* to rescue generations of Yiddishkeit from spiritual annihilation.

Rabbi Meir was the author of numerous articles on Torah, Hashkafa, politics, and Agudath Israel. Many of them were acclaimed as classics—the fruits of a thought process conditioned by years of dedication to Torah. But it was in his last article, written from his sickbed, that Reb Meir revealed just a bit of himself, a bit of his concealed gadlus.

In Kletz Reb Meir was a prodigy. After Rav Aharon's shiur the older bachurim would gather around sixteen-year-old Meir Pantel to hear him explain the complex, intricate thought sequences of Reb Aharon Kotler. One Yom Kippur, before N'eila, Reb Aharon stopped the davening. He motioned for young Meir to stand beside him. He draped his tallis over the boy's head and then gave the signal to begin. Reb Aharon davened the entire N'eila together with Reb Meir under the same tallis. In all the years nobody ever heard Reb Meir mention the incident. As the Kotzker said, "to have all the attributes of a mountain and yet be humble..."

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## NEWS FROM AGUDATH ISRAEL

Compiled by  
**Rabbi Menachem Lubinsky**  
Director of  
*Government and Public Affairs*

### TORAH STUDY HIGH ON SUMMER AGENDA

Camp Agudah was the scene of two major Torah events this summer: The Daf Yomi Siyum of *Mesechta Shabbos* and the annual **Melave Malke of Zeirei Agudath Israel of America**. Rabbi Isaac Oelbaum, the Rav of Congregation Nachlas Yitzchok in Queens, said the *Hadran*. Rabbi Dovid Cohen, the Rav of Congregation G'vul Yaavetz in Flatbush, said *Divrei Chizuk*.

Hundreds of Bnei Torah from yeshivos throughout the country attended the annual **Melave Malke of Zeirei Agudath Israel**, which was addressed by Rabbi Moshe Stern, the Debreziner Rov, and Rabbi Reuven Feinstein, the Rosh Yeshiva of Yeshiva of Staten Island.

In Camp Ohr Shraga, Reshet Shiurei Torah sponsored a gathering marking the completion of "**Shmiras Halashon**," which was authored by the sainted Chofetz Chaim. It was addressed by Rabbi Mechel Birnbaum of Mesivta Tifereth Jerusalem and Rabbi Gershon Saks of the Yeshiva Chofetz Chaim in Monsey.

In addition to these special events, Reshet helped arrange for *Magidei Shiurim* to replace the year-round lecturers who are on vacation. It also sponsored special seminars in bungalow colonies throughout the Catskill Mountains.

## CHIZUK ON EXPANSION DRIVE

Encouraged by its successes with its hotline, which continues to average 100 calls a week from Jews anxious to learn more about their heritage, its Chizuk Institute of Torah Study, which currently consists of 9 classes with an enrollment of over 300 students, its 300 volume Milton and Blanche Frankel Library, its Hospitality Program consisting of 250 hosts, and other similar programs, Chizuk is planning a major expansion of its activities to reach out to the Jewish masses. Its success with **Baalei Teshuva** is enhanced by some of their outstanding accomplishments with Jews who left cult movements.

### AGUDATH ISRAEL GIVES \$50,000 GRANT TO TOMCHEI SHABBOS

A local project in the Boro Park-Flatbush neighborhoods of Brooklyn, which distributes food to the poor, received a special grant from Agudath Israel of America in recognition of its efforts in helping the poor. **Tomchei Shabbos** is an organization that distributes tens of thousands of dollars of food each week to the poor in several local communities. This unique project involves large numbers of volunteers ranging from store owners who contribute food to young men who drive vans to deliver the food on the eve of *Shabbos*.

To assist the Tomchei Shabbos organization in expanding its program, and to help an additional new group of poor people during the next few months, Agudath Israel contributed to this agency the entire special grant of \$50,000 which it had received from a special Emergency Food and Shelter Program.

