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A FERVENT CALL TO ALL JEWS

קריאה נרגשת לאחינו בני ישראל
from the Moetzes Gedolei HaTorah of America

We are all deeply concerned over the situation of our brethren in the Holy Land; and we pray for their safety and welfare, and that of the armed forces of the United States of America.

At this hour, it is incumbent upon each of us to...

מצבם של אחינו, יושבי ארץ הקודש, מדאיג ומחריד כל לב, ועינינו נשואות למרום בתפלה ובתחנונים לשלומם ולטובתם, ולשלום צבאות מלכות של חסד ארה"ב דאמריקה שלא יאונה להם כל און.

SADDAM HUSSEIN WANTS TO FINISH WHAT HITLER STARTED!

"שבכל דור ודור עומדים עלינו לכלותינו
והקדוש ברוך הוא מצילנו מידם."

Less than 50 years after Hitler, the Butcher of Baghdad sits in his German-built bunker and plots the gassing of Israel's Jewish population. He boasts of turning Israel into a **"crematorium."** His missiles slam into civilian Jewish neighborhoods accompanied by the cheering howls of Moslem mobs from Teheran to Amman.

In the meantime thousands of American Yeshivish families living in Yerushalayim, Bnei Brak, Zfat and Tverye huddle hungry and heatless in sealed rooms. Their words of Tehillim are muffled by gas masks. Their children cry, half from fear, half from hunger. And then there are the elderly, ill, widowed and orphaned.

And now Pesach is around the corner. Food and supplies are scarce. Prices are going through the roof. These same American Jews who represent all of us in Eretz Yisroel are facing unprecedented economic hard-ship. Yet they refuse to quit. They will not abandon ship to return to the comfort and safety of life in America.

Sure they deserve a lot of credit. But they can't eat credit. They can't wear credit. They can't make kiddush on credit. They can't buy matzohs on credit. And they certainly can't feed seven, eight and nine children on credit.

Which is why this year more than ever, we urge you to give to KOLEL America the American Rabbi Meir Baal Haness charity. And we're not just asking you to give but to give two and three times as much as you've ever given.

We are not asking you to just support those in need. We are asking you -- no, begging you -- to support American Jewish men, women and children, true Bnei Torah, who are moser nefesh for us at all times, especially now.

So, at the Seder this year when you say "כל דכפין יתי ויכול" you'll be able to say, "I have truly done all I could for those who count on me in Eretz Yisroel."

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A FERVENT CALL TO ALL JEWS

We are all deeply concerned over the situation of our brethren in the Holy Land; and we pray for their safety and welfare, and that of the armed forces of the United States of America.

At this hour, it is incumbent upon each of us to **share in the pain** and the burden of the people of G-d dwelling in Zion, in the manner taught to us by Chazal — our Sages of blessed memory. This is not a time to go about our daily lives in habitual routine. This is not a time simply to sit with arms folded without undertaking significant and substantial action in the way of *teshuva* and good deeds. During these earth-shaking times we must strengthen ourselves in our commitment to the principles upon which Creation itself stands: *Torah, Avodah, and Gemilus Chassodim*.

We turn, thus, in urgent appeal to all Jews who revere G-d's word to take strong, substantive measures to deepen their study of Torah and fear of Heaven, so that G-d's mercies be evoked on behalf of His people. We consider it appropriate at this time to propose the following specific steps to strengthen both community and individual observance:

1) **TO INCREASE TORAH LEARNING** at all times. Particularly on Friday evenings and on *Shabbos* during the day, the members of every community are urged to come together for Torah study in their synagogues and *botei midrash*. Chazal have taught in interpretation of the verse, "The yoke will be broken because of the oil" (*Yeshayahu* 10): The yoke of Sancherev was broken because of the oil of Chizkiyahu, which lit the lamps of the synagogues and *botei midrash*, enabling the Jews to immerse themselves in Torah. This *mitzvah* includes supporting *yeshivos* and those who study Torah. (See *Hilchos Talmud Torah, Yoreh De'ah* 246:1.)

2) **TO POUR ALL ONE'S ENERGIES AND FERVOR INTO PRAYER**, to *daven* with a *minyan*, with heartfelt intent.

3) **TO CONTINUE RECITING TEHILLIM EVERY DAY**, particularly on Mondays and Thursdays, and to open every gathering of ten or more Jews — including *simcha*

celebrations — with the recitation of *Tehillim* and prayers for our brethren in *Eretz Yisroel*.

4) **TO SUBSTANTIALLY CONTRIBUTE TO TZEDDAKA** — particularly for the poor of the Holy Land and its people. It is most appropriate that every family donate as "*kofer nefesh*" a multiple of *chai* (the number eighteen) — everyone according to his or her ability.

5) **TO INCREASE CHESSED** (acts of kindness), to further harmony among people, to strengthen bonds of friendship, and to guard against *rechilus, loshon hora* (malicious talk and defamation of character) and anything that leads to animosity and divisiveness.

A full grasp of the extraordinary gravity of our current situation demands that we be especially careful with our conduct and lifestyle. We must avoid excessive indulgence and lavish expenditures — taking special note of *simcha* celebrations in this regard. We must ensure that the strictures of modesty are scrupulously observed, and guard the sanctity of the Jewish home from intrusion by anything that violates our basic beliefs and values. The best way to achieve all this is to devote time each day to the study of *Sifrei Yirah* and *Mussar*, which guide a person in leading a better life.

To our spiritual legions, those studying in *yeshivos* and *kollelim*, we turn with a special call: Strengthen your efforts at this critical time in your pursuit of Torah and sacred endeavors. All Jewry looks to you to bring life and blessing to G-d's people, as Chazal (*Makkos* 10) interpreted the verse, "Our feet stood in your gates, O Jerusalem" (*Tehillim* 122): "What enabled us to stand on our feet in battle? The gates of Jerusalem, where they were engaged in Torah study."

We pray for the welfare of our government. May He who grants "victory to kings" protect our armed forces, and sustain them in their mission of ridding the world of evil and establishing justice.

We pray to our Father in Heaven that He hear our cry, that He help, protect, and save the Jewish people in the Land of Israel and wherever they may be, for salvation and a speedy redemption.

MOETZES GEDOLEI HATORAH OF AMERICA

12 Shevat, 5751

קריאה נרגשה לאחינו בני ישראל

של עשרה מישראל, לרבות מסיבות של שמחה, לפתוח במזמורי תהילים ובקשת תחנונים עבור אחב"י בארץ ישראל.

(ד) להרבות בצדקה ובפרט לעניי ויושבי אה"ק, ומן הראוי מאד לכל משפחה לעשות כופר נפש במספר ח"י איש איש כפי יכולתו.

(ה) להרבות בפעולות החסד והשלום בין אדם לחבירו, להתחזק באהבת רעים, ולהישמר מכל רכילות ולשה"ר ודברים המביאים לשנאה ופירוד לבבות ח"ו.

הרגשת המצוקה שאנו נמצאים בה מחייבת הנהגה ושמירה יתירה בסדרי החיים שלנו: להתרחק ממותרות ומפזרנות, ובפרט בסעודות של שמחה; להשגיח על גזרי הצניעות וקדושת הבית שלא יכנסו לתוכו דברי כפירה ותועבה. והעצה היעוצה לכל זה היא הלימוד בכל יום בספרי יראה ומוסר המלמדים אורחות חיים בטהר המדות ובתיקון המעשים.

ופונים אנו בקריאה מיוחדת לחיל ד' בני הישיבות והכוללים די בכל אתר ואתר. חזקו ואמצו בעת הזאת לשקוד ביותר על דלתות התורה ועל כל הדברים שבקדושה. אליכם נשואות לבותיהם של ישראל לחביא חיים וברכה לעם ד' וצדקה מאלקי ישענו. וכמאמר רז"ל (מכות י.) על הפסוק עומדות היו רגלינו בשעריך ירושלים, מי גרם לרגלינו שיעמדו במלחמה, שערי ירושלים שהיו עוסקים בתורה.

הננו מתפללים בשלומה של מלכות, והנותן תשועה למלכים יחסה על הפקידים והחיילים העומדים על המשמר, ויעזרם בתפקידם לבער רשעי עולם ולעשות משפט ודין בשונאינו.

ומלפני אבינו שבשמים נבקש תחנונים שירבו זכויותינו וישמע קול צעקתנו ויעלה זכרוננו וזכרון כל בית ישראל לפניו יתברך, לטובה ולברכה ולחסד ולרחמים, ויעזור ויגן ויושיע לכל ישראל בארץ ישראל ובכל מקום שהם בפליטה גדולה, לישועה ולרווחה, ולגאולה קרובה, אכ"ר.

מצבם של אחינו, יושבי ארץ הקודש, מדאיג ומחריד כל לב, ועיינו נשואות למרום בתפלה ובתחנונים לשלומם ולטובתם, ולשלום צבאות מלכות של חסד ארה"ב דאמריקה שלא יאונה להם כל און.