Anti-missionary activity is one of the priorities of the Agudath Israel World Organization Agency. Rabbi Dovid Goldwasser, the director of Chizuk, also uses the air waves to carry the message of Torah through a daily "Morning Chizuk" over WFMU, hosted by Moshe London.

The expansion will include **extending the hotline to 24 hours**, establishing seminars at some existing sites, including Long Island, New Jersey and a number of college campuses, setting up an exhibit on Jewish Identity, and the designation of Jewish Heritage Days in sites throughout the country.

### AGUDATH ISRAEL IN LEGISLATIVE GAINS

It was an interesting summer in other legislative areas as well. • In New York State, two important bills passed by the Legislature awaited the Governor's signature: One that would impose restrictions on medical examiners in performing autopsies without consent of the next of kin, while a second measure provided for withholding a civil divorce in the event that a barrier to remarriage remains, which is particularly significant to the menacing *agunah* problem. • In Illinois, a bill which would force cemetery authorities and workers to perform burials on Sundays and holidays also awaited the Governor's signature. • In Ohio, a comprehensive package of kashrus legislation was signed by the Governor.

In other developments, a bill which would have permitted medical examiners to remove corneas during an autopsy without obtaining the prior approval of the next of kin was killed in this session of the Legislature by Agudath Israel. Similarly, a bill which would have defined death as the cessation of brain stem activity was also removed from consideration by the Legislature as a result of the efforts of Agudah.

### OFFICE OF BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

A project designed to assist businesses in winning the battle against competition from imports will now also serve Bergen and Hudson Counties in New Jersey, according to an announcement by Mendel Goldberg, the director of Agudath Israel's Office of Business Development. In the short time since it was established, OBD in conjunction with the Metro New York Trade Adjustment Assistance Center has enrolled import impacted manufacturers in the federal government's Trade Adjustment Assistance Program.

## Eternal Heritage Foundation

### FOUNDATION GRANTS

Eternal Heritage Foundation fellowship grants are available to teachers/rebbes of Talmud and related subjects (minimum of 25 hours a week) in qualified yeshivas of the mesivta high school and beis medrash levels. Purposes: further the cause of Jewish studies, raise the quality of education, and enhance the respectability of the profession. Areas of interest: independent studies, research and publication of reports and novellae, pedagogic methodology, tutorial guidance to students engaged in independent studies, during available afternoon hours and other suitable times. Fellowships may be renewed annually at the discretion of the Eternal Heritage Foundation upon determination of fulfillment of grant obligation. For application forms and details, please write to **Fellowship Program, Eternal Heritage Foundation, Suite 411, 415 Lexington Avenue, New York, New York 10017.**



## GOOD NEWS AND BAD NEWS FOR YESHIVOS

This has been a "hot summer" for interests of yeshivos. It began with the encouraging news that the United States Supreme Court had upheld a **Minnesota state law granting tuition tax deductions** to parents of private schools. The action prompted Agudath Israel to immediately set in motion plans for a New York State tuition tax deduction program and lent encouragement to the national drive for tuition tax credits.

There was more good news: • Enrollment

in New York State yeshivos grew by 11,000 over the last 5 years. • Some 10 New York yeshivos received \$400,000 in energy assistance grants. • City fathers rescinded plans made last January to cut back on school bus transportation in New York City for next year.

The bad news was that the New York State Board of Regents had given its initial approval to a new plan to improve elementary and secondary education results in New

York State. The problem is that the plan took a broad sweep and included nonpublic schools. New standards are puzzling since yeshivos were not part of the criticism leveled by the National Commission on Excellence in Education. No less an authority than the U.S. Secretary of Education Terrel H. Bell praised the accomplishments of the yeshivos and suggested that they serve as a model for education in general.