בשעה זו הרי מוטלת על כל אחד ואחד מאתנו החובה להשתתף בצערם ולשאת בעול סבלם של עם השם השוכן בציון על פי הדרכים שהורונו חז"ל. לא זאת העת להישאר נרדמים בתרדמת ההרגל ולחיות חיינו כמצות אנשים מלומדה. לא זאת העת לשבת בחיבוק ידים מבלי להרבות בתשובה ומעשים טובים. בשעה שעמודי תבל מתמוטטים, וינועו אמות הספים, הננו מצווים לחזק ולבסס בקרבנו אותם הדברים יסודי הבריאה שהעולם עומד עליהם: התורה, העבודה, וגמילות חסדים.

באנו איפוא בבקשה נמרצה לאחינו בני ישראל החרדים אל דבר השם לאזור חיל ועוז ולהתאמץ בפעולות של ממש בנתיבות התורה והיראה, למען יתעוררו ויגיעו רחמיו יתברך על עמו בית ישראל. וראינו לנכון בשעה זו להזכיר ולהציע ליראי השם ולחושבי שמו את הפרטים והנקודות דלהלן להביא חיזוק ותיקון לציבור וליחיד, ולזכות ולחושע בישועה ממרומים.

(א) להרבות בתלמוד תורה בכל עת, ובמיוחד להתאסף בבתי כנסיות ובתי מדרשות בליל ש"ק ויומו לשקוד על התורה, וכמאמר רז"ל עה"פ וחבל על מפני שמן (ישעי' י'), שחובל עלו של סנחריב מפני שמנו של חזקיהו שהיה דולק בבתי כנסיות ובבתי מדרשות לעסוק בתורה. ונכלל במצוה זו החזקת הישיבות ולומדי התורה כמבואר בהלכות תלמוד תורה (יו"ד סי' רמ"ו ס"א).

(ב) להתעורר בכל כוחות הנפש לעבודה שבלב זו תפלה; לדקדק על התפלה בצבור ועל שיח שפתותנו שיהא עולה בכוונה ורעותא דליבא.

(ג) להמשיך באמירת פרקי תהילים בכל ימות השבוע ובפרט בשני וחמישי, וגם בכל אסיפה

מועצת גדולי התורה בארה"ב

י"ב שבט, תנש"א

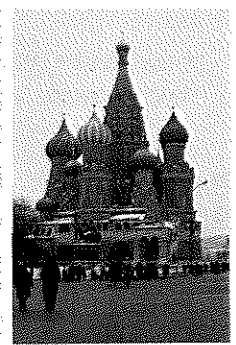


CONFRONTING THE SOVIET JEWISH MIRACLE:

The rush of events of recent weeks, and the deep concern that we have for our brothers in Eretz Yisroel as well as America's fighting men and women in the Near East, so crowds our minds and emotions, that we may tend to ignore other, extremely significant trends—not the least, the miraculous events taking place in regard to Soviet Jewry.

As the articles that follow point out, the miracles that began some ten years ago, with the nascent baal teshuva movement in Moscow (see, for example, "The Russians Are Returning," JO, Feb. '83) are continuing on a different level. We have the unceasing flow of Soviet Jewish olim, who are a miracle unto themselves—a miracle that, beyond inspiring awe, has to be recognized as a historical challenge and opportunity. And in the meantime, Soviet Jews continue to come to America, where their needs must also be addressed.

The articles that follow deal with different facets of this dynamic situation which demand our attention.



The Soviet Aliya: Responding to the Challenge

Everyday they come, thousands of Russian immigrants, seeking a new life and a new beginning in Eretz Yisroel.

It started as a trickle but it has turned into a tidal wave of new immigration, moving from a culture of repression to the open opportunities of Eretz Yisroel. Just go to Lud Airport any day, any night, and see the planes landing one after another, disgorging a massive Jewish population that has known nothing but repression for

generations. These people had been cut off from their fellow Jews, physically, spiritually, and culturally. Now that G-d has decreed that they should come, nothing stands in their way. Not the threat of war, nor actual hostilities in the Gulf War, not the hardships they must endure as they travel through Eastern Europe to get to Eretz Yisroel, nor the physical and economic challenges they face upon entering Eretz Yisroel.

Yeshuas Hashem keheref ayin. With the blink of an eye, a revolution began. A revolution that nobody would have dared to imagine or hope for less than two years ago. After all, for most of the 80's, less than 1,000 Jews a year came to Eretz Yisroel

from Russia, now more than 1,000 are coming *each day*. In 1990 alone, 200,000 Russian immigrants landed in Eretz Yisroel. In 1991, an additional 400,000 are expected. By 1992, the three-year total is expected to reach 1 million people. That's a 25% increase in Israeli population.

What a wonderful opportunity! But what an incredible challenge to Klal Yisroel!

For the secular Jew in Eretz Yisroel, this *aliya* spells the opportunity to settle the Negev, strengthen the armed forces, increase the intellectual and political strength of the country, and compensate for the large birth rate of the indigenous Arab population. For the *frum* Jew, though, there

Avraham Biderman, a musmach of Mesivta Torah Vodaath, was the New York City Finance Commissioner and then the New York City Housing Commissioner in the Koch administration. He is member of the Fund for Russian Education, located at 39 Broadway, Suite 3300.

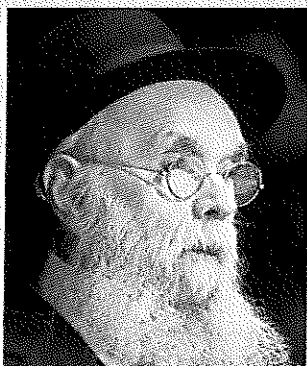
is an additional, much greater opportunity: to rescue *doros* (generations) for *Yiddishkeit*, for whom there was no hope imaginable years ago. That opportunity, however, is also an extraordinary responsibility. For years, we have been *mispallel* and agitated for the Russian Jews to be let out. Now that they are being let out, what are we doing about it?

DEALING WITH THE ENORMITY OF THE CHALLENGE

At the last Agudath Israel of America convention, the incredible challenge of Russian Jewry was at the forefront of the discussion. Rabbi Avrohom Pam שליט"א delivered a passionate address on this subject, issuing a clarion call for

action. "The future of *Klal Yisroel* is in our hands," he declared.

While we may tend to feel overwhelmed by the scope of this *aliya*, this is no excuse to shrug our shoulders, and walk away. To the contrary, we must decide where to begin. Here Rabbi Pam gave us guidance in how to formulate our approach:



We should take note of the exchange between Yehoshua, about to engage in the battle of Yericho, and the *Malach Hashem* that met him, as recorded in *Tanach*: "When Yehoshua was near Yericho, he lifted his eyes and saw a man standing opposite

him, with sword outstretched in his hand. Yehoshua approached him and asked him, 'Are you with us or with our enemy?'...

"And he said, 'No, for I am an angel of G-d, I have come now.'"

The angel's response is strange, for it does not deal with Yehoshua's question regarding his position in the war. *Chazal* (the Rabbis of the Talmud), however, explain that the word "now" does answer this question: it is a reference to Torah study, an obligation that is always applicable—*always*, in all circumstances, without exception—"now." Thus, the *malach* was informing Yehoshua, in effect: If you increase your Torah study *now*, then I'm with you. If not, I'm on your enemy's side.

By the same token, we must take action in keeping with the *malach's* implied directive of "Now." *Eretz Yisroel* is being flooded with a massive Soviet immigration. If we reach out to these Jews, and correspondingly increase *chadorim*, *yeshivos* and Torah schools to accommodate their children, at least the younger generation will be with us. If not, they will join the ranks of the opposition, and make our battle for the Torah character of *Eretz Yisroel* a much more difficult one.

There is yet another consideration that even adds to the urgency of the situation. If we do not mobilize our resources to meet growing demands, this will reflect poorly on earlier conduct, much to our detriment. To better understand this con-

cept, let us refer to the last of the Kings of Israel (the Ten Tribes), Hoshea ben Eila: "He did evil in eyes of G-d, but not as much as the kings of Israel that preceded him" (*Malachim* II: 17, 2).

Rashi explains that the first king of the Ten Tribes, Yeravam ben Nevat, had set up two golden calves, one to the north and the other to the south of Israel, to serve as national focal points to replace Yerushalayim, which was in the territory of the rival tribes, Yehuda and Binyamin. Further, border guards were posted to prevent pilgrims from the Ten Tribes from journeying to Yerushalayim. These were maintained during the entire era of the independent nation of the Ten Tribes, until the reign of Hoshea, who abolished them. Under his rule, the members of the Ten Tribes finally had access to Yerushalayim, yet they still did not make the obligatory pilgrimage there during the *Shalosh Regalim* (three pilgrimage festivals). This was a terrible indictment of the Tribes, for until then, they could have pleaded that extenuating circumstances had prevented them from being *oleh la-regel*. Now that they persisted in refraining from going to Yerushalayim even though the roads were open, any protestations of innocence would ring hollow. Excuses were no longer acceptable. As a result, the Ten Tribes were punished with exile, not only for current failings, but for those of the past.

Similarly, for the past seventy years there could be no expectations that Soviet Jews would provide their children with a Torah education. Any attempt to do so could have been punishable by death. Now, however, that as many as a million Soviet Jews can be expected in *Eretz Yisroel*, what is to prevent them from enrolling their children in a Torah school? Only our indifference to their plight and our inaction in meeting this pressing, historic need will seal their fate. After all, who, if not we, recognizes, knows, and understands the nature of the choice before them?

This is truly a crucial time: Great opportunities are opening up to us, but if we fail to respond to them, the loss could be of tragic proportions.

Following that *hisorrerus* (inspirational address), a group of *baalei battim* convened by Chinuch Atzmai leaders joined Rabbi Pam and other *Roshei Yeshiva* at the convention, that very evening, to see what can be done. Consider the numbers: over a 15-month period, Sept. 1990 to Dec. 1991, 500,00 Russian Jews are expected to come to *Eretz Yisroel*. 150,000 will be school-age children. How will we absorb them into our schools? More to the point, can we fail to try to absorb them? As Rabbi Pam pointed out in his address that day, there is a dramatic difference between the two possibilities—enrollment in government schools or in Chinuch Atzmai-Torah Schools. It is the difference [the *Rosh Yeshiva* said] “between the sacred and the profane, between light and darkness,” and especially “between Israel and the other nations.” The choice of schooling is a matter of two conflicting goals in self-fulfillment, two “*Niheyeh*’s”—two opposing expressions of “Let us be....” Either: “Let

us be like all nations, Israel,” or: “Let us and our offspring and the offspring of all Your people, the House of Israel—all of us—be knowledgeable of Your Name and students of Your Torah for its own sake” (*Birkas HaTorah*).

At the request of Rabbi Pam and other *Roshei Yeshiva*, a working committee was organized to examine the issues, to see what American Jewry can do to provide resources, and to determine how to best put to work the funds that are available. Time is of the essence. After all, at this writing, every night brings 500 new children into *Eretz Yisroel*... children we cannot afford to ignore.

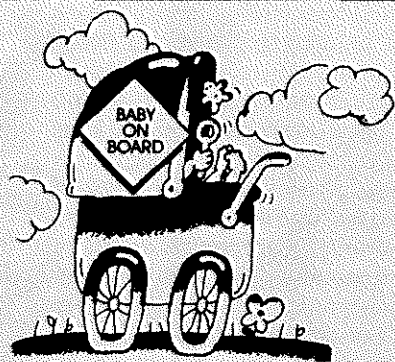
MISSION TO ISRAEL

A meeting of the *Moetzes Gedolei HaTorah* was called, at which three *baalei battim*—members of the larger committee—were asked to go to *Eretz Yisroel* to see what could be done to encourage the Russian immigrants

to embrace a Torah life. (The three were Mordechai Neustadt, Chairman of Agudath Israel's Vaad L'Hatzolas Nidchei Yisroel; David Singer, a member of the Board of trustees of Chinuch Atzmai; and myself.) We knew something had to be done, but were concerned whether the Russians would be receptive. After all, they had so many problems: They come without jobs, without a place to live, they don't speak the language, and have been uprooted from a country where their ancestors had lived for centuries. Would they be interested in religious education under such circumstances?

After intense meetings with dozens of Israeli and Russian activists and hundreds of Russian children and their parents, we have found that the answer is an unequivocal Yes. In fact, the enormity of their problems makes it easier for us to reach out to them, to befriend them, and to bring them closer to *Yiddishkeit*.

They need help and encouragement along every step of the way, and



DOUBLE YOUR JOY

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if the *frum* community expresses concern, they will be more disposed to enroll their children in a Yeshiva, to experience *Yiddishkeit* for the first time. The Russian Jews that are coming are open and accessible.

But what's the most effective way to reach them? To answer that question, we turned to the *Gedolim* of *Eretz Yisroel* for guidance: *Hagaon Harav Elazar Schach*, the *Vishnitzer Rebbe*, and *Hagaon Horav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach*. They all gave the same response: Work with the children. The 150,000 children have not been exposed to the full brunt of the atheistic Russian society. They can be salvaged, and can bring their parents along with them.

We not only heard it, we saw it happening. We met with *bnei yeshiva* who were campaigning to enroll children in *yeshivos*; they were "adopting" Russian Jews in far-flung communities, and were prepared to do more with just modest outside assistance.

We met with *Rabbonim* from cities all over *Eretz Yisroel*—from Carmiel in the north to Ofakim and Rechovoth in the south—who were reaching out to Russian families, were struggling to meet the needs of the Russian immigrants and were meeting with success...but who could do so much more with adequate resources. We met with dozens of activists, many themselves Russian *olim* who became *frum* and who are working to set up new schools, attract families and provide the environment necessary to bring Russian families back to *Yiddishkeit*. But who desperately need funds to accomplish these goals.

We saw progress being made in reaching Russian Jewish children. Among the many places we visited was a Chinuch Atzmai school in Haifa. Three months ago, this school had no Russian children. Now 150 such children are there, learning Torah, reciting *berachos*, rediscovering their Jewish identity. One girl who came two months ago, recited the *Asseres Hadibros* (Ten Commandments) by heart for us. Others who came to *Eretz Yisroel* days earlier were learning to read and write Hebrew. They were discovering

After intense meetings with dozens of Israeli and Russian activists and hundreds of Russian children and their parents, we have found that the enormity of their problems makes it easier for us to reach out to them, to befriend them, and to bring them closer to *Yiddishkeit*.

Moshe Rabbeinu and his *Torah*, and they were responding enthusiastically. At another Chinuch Atzmai school in Kfar Shalem, north of Tel Aviv, we saw dozens of recently-arrived Russian children learning in hallways and converted broom clos-

ets, and hundreds more begging to be enrolled in the school, but unable to because of a total lack of capacity.

Clearly, it is not difficult to reach Russian families, both children and adults. The only limitation is in terms of the resources that we can provide.



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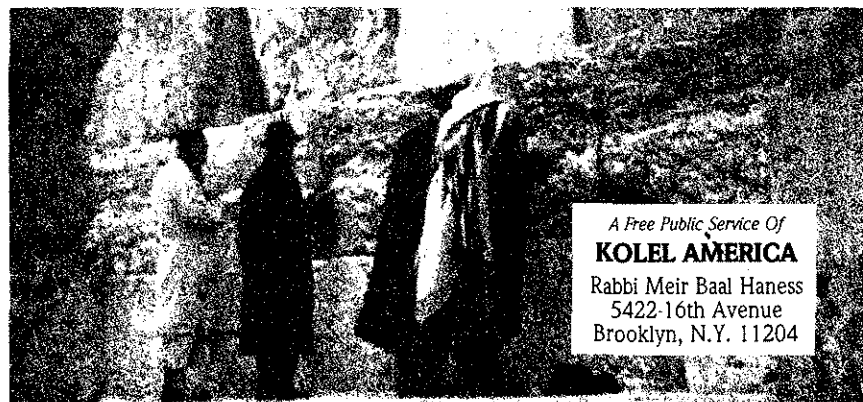
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ENCOURAGED...BUT CHALLENGED

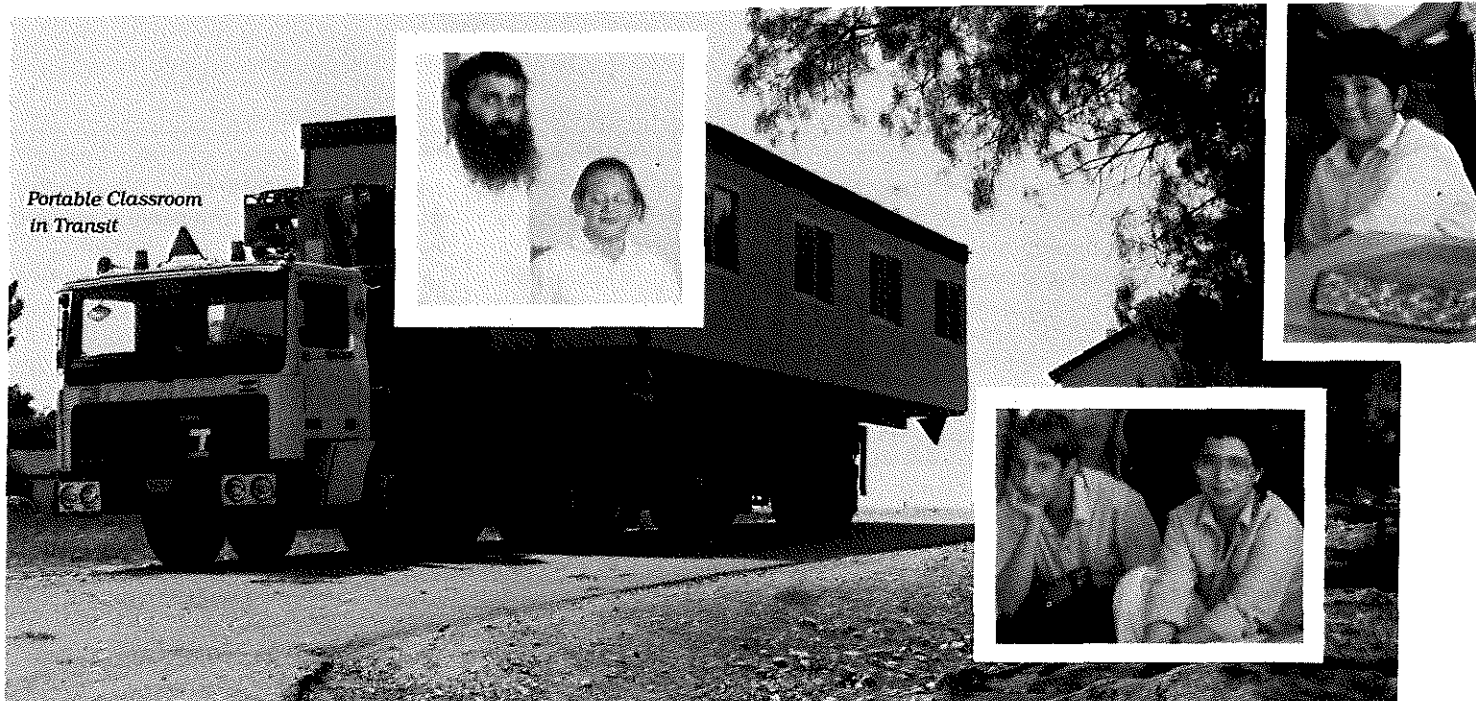
We came back from *Eretz Yisroel* encouraged, but acutely aware of the dimensions of the challenge we are facing. Encouraged, because people were ready to absorb Torah learning and *chinuch l'mitzvos*, but actively aware of the enormous dollar commitment required—money that must come from sources other than *Eretz Yisroel*. Again the words that Rabbi Pam had spoken echoed in our ears:

The current economic downturn certainly figures in the nature of our response to pressing demands. This is addressed by the Prophet Malachi (according to the Talmud, he was Ezra) who takes *Klal Yisroel* to task for withholding *ma'aser* (tithes to the *Levi'im* and the poor). He asks them, in effect, if they are using their economic losses (he calls them "curses") as a pretext for "stealing from Him," by holding on to the *ma'aser* in their possession. To the contrary, says Malachi, you should increase your contributions! "Test Me with this," says G-d, if I will not fail to open up the storehouses in the heavens, and empty them out for you, with blessings beyond count" (*Malachi* 3,10).

An economic recession, then, is reason to increase one's *tzeddaka* and activities on behalf of Torah, for the greater the scope of our activity, all the more will G-d shower us with His limitless bounty.

As our first priority, we must help local activist groups in *Eretz Yisroel* and give them the resources to reach out to Russian families, to provide these families with encouragement and assistance in finding homes and jobs. As part of these efforts, the children will be encouraged to enroll in *frum* schools.

At the same time, we must move quickly to increase school capacity, so as not to lose the momentum. Schools in *Eretz Yisroel* are mostly filled to capacity, and cannot absorb many more children. If we wait until we erect new school buildings, the battle will be lost. The only way to meet the anticipated demand is to



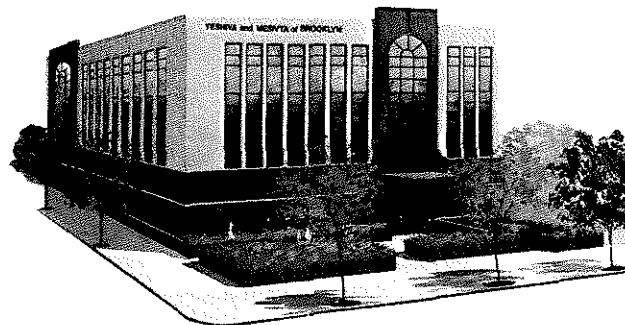
buy portable classrooms. A portable classroom costs approximately \$20,000, enabling us to save thirty Jewish *nefashos* (souls), and the *doros* that will come from them. We need the classrooms—not by the dozens, but by the hundreds—to accommodate all the new children that we can attract. After all, some

30,000 children entered *Eretz Yisroel* in the last four months of 1990 alone. Providing classroom space for just 10,000 of the 150,000 children who will come by 1991 will cost \$7 million. And we cannot stop there.

A third vital component must be afternoon programs for Russian children, because we cannot expect

them to become committed to Torah without extra help. If they absorb *Yiddishkeit* until 1 P.M., and are reunited with secular society in the afternoon, we cannot succeed in winning the hearts and minds of these children. There must be a place for them to spend their afternoons in a Torah environment...a place where

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they get help with their studies, language assistance, where they can further master the basic concepts of Judaism, where their parents can also be helped.

Afternoon programs can be provided all over the country. And here,

too, the costs are staggering. The government pays for the teachers' salaries for the morning hours. Supervising and providing a proper afternoon environment, however, must be funded privately, and this can run \$1,000 a child a year or \$10,000,000

for 10,000 children.... That may strike the reader as a huge sum, but is it a lot to save future *doros*?

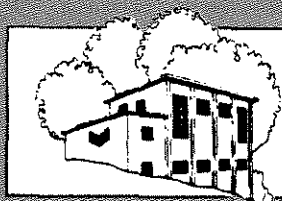
With this three-point program—funding for enrollment recruiting, for additional school capacity, and for supplemental educational programs for the afternoon—we can succeed in winning the hearts and minds of these children and their parents, changing the *tzura* (shape) of Eretz Yisroel.

Shortly after our return to America, the Fund for Russian Education in Israel was formed at the behest of the *Gedolei Yisroel*, to implement this program. And work began immediately. As of this writing, \$500,000, have been raised due in large part to a generous gift from the estate of the late Harry Beren ז"ל.

These funds have been committed:

- to buy 13 portable classrooms to accommodate 400 children;
- to fund two outreach centers, in Ofakim and in Carmiel;
- to sponsor two *yeshivos* for Russian teenagers—one under the auspices of *Peduyim Letzion*, a group of American and Russian *bnei Torah-askanim* in Eretz Yisroel who are following up on boys reached through the efforts of the Vaad LaHatzolas Nidchei Yisroel in the Soviet Union; and one to be operated by Karlin-Stolin Chassidim, to serve *olim* who have been reached by that group in Kiev;
- and to help various local enrollment efforts.

But this is only a start. Given the enormous number of immigrant children expected, we must think in large terms. As mentioned, this is certainly not the most opportune time to raise funds. But *Klal Yisroel* does have the capacity to respond in times of recession. Witness the Federation's success in Operation Exodus: \$425,000,000 was raised in just one year to meet the physical needs of the Russian *olim* to pay for their transportation and housing resettlement. To make the Russian *aliya* a meaningful journey in the fullest sense of the word, we must meet not just the immigrants' material needs, but those of the *neshama* as well. ■



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CONFRONTING THE SOVIET JEWISH MIRACLE:

“The Russians Are Coming, The Russians Are Coming.”

“Let’s Go Hide.”

“What is Happening to American Jewry?” —Revisited

BUT FIRST THE AMERICANS.

The truth is, we ho-hummed the Lachman-Kosman report that appeared in *The New York Times* (June 4, 1990). Unfairly so, and unfortunately so.

“What is Happening to American Jewry?” they asked. Their answer—“The rapidly assimilating Jewish Community is crumbling, and something must be done.” Seymour Lachman and Barry Kosman were not the first to detect the signs. Many other observers have already written about the assimilation, the mixed marriages, the childless communities, the accelerating erosion. But *they* said it on the prestigious Op-Ed page of *The Times*.

Evidently the Lachman-Kosman strategy worked: publication of this

piece shook up the secular Jewish world—even if for an instant. Jewish newspapers across the nation carried carefully researched response articles, examining views from the pessimistic (“It’s true, it’s terrible.”) to the desperately optimistic (“Let’s enrich their lives Jewishly so the children of intermarriage will choose us.”). At the very least, Lachman and Kosman brought the question of being Jewish to breakfast nooks and conference tables throughout America. The impact will inevitably be positive: the most dangerous environment for Jewish youth is one in which the Jewish question is not on the agenda. When there is debate, where there are disputes, then we can at least hope to find commitment. Even for this alone, we must thank Lachman and Kosman for dropping the boulder into the pond.

The reaction of some in the Torah community was to criticize *The Times* piece for not mentioning the successes of the Orthodox Jewish community—success that has blinded us

to our failures, and to an extent, clouded our judgment. However, specifically mentioning the Orthodox would have been a strategic blunder, in that it would have deflected its impact on the secular Jewish society, and helped us not a whit.

The Jewish Observer’s reaction (JO, September 1990) was incisive and balanced. He focused on our role: we must hold on to our own, and then some. “Choose a project, think of it as an extension of yourself, and act accordingly....The ripple effect can be astounding.” To me, it struck just the right note.

In describing the elements of our success, the aforementioned article brought to mind the heroic struggles those hardy few who managed to survive the lack of *yeshivos* in the 1920’s and 1930’s: We developed our own leadership, met American society on its own ground, reached a *modus vivendi*, and then transcended it, with an uncompromising Torah-based Judaism....We have a right to be proud: the five and a half

Dr. Bernard Fryshman, Professor of Physics at the New York Institute of Technology, and Executive Vice President of AARTS, has recently been reappointed to the National Advisory Committee on Accreditation and Institutional Eligibility.

million Americans who may (וְהוּא) vanish are the responsibility of those who could have provided the Jewish education, but didn't. It's *their* fault—but us? Our hands are clean....Or so we thought.

THEN THE RUSSIANS CAME.

Not like the '70's when the numbers were tractable, our expectations were shining, and hopes were high. A few sticks of furniture, a dose of friendship, an exposure to a Pesach Seder. The rest would follow. It didn't—and a sense



of resignation set in. "The Russians are different," we said, "and there is little we can do."

A handful of people—among them, a vibrant group operating out of Agudath Israel—including the founders of Be'er HaGolah, and others resisted. Minor successes were reported, and then the first Russian *mechanchim* came. With the

"shprach" as well as the dedication, with expertise and *Yiras Shomayim*. Suddenly, the Russian child in a yeshiva setting did not seem so strange. A program in Queens grew eight-fold in 1989-90, and saw Russian parents taking their children out of public school to attend a yeshiva! All the seats in *yeshivos* dedicated to working with Russian Jewish children filled up—and by September, 1990, someone estimated that there were 1000 Russian Jewish children attending *yeshivos* of one kind or other in Brooklyn. That's the success part.

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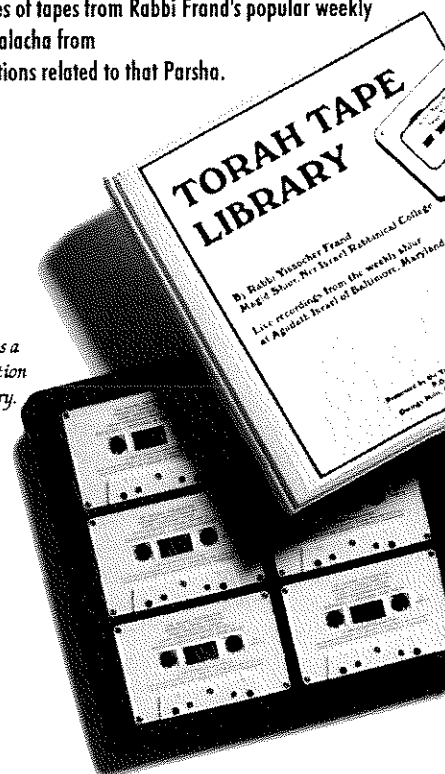
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THERE'S A FAILURE PART, AS WELL...

...**B**ecause outside there are probably an equal number of children attending public school who would be in yeshiva if there were seats available. And there aren't.

We are trying. One group of dedicated laymen is desperately trying to fund a school for Russian children who were literally hand-picked. Only families where parents are prepared to play an active, positive role in the child's Jewish education were considered. The Yeshiva is now filled, with a waiting list of an additional 150 children.¹ Hand picked—but still in public school.

Another group has also undertaken to support a Russian program—"but we can't handle any more." In the past it was only a *mechanech* (educator) who could legitimately say, "I can't handle any more." He (or she) knows how many children he can educate within his class without compromising the education of the group as a whole. But how can a *baalhaboss* (layman) say he cannot provide a Jewish education for any more children?

Suppose the Russian Jews decided one day that their children are just as important as our own? Suppose they brought their children into our *yeshivos* a few minutes before the big yellow buses arrived? When our kids come home crying, "Someone is sitting in my chair"—what would we do? Call the police? Go to a *Din Torah*? Open new *yeshivos*?

What if our worst nightmares came true and the American Torah community had to relocate, say to Montreal? That community would welcome us with open arms, to the extent of its ability, and more. They would help us get jobs, homes, make Bar Mitzvas for our children, run classes in French for us. Only, they probably couldn't provide all of our children with a yeshiva education. What would we feel?

1. It used to be 200 children, but one young man, a Nachshon Ben Aminadav, challenged the school to open an additional two classes. "I'll get you the money," he said. He and his friends must still raise an additional \$75,000 before the end of year.

And how do the Russian immigrants feel, with their children in public school?

Haven't we been here before? The Jews of the '20's, '30's, and often the '40's had Kosher food, gave their male children a *bris*, spoke *Yiddish*, went to *shul* and did all the things we are trying to help the Russian Jews do. But they didn't have *yeshivos* for their children. Lachman-Kosman, I hope you are listening, because here is the fodder for your article 20 years



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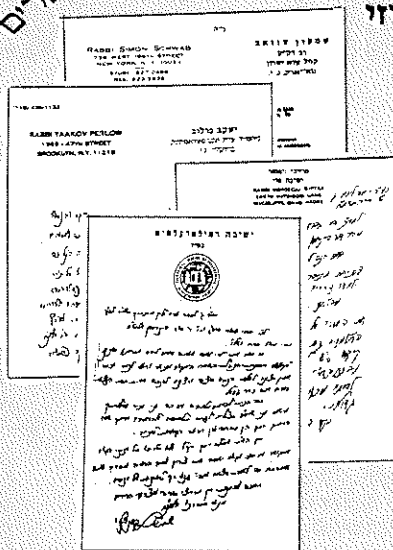
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Rabbi Dovid Heinemann - מנהל



hence, when the question will be: How did this Russian Jewish community of perhaps 250,000 souls (80,000 immigrants in 1990 and 1991 alone) vanish without a trace (לר)?

But this time our hands won't be so clean. We won't be the few saved from among the masses lost to assimilation, because *somebody else* didn't build *yeshivos*. We are now the *somebodies*. We know the solution, we know the stakes, and we know that there are as many as a thousand Jewish children attending public school because there is no room in our *yeshivos* for them.

FIRST THE EXCUSES.

We haven't enough *mechanim* with the expertise and experience needed to succeed with Russian Jewish children. Nor do we have the *menahallim* prepared to devote a lifetime of sleepless nights to run the new *mosdos* that we need. Two excellent reasons for us to sit on our hands. Except that finding the human resources is not our responsibility; providing the physical resources is.

I am convinced that were we to have the *yeshiva* seats, we would have the people. More, the *menahallim* of our existing *yeshivos* would all pitch in to share curricula, resolve *bris* problems, apply for textbooks, prepare for registration, organize lunch programs. And Agudath Israel's *hishtadlus* would be there, with connections and expertise.... We are a community with a vast reservoir of talent, of good will, of *chesed*, and they will all be brought to bear.

Which brings us back to money. And more excuses.

We have no *Kehilla*, we cannot tax one another. Often we focus on organized communal bodies like Torah Umesorah, Agudath Israel, the *Roshei Yeshivos*, the Chassidic communities.... But these bodies have limited resources, we know too well. Diverting charity is not an answer either.² The only way we can hope to marshal our communal resources is from the perspective of a community

2. Quite the contrary! Our *yeshivos* and *mosdos* require new funds, plus more painful belt-tightening to survive. But somehow the nature of this emergency is not being heard. The plight of the Russian Jewish children may bring a new sense of discipline and new resources for all.

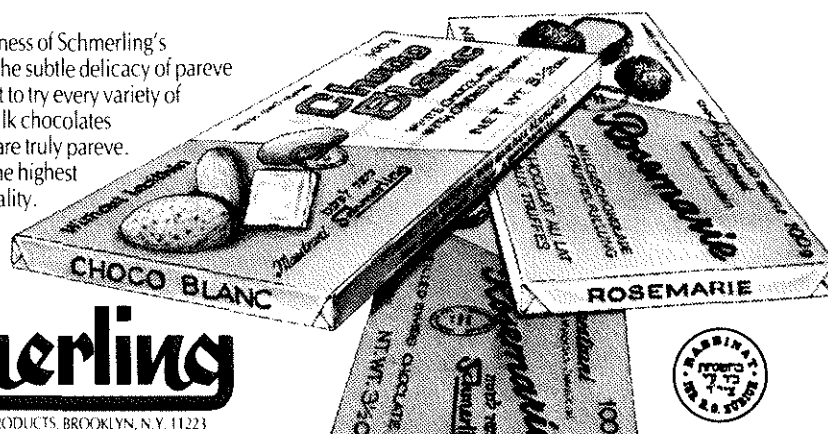


whose own basic needs are being served.

We have come full circle. We are looking at our past—the 1920's, '30's and '40's. Life was hard, money scarce, thousands of Jewish children in public school. What we do now is a mirror of what we would have done then. And our role with respect to the Russian Jews will determine what would have been our role with respect to the 5 million-plus American Jews. We were blessed with visionary leaders—Reb Shraga Feivel Mendlowitz and Rabbi Aharon Kotler זצ"ל, for example—who charted a course and issued a call to others to assist them. There were giant laymen who heard that call. There were builders and supporters of Torah who built *yeshivos* in the American desert. We would like to think that we would have been among the heroes in that war. Then. But what about now?

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SOLUTIONS

There are two classes of solutions. The first kind is highly preferable and consists of shifting the burden on to someone else. At one time, we would have said "get it from the rich." Actually, we probably wouldn't have had to say it, because those yeshiva graduates more financially blessed than most, gave before having to be told. They invested their energies, their time, and their money so that problems often never reached our consciousness. The times have changed. Many of those who we think are well-to-do are a step away from a precipitous fall. Part of their burden has been picked by their colleagues, but a share must fall on those other than the extremely rich.

But even as we spread the burden, most of us can still point to someone else.

- For example, we can safely ask the thousands who usually take more than one vacation trip a year, to cut back \$1,000 or so on annual vacation expenses and contribute that money (over and above their *maaser*) to Torah. That should help considerably.

And there are the ideas that are a little harder to implement. Because they involve all of us:

- The vice president of my school told me that he refuses to water his lawn because it's a criminal waste of water. Another colleague lives with a shabby lawn because he won't use environmentally dangerous chemicals. With people giving up manicured lawns to save the planet, could we not give up cultivating grass in order to cultivate Jewish children? How many lawns (at \$500 to \$2000 a year) are needed to educate a Jewish child?

- Everyone else deals with excessive costs of *simchos*, so I will forego the pleasure. I will only add that I attended a Bar Mitzva where ten men and assorted wives and children made a *seudas bar mitzva* for an outstanding boy, whose yeshiva education included *midos* as well as Torah. The total cost was probably about \$250, and I am told by a re-

We have come full circle. We are looking at our past—the 1920's, '30's and '40s. Life was hard, money scarce, thousands of Jewish children in public school. What we do now is a mirror of what we would have done then.

sponsible halachic authority that the boy is just as "*bar mitzva*'ed" as if his father had spent the \$5000 he could readily afford on a shindig....

- My *esrog* cost \$100 this year, and I estimate that \$4000 left the average *shtetle* in *esrog* money, when a tenth would have sufficed to give everyone a chance to do all the necessary blessing and even a little waving.³

3. Now that I have learned to keep the *arba minim* fresh for more than three days, it is doubly difficult to give up the personal pleasure of my own *esrog*. But let the *esrog* stand as a point of reference, as more practical readers than I come up with their list of expendables.

Conservatively, we are probably spending over 3 million dollars a year on *esrogim*. Leaving aside the halachic considerations, are we prepared to give up our *esrogim*, so that hundreds of Jewish children get a Jewish education?

It needn't be *esrogim*, of course. We could address the *shalach manos* explosion, which threatens to overwhelm one and all. To the best of my understanding, few of the 100,000 or so *shalach manos* senders spends less than \$100 a year. I guarantee one can satisfy the most stringent halachic requirement of *shalach*

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HOW WILL THE ABOVE SOLUTIONS BE DESCRIBED?

Snide? Cruel? Cynical? Quixotic? Just a while ago, several young people from Flatbush gathered in my home to see what we could do about The Problem. At

10:30 p.m., Rabbi G. arrived to tell us about a day-care program for Russian children he and his wife had set up at the suggestion of a *Gadol*.

Fifty-five children were being served, from 2-1/2 to 5 years old—with requests from hundreds more. He was ready to close down, unable to cover a loss of \$3000 a week. Fifty-five Jewish children, who might never get another opportunity to learn the *Aleph-Beis!*

By the time this article is read, the center may be closed, the children



We are aware of the dire emergency in which we find ourselves. We are awaiting direction, we are awaiting the disciplined state of emergency, which would ensure that everyone is doing his fair share.

back home, or in one of the many programs that missionaries have set up in Brighton.

The wild-eyed money-saving proposals have now become a little more practical, haven't they?

The real problem is the perception "that nobody will listen." The truth is everyone is prepared to give of himself—if everyone else does so, too. There is a will to do, a willingness to give, a readiness to share. As a part of many.

And this, perhaps, is the role of the author—to signal to those who read this, that we must inform those who lead us, that we are ready to be led. We are aware of the dire emergency in which we find ourselves. We are awaiting direction, we are awaiting the disciplined state of emergency, which would ensure that everyone is doing his fair share.

Hopefully, we will be able to read the 2010 Lachman-Kosman Report with a sense of relief and gratitude. And with as little guilt as we did the report of 1990....



To every Jewish woman I say, The Torah is your inheritance. Come and claim it.

דברים, תורת.

This medley of tapes entitled "Woman to Woman inspiration," give me deep Chizuk (strength) as a woman. And I hope you find that they do the same for you.

#1 Women in The Torah. The goal of this shiur is to help today's woman make a true connection to the *אמהות* and other women in the Torah who blazed the trail for us all.

#2 Women in The Nevim (The Prophets) In this discussion we attempt to glean the unique *עבודת* (personal service of Hashem) of each inspiring woman from the Prophets.

#3 Aspirations. From a thought-provoking

paragraph in *Sefer Hachinukh* (Duties of the Heart), we find a recipe for the development of our true potential and the stimulation of spiritual growth.

#4 Shalom Bais (Harmony in the home) What does it mean to "Love thy neighbor as thyself?" *ואהבת לרעך כמוך* How is this the absolute cornerstone of marriage?

#5 The Aishes Chayil - (Woman of Valor) Let us magnify for ourselves the meaning of select passages (Proverbs) that deal with the "Woman of Valor." Thus we may merit to assimilate them into the bloodstream of our everyday lives.

I invite you to share in our rich Torah Heritage and *ה"ה* there will be more tapes to follow.

Wishing you *בטוב*.

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Tehila Jaeger

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The Torah tells us that a **מת מצוה** (the burial of an abandoned corpse) supercedes every **mitzvah** in the Torah. Even a **Kohain Gadol** (High Priest) on his way to the **Bais Hamikdash** (Holy Temple in Jerusalem) must defile himself in order to tend to a **מת מצוה**.

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Each of the fifty thousand indigent Jews buried in the Hebrew Free Burial Association's cemeteries is someone's child. Each person is someone's grandparent, neighbor or friend. Each has a face, a name, a history. It might be someone you knew. Someone you loved.

Today, in light of the current economic picture, the frightening prospect of not being able to give a poor Jew a decent burial has become a stark reality.

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CONFRONTING THE SOVIET JEWISH MIRACLE:

When Oksana and Anatoly Are on Your Guest List...



So, you've invited a Russian family for *Shabbos* and you don't know what to do, right? Wrong! You have not invited a Russian family at all—but a Jewish family, recent immigrants from the Soviet Union, will soon grace your *Shabbos* table. It may seem insignificant to you, but being thought of as “Jewish” as opposed to “Russian” is extremely important to Soviet Jewish immigrants.

Now that we have helped to alter your thought processes, let's try to give you a few Do's and Don'ts so that you will enjoy your guests, and they will enjoy being with you.

First, keep smiling! Recent medical research has shown that the physical act of smiling helps to reduce nervous tension—and you'll have plenty of that! So you may as well smile and enjoy yourself.

Eliezer Gillig, who is fluent in Russian, spent the summer in Kiev, where he was involved in running summer camps for Jewish children. His “There Are Some Ways You Can Help” was featured in JO, May '89. He lives in Brooklyn.

Secondly, be yourself! If you usually sit at your *Shabbos* table in a model coat, by all means feel free to do so. The more natural you feel, the more your true feelings of *Ahavas Yisroel* will shine through to your guests. People who were raised under the Soviet banner are much more “laid back” than typical Orthodox Jews, so if your Venetian blinds are dusty, or the table-cloth is wrinkled, it is NOT an indication that your talents as a *balebusta* are suspect. It is probably an indication that you have more important things to worry about. Your guests will feel more comfortable in a home that has that “lived-in” look.

Serve the foods you enjoy making, save your strength for sparkling conversation, and Enjoy! Your guests already appreciate your invitation more than you can imagine. If they didn't, they wouldn't be coming.

Don't be surprised if Anatoly, Oksana, and little Igor show up carrying a bag with a bottle of Gallo Wine, and a bouquet

of flowers. Flowers are tremendously important in Soviet culture—they brighten up an otherwise unimaginably drab existence. Anatoly and Oksana have not yet been taught that carrying is forbidden on *Shabbos* or that Gallo wine is not kosher. Put the wine aside and keep mum about the carrying.

Greet them warmly and show them to their seats. Do not tell them to choose a seat; show them where they should sit. If you have children, they should have been previously told not to stare or to comment about the guests' clothing, accents, hair-styles, etc. They should be encouraged to share their toys with Igor. Children can become friends quickly.

Oksana will not have her head covered. (Georgie and Jacqueline haven't yet made it in Minsk.) Please don't offer her a *tichel*, unless 1) you are wearing one and 2) she asks for it. If you can't accept the concept of a bareheaded woman at your *Shabbos tisch*, it would probably be better to leave the *hachnossas orchim* to

somebody else—seriously!

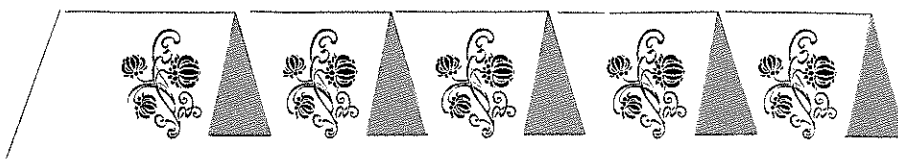
Speak slowly and clearly. It may be necessary to repeat yourself several times, to say the same thing over again once or twice using different words, in order to be comprehended, so that your guests can understand you. (Get the picture?)

At the first meeting, do NOT talk too much about Torah. DO talk about the difficulty of the immigrants' material predicament. Get Anatoly to tell you about his profession, and commiserate with Oksana about Igor's recurrent ear infections. Anatoly and Oksana are probably well-educated by Soviet standards, and feel bad that here in America their professional status is not respected. Say to them, "I really admire your courage in coming to this foreign country. It must be so hard for you to find that your training is not appreciated enough in America to get you a really good job." Voice their concerns and complaints—they'll sense that you understand, and even though you're not in a position to help them, you do appreciate them.

As much as you shouldn't talk about Torah, it might be a good idea to explain why you make *Kiddush*, use *lechem mishna*, wash for "hamotzi," refrain from speaking until after you eat the challah, dip the challah in salt, use a separate fork for the fish, etc. etc. Assist the guests in making *berachos*, translate them, and explain why we make them. Any explanations should be very, very brief.

You may think that your *zemirots* are the most beautiful thing this side of the Metropolitan Opera, but for the sake of your guests, keep them to a minimum, unless you see that the guests are singing along with obvious enjoyment. (By the way, Oksana may be enjoying the singalong more than Anatoly.) Perhaps you might ask Anatoly to sing a Russian song, if he knows one. (You won't know what he's singing about anyhow, and some of the *niggunim* are hauntingly beautiful.) If you know any Russian Jewish songs, by all means, share them.

Never say anything along the lines of "Isn't *Shabbos* beautiful?" It's



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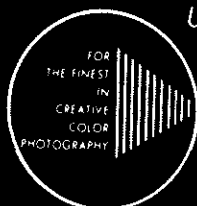
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At the first meeting,
do NOT talk too
much about Torah.
DO talk about the
difficulty
to the immigrants'
material predicament.

quite possible, and perhaps even probable, that Anatoly and Oksana think it's a bore! That's not a reflection on you, or even on *Shabbos*—it's merely another manifestation of how well Lenin and Stalin, et al, did their job of eradicating *Yiddishkeit*.

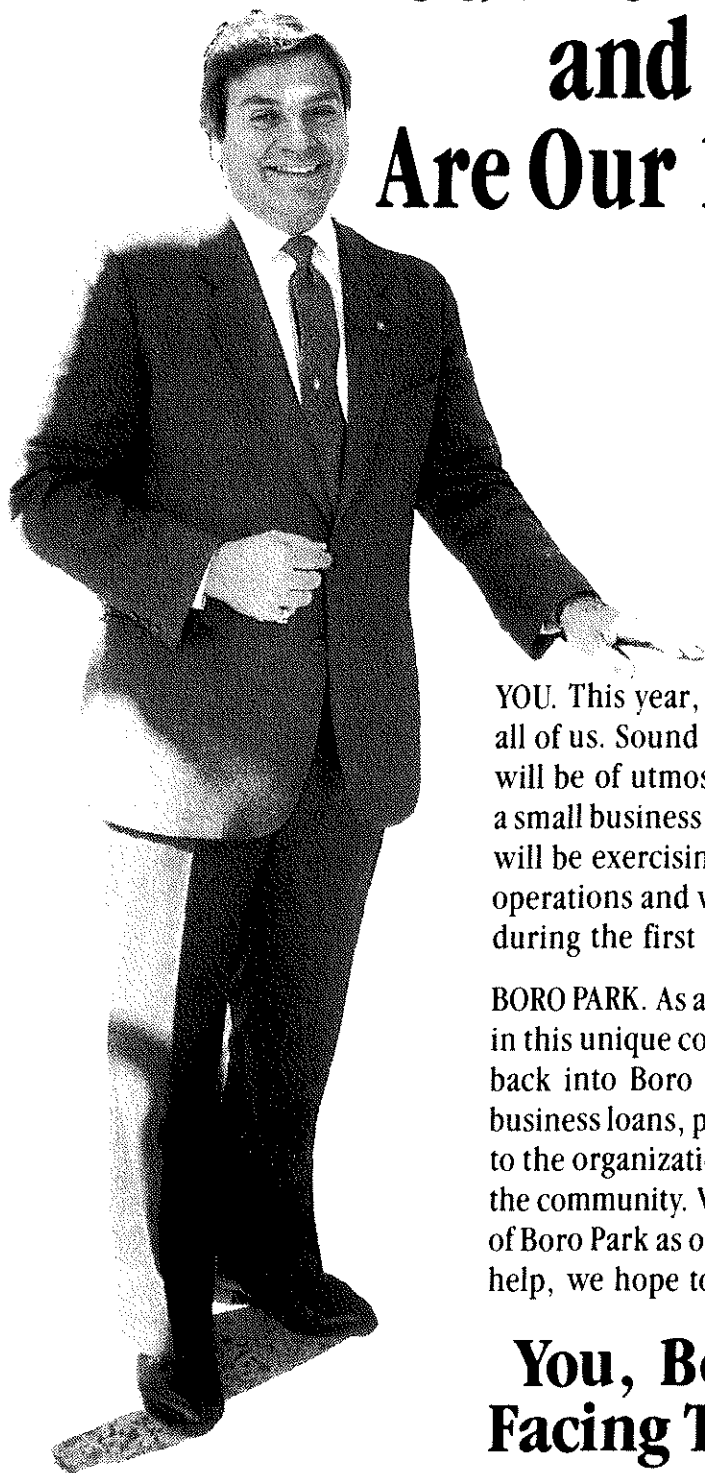
If possible, have some Russian-language printed matter on Jewish topics in the house, that Anatoly and Oksana can peek at. They will, perhaps, ask if they could borrow it. Now, you can explain that carrying on *Shabbos* is forbidden, but you'd be happy to drop it off at their house on Sunday morning or afternoon. What time will be convenient? You can insist, since they will probably not want to trouble you. Of course, it's no trouble at all, you will assure them, and besides it will be a good excuse to get together again. Or perhaps Tuesday evening would be more convenient.

Just in case the *seuda* continues until *Mincha* time, it would probably be better NOT to invite Anatoly to *shul*, unless your *shul* is one of the rare ones that has a stash of Russian *Siddurim* and *seforim*. Give him the choice of staying behind or coming with you. *Shalosh seudos* should be enjoyed at home.

At parting time, tell Anatoly and Oksana how much you enjoyed their company, and you hope they will be available in two weeks to come again, because you would like to invite them. (Don't just say something like: "The door is always open.") In between, before the week is over, give them a call and ask if you could stop by for an hour or so to further your acquaintance. Do it. And don't forget the flowers. ■

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The bleak era of the Holocaust was relieved by very few bright spots; one of them was a small network of Orthodox rescue activists located throughout the free world: in the U.S., Britain, Switzerland, Turkey, Eretz Yisroel, Sweden, and Tangier. Only recently have some of their extraordinary efforts come to light. These people were not professional relief or even communal workers, or heads of Jewish defense organizations. They were rabbis, roshei yeshiva, laymen and women, whose dedication to the Torah's dicta of areivus (collective responsibility), pikuach nefesh (rescue), and pidyon shevuyim (redemption of captives) catapulted them to leadership in uncharted arenas, and guided them to resort to unorthodox means of rescue which the Jewish establishment was loathe to use.

Several books have been written on the topic, notably *Thy Brother's Blood*, by **David Kranzler**, author of the following article. Among the fifteen chapters in the book portraying heroic efforts to rescue Jewish lives during that tragic period, one deals briefly with the efforts of Mrs. Renee Reichman, ע"ה—a striking example of what a mother and housewife can achieve in times of national crisis. We present the following report on Mrs. Reichmann's remarkable achievements in hatzalah, during this month, marking her first Yahrzeit.



Renee Reichmann ע"ה and the Tangier Rescue Connection

ESCAPE TO SPAIN

Like Mrs. Recha Sternbuch,¹ another woman of valor, Mrs. Reichmann would have preferred to concentrate on the care of her husband and the raising of her

Dr. David Kranzler, historian and full professor (ret.) at CUNY, is the author of five books on the Holocaust, including *Japanese, Nazis and Jews: the Jewish Refugee Community of Shanghai 1938-1945*, and *Thy Brother's Blood: the Orthodox Jewish Response During the Holocaust*. Dr. Kranzler is presently completing two works: *616 Bedford: the Life and Times of Elimelech Tress*, and *The Greatest Hero of the Holocaust: the Man Who Stopped Deportations from Budapest to Auschwitz*. His *To Save A World: Orthodox Jewish Rescue Heroes* was just published by CIS.

childrer (one teenage daughter and five younger sons) rather than involvement in the life-and-death struggles of European Jewry. Moreover, while the Sternbuchs resided as citizens in Switzerland, the Reichmann's were refugees in Tangier, Spanish Morocco, and were trying to adjust to their new environment. But the call of destiny does not wait for convenience

Scion of the well-known Gestetner family, Renee hailed from Gyor while her husband came from Beled, both in Hungary. The Reichmanns were living in Vienna where Reb Shmaya

(Samuel) had established a thriving wholesale egg business.

Following the *Anschluss*, in March 1938, when Hitler marched into Austria, the Reichmanns sought a safe haven in Paris. Their respite in France was rather short, however, for on *Erev Shavuot*, with the rapid collapse of the French Army, the Reichmanns made a hasty flight southward, a few steps ahead of the Nazi troops. They readily obtained a ten-day transit visa through Spain and wended their way toward the southern border.

Mr. Reichmann went ahead into Spain to explore the situation. He had no problems at the border, where not even his passport was de-

1. See *Heroine of Rescue*, a book on Mrs. Sternbuch, by Joseph Friedenson and this author.

manded. When he asked whether he could bring in his family, the police responded in the affirmative: "As long as they come before six p.m., when the border closes."

Shmaya Reichmann returned with the rest of the family, along with a stranded Hungarian Jewish girl, who had joined them. A major obstacle to their entry was averted by a decent Spanish border policeman, who had noted the discrepancy in their passport, which listed six, not seven children. Instead of turning them back across the border, which would have been a certainty in "democratic" Switzerland, he helped them straighten out this snag with the help of the Hungarian Embassy in Madrid. Eventually the girl returned to her family in Hungary.

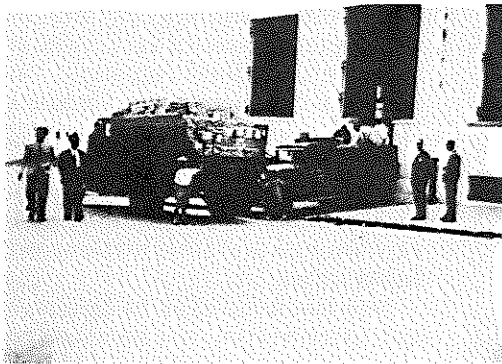
(Rather than the exception, this

the story of rescue from Tangier unfolds.)

In Spain, Reb Shmaya sought not only refuge but a place with at least the possibility for raising a *frum* family: a *minyan*, *kashrus*, and tutors to teach Torah to the five young boys. Since the latter part of the nineteenth century, Spain had a small, unobtrusive Jewish population in several cities, but virtually no religious life. The only feasible place seemed to be Tangier, in North Africa, just across the Straits from tip of Gibraltar. Previously an international city, it was shortly to be incorporated into Spanish Morocco after the fall of France. Tangier had an old Sephardi community and a small but growing Jewish refugee population that eventually numbered several hundred.

The Kleins requested that Mrs. Reichmann send packages of food from Tangier to their parents and brother. By that time, it became virtually impossible to send food packages from the United States, due to its moral support of Britain's naval blockade of German-occupied territory (America did not enter the war until December 8, 1941). The secular Jewish organizations, with their own boycott of Germany, made such a move unfeasible². Since Spain was ostensibly an ally of Nazi Germany, sending food from Spanish Morocco proved no problem, especially since it did not even involve American citizens.

In addition to helping the Kleins Mrs. Reichmann also sent food packages to Jews in hiding in Belgium and in France, with the help



The Reichmann sons near the truck-load of food packages sent from Tangier to concentration camps.



benevolent attitude on the part of all levels of Spanish authority as well as the populace at large, reflected the humanitarian character of a large proportion of the Spanish people. This, despite centuries of alleged antisemitism in a society virtually absent of any Jews since the expulsion of 1492, and in spite of General Francisco Franco's tenuous ties with Hitler. The ideological label of fascism did not necessarily spell antisemitism, at least in practice, just as democracy did not necessarily imply sympathy and help for Jews during those dark years. The Spanish, as well as the Italians, were not equivalent to the Germans, nor were Franco and Mussolini the same as Hitler. This is important to bear in mind as

A CALL FOR HELP, FROM NEW YORK

Renee Reichmann was diverted from caring for her family in the latter part of 1941, by a letter from a member of the Klein family, their friends from Vienna, who had moved to New York, where they would establish the well-known Barton's Candy Company. The youngest brother, Isaac, had remained with his parents. They had been unable to escape to the United States, and were confined in a ghetto in Poland. At that time, the general assumption was that Hitler merely wanted to starve the Jews in the ghettos, rather than to commit genocide.

of the French Jewish Underground. When she learned that many Jews had been deported to concentration camps, she suspected that she could send food there as well. She cabled her brother, Chesky Gestetner, in Bratislava, Slovakia, to send her names of Jews in the camps, and he responded with a list of some 1800 Jewish girls who had been among the first to be deported to Auschwitz-Birkenau, in the spring of 1942. In this manner, she began a major rescue effort that was to continue

2. For the story of Agudath Israel's valiant struggle to help their starving brethren in Poland in the face of opposition by the secular Jewish Organizations, see Chapter 7a in this author's *Thy Brother's Blood*.

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throughout the war, as well as for several years after the war.

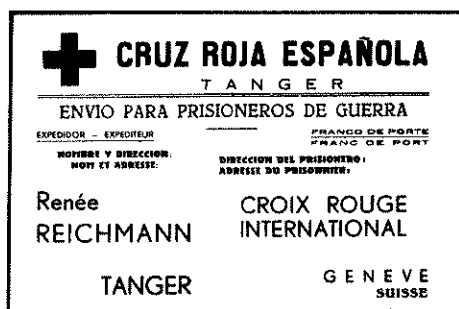
ESSENTIALLY A FAMILY AFFAIR

For some time, she financed this relief project by herself, with the help of some other financially successful refugees in Tangier. Her daughter, Eva, who had worked closely with her during these years, recalled, "My mother was the type to whom nobody dared say no. She just told them she expects a large donation, and they responded." Still, the relief project remained essentially a family affair. Eva, who rapidly achieved fluency in Spanish and French, was her mother's secretary, general assistant, as well as translator.

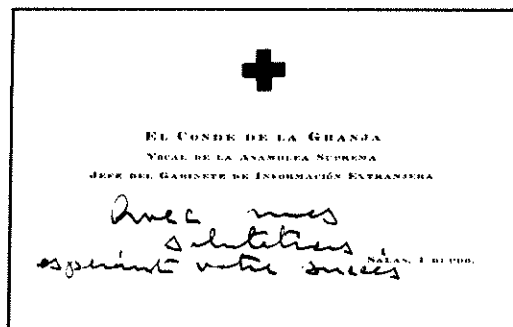
She solicited money and clothing from fellow Jews in Tangier and Tetuan, Spanish Morocco, as well as in Barcelona and Madrid. She insisted that the clothing, if second-hand, be in excellent condition. "We don't want to send them *shmattes*. They've already suffered more than enough," she insisted, also convincing Jewish factory owners in Madrid and Barcelona to donate hundreds of new blankets and other woolen goods to her cause.

Her frequent trips to Spain required travel visas and licenses from the "pro-German" Franco Government. Yet, in this as well as in many other requests, Mrs. Reichmann found the officials in Madrid helpful and even gracious. In addition, the Spanish Red Cross facilitated in the mailing of the thousands of packages to the camps. They even granted her permission to send the packages under their name, allowing her to print special labels (see illus.).

Since Spain was an ally of Germany, the rubric of the Spanish Red Cross (with full government approval) on the labels provided a far greater assurance that the packages would reach their intended recipients than even that provided for by the International Red Cross (IRC). This "guarantee" was reinforced by the labels' designation of the Jewish recipients as "prisoners of war," a privilege denied them by the IRC



Spanish Red Cross labels on packages of food sent to Jews in camps by Renee Reichmann.



Card of El Coude La Granja, president of the Spanish Red Cross.

until the summer of 1944. That is why throughout most of the war, Jews had not been included in the IRC's regular distribution of packages to inmates of the concentration camps.

Only by mid-July, 1944, did the IRC grant Jews in the camps this privileged status. This only came about after a relentless Swiss press campaign, which publicized the horrors of Auschwitz to the entire world, and evoked the first major public western reaction to Auschwitz, and the complicity of the Hungarians in the genocide of the Jews. This extraordinary press campaign which included over 120 Swiss newspapers and manifested itself in over 400 articles—many on front pages—had been instigated and orchestrated by George Mandel-Mantello, the Jewish First Secretary of the El Salvador Consulate in Switzerland, after his courier brought him copies of the Auschwitz Report and the Hungarian Report.³

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3. The former was based on the testimony of the two escapees from Auschwitz to the Slovak Jewish underground, headed by Rabbi Michael Ber Weissmandl and Gisi Fleischman, detailing the mass murder of 1,765,000 Jews in Auschwitz since April, 1942. The latter detailed the deportations of over 400,000 Hungarian Jews since April, 1944. See this author's "The Swiss Press Campaign that Halted Deportations to Auschwitz" in *Remembering for the Future* (Oxford: Oxford V. Press, 1988), pp. 156-170. See also *Thy Brother's Blood*, chapter 11E. This author is currently completing a book on the rescue exploits of George (Mandel) Mantello.

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privileges—saving many thousands of dollars in mailing expenses—it also spared the Reichmann's the arduous task of writing up all the addresses. All that was required was the recipient's name. Nor did the SRC set a quota on the number of packages; the only limit was the amount of money available. Food was obtained from local merchants at cost price.

Not a penny was spent on personnel, which consisted primarily of the Reichmann family—including all five boys—as well as a few friends, all volunteers. Every day, after school and private tutoring in Jewish subjects, the boys packed and loaded these packages, which by 1944 reached 2,000 per week.

Since the Reichmanns had no storage space, Mr. Aaron Cohen, a well-to-do Sephardi Jew, made his warehouse available every day after business hours, at about five p.m. Frequently, the strenuous work of sorting, packing and loading the packages would occupy the young volunteers until the wee hours of the morning.

MATZOS