## LEGISLATIVE ACTIVITIES

- Several years of diligent efforts to increase the amount of **money yeshivos receive for textbook loans** ended in success recently when Governor Cuomo agreed to include an additional \$5 per student in his budget, bringing the State reimbursed textbook stipend to \$20 per student.
- *Representatives of the Commission on Legislation and Civic Action met with various medical examiners throughout the state to apprise them of the position of Orthodox Jewry to autopsies.*
- A special task force spent several weeks preparing for the New York City School Board elections by screening candidates, preparing slates, organizing a citywide network of parents interested in special education and encouraging the Orthodox Jewish community to vote.
- *Bernard Edelstein, a member of the Commission, testified before a special New York State panel looking into the high cost of kosher food.*
- The New York State Education Department mailed out more than \$1 million for the previous school year to yeshivos as a result of the efforts of the Commission on Legislation and Civic Action.
- *Agudath Israel representatives testified in Washington on the need to reimburse yeshivos for the removal or containment of asbestos hazards.*



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## IN ISRAEL

The resumption of archaeological digging in the G Section touched off a noisy demonstration, which resulted in the arrest of many innocent bystanders. Agudath Israel Knesset representatives accused the police of using excessive force and brutal methods in response to the actions of a few. At one point, the Knesset Deputies met with Prime Minister Menachem Begin and urged him to use his good offices to bring about the release of the detainees. Soon after the ugly events that followed the resumption of the digging, Agudath Israel successfully passed a first reading of a bill which would prohibit archaeologists from digging up ancient grave sites.

Opposition leaders cried foul when the measure passed in the waning chorus of its

session before it recessed for the summer vacation.

### Meanwhile:

... Tens of thousands of youngsters participated in summer camps sponsored by Zeirei Agudath Israel and N'shei Agudath Israel. Yeshiva youth were hosted at special retreats established by various projects of Agudath Israel.

... In Jerusalem, 4,500 youngsters participated in the national Shmiras Halashon contest. The activity was planned to coincide with the 50th Yahrzeit of the Chofetz Chaim. The sponsor was Agudath Israel in Israel which organized the contest amongst youngsters in Talmud Torahs and schools of Chinnuch Atzmai throughout the country.

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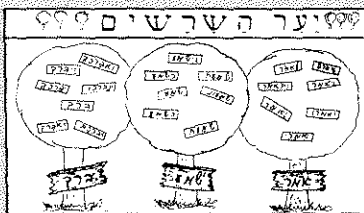
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## AGUDATH ISRAEL HAILS GOVERNOR CUOMO FOR SIGNING "GET" BILL

Governor Mario Cuomo's signing into law on August 8th the landmark "Get" Bill was hailed as a "courageous and just" action by Rabbi Moshe Sherer, president of Agudath Israel of America. The bill serves to help solve the tragedy of men or women unable to remarry because of barriers created by their spouse. The "Get" Bill passed the New York State Senate and Assembly in June almost unanimously, after years of efforts by Agudath Israel of America to alleviate the tragic "agunah" problem of a spouse who is a victim of extortion and blackmail. The bill's chief legislative sponsor is Assemblyman Sheldon Silver.

The "Get" Bill was vigorously opposed by the American Jewish Congress and the Union of American Hebrew Congregations (the Reform rabbis and synagogues), who made a major effort to influence New York's Governor to veto the bill which they claimed was unconstitutional. The prominent Washington attorney, Nathan Lewin, a former professor of constitutional law at Harvard University, who had drafted the bill at the request of Agudath Israel, presented an incisive legal memorandum to prove the constitutionality of this measure.

The bill requires any party to a marriage which was solemnized in a religious ceremony to verify that all steps have been taken to remove any barriers to remarriage prior to a judge issuing a civil divorce. Agudath Israel had been working with halachic and legal experts for the past three years, under the leadership of Professor Aaron Twerski, to draw a bill which would help put an end to the suffering of so many innocent people, who were being bludgeoned by a heartless spouse into paying "ransom money" in order to be able to remarry in accordance with Jewish religious law.

Rabbi Moshe Sherer praised Governor Cuomo for "adopting the humane approach of placing equity considerations over moot legalistic issues." "This is a very happy day for many sad people and the religious community is indebted to Governor Cuomo for his action," he said. Rabbi Sherer also lauded Assemblyman Silver "for his untiring efforts," and singled out for appreciation Governor Cuomo's assistant, Rabbi Israel Mowshowitz, and Mr. Kalman Finkel, a prominent Orthodox attorney.

דפוס הצלה

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פאר פרייע

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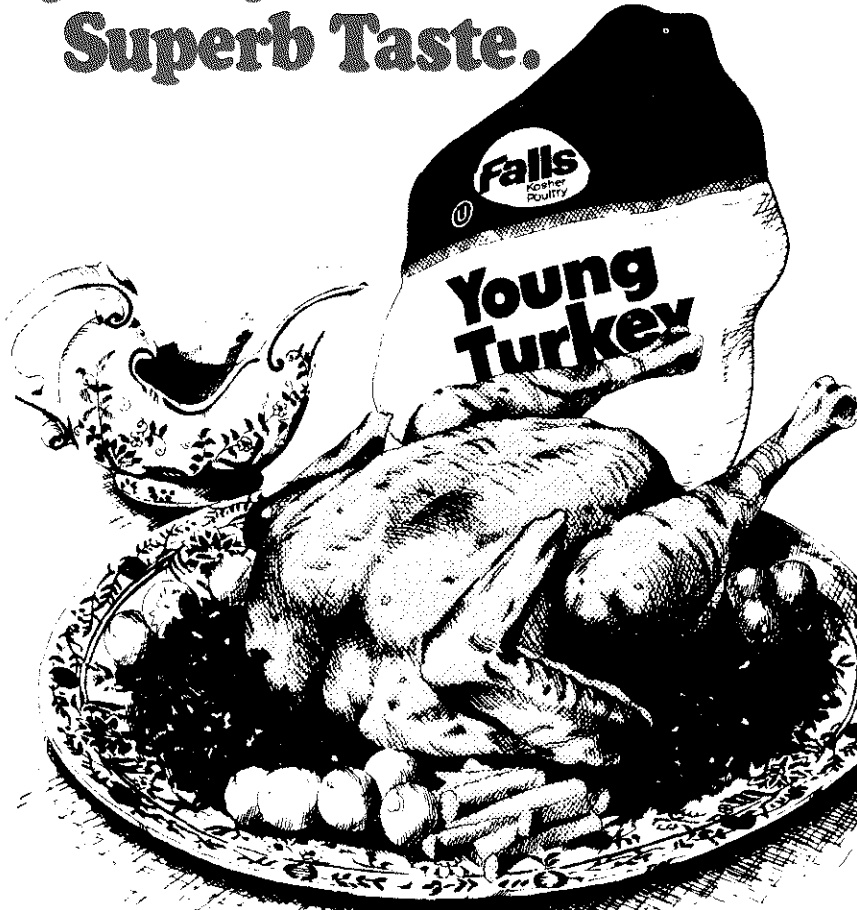
## ARCHIVES


A series of projects which were designed to better document the Orthodox Jewish experience in America were recently completed by the Orthodox Jewish Archives of Agudath Israel of America under its chief archivist Rabbi Moshe Kolodny. One project surveyed governmental institutions, private archives and museums on material that they hold on the history of Orthodox Jews in their states,

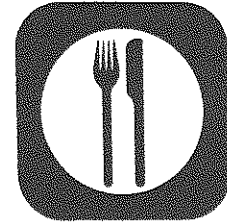
with nearly all of the 50 states responding. A second project organized a special section on the history of Orthodox Jews in New York State. As a result of these new acquisitions and information, the Archives is planning to repeat its successful exhibit of last Fall when more than 4,000 people participated in a one-day exhibition of rare photographs and documents.



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## CHINUCH ATZMAI—TORAH SCHOOLS ENTERS FOURTH DECADE WITH MORE CHILDREN, LIMITED SPACE

The Chinuch Atzmai-Torah Schools network in Israel is facing both growth opportunities and risks as it enters its fourth decade. While the report that follows deals with figures and geographic locations, each number is a *neshama*—a Jewish soul, and each location represents an entire community.

The leadership of the independent system of Torah education projected a growth in enrollment resulting from three important developments:

- a total net increase of more than 1,000 additional children over last year's enrollment in existing schools;
- 4 new schools: Emanuel (2), Ramot, Telshe-Stone;
- 16 new kindergartens: Beer Sheva, Bnei Brak (Special Ed.: hard-of-hearing), Dimona (full day-care center), Emanuel (4), Haifa (Special ed.: learning disabled), Mazkeret Batya, Neve Shaanan, Neve Yaakov, Petach Tikva (2), Rishon Lezion, Tzfas (2).

Space problems exist in four locations:

- **Cholon**, an increase of 100 children has created a shortage of 5 classrooms;
- **Pardes Chana**: substandard housing has caused a substantial decline of the school's enrollment;
- **Rechasim**: a developing school with an enrollment of 150 children had been housed in rented quarters which are no longer available; a structure of at least 7 classrooms must be provided before the new school year;
- **Tifrach**: a school, which in a very short period of time has grown to 250 children, is still housed in 35-year-old shacks with little protection from the elements.

This combination of growth and housing problems reflects the development of Chinuch Atzmai-Torah Schools over the past thirty years: a population that seeks quality education for its children, hampered by inadequate and inferior facilities, often in proximity to elaborate facilities provided for public schools, reflecting a *de facto* discrimination by government officials against the growth of independent Torah education.

The success of the past three decades—parents and children who seek Chinuch Atzmai-Torah Schools, and qualified teachers prepared to serve them—poses the challenge for the coming decade: providing adequate classroom space. The government's policy concerning school construction was instituted thirty years ago: when a school reaches full enrollment, it may apply for facilities; meanwhile, inadequate facilities often prevent the school from reaching full enrollment. And even when a school qualifies, the necessity to channel the application for school construction through municipal authorities usually means further discrimination and deprivation.

Over the thirty years of Chinuch Atzmai's existence, its unique program of additional hours of Torah education has attracted many people who appreciate its value, even in the face of more attractive facilities at other schools. But the critical problem remains the children who are lost, not for lack of interest but lack of space. For this, the network's leaders turn to friends of Torah education the world over for support.

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| ● Nassi Layom . . . . . 1,800          | ● Annual Membership . . . . . 180 |
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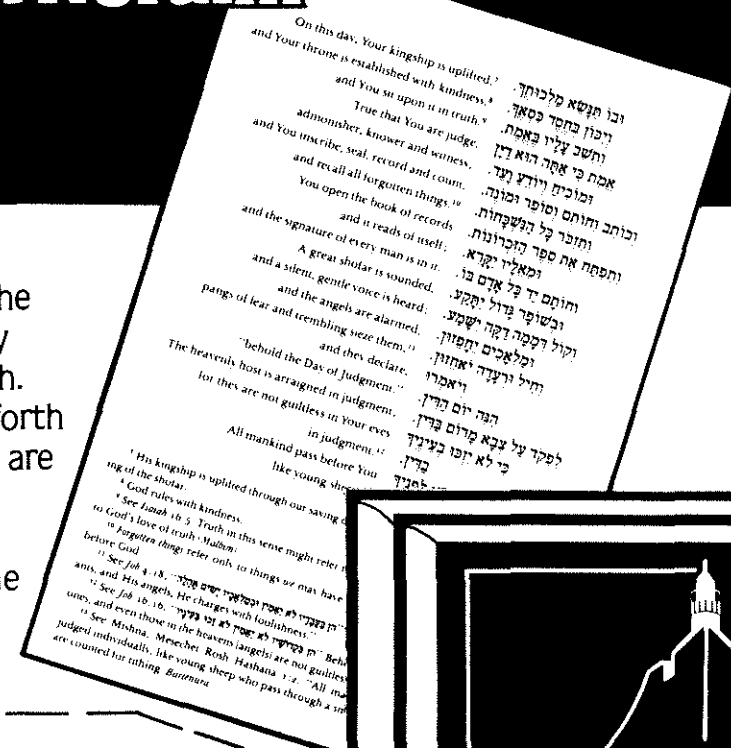
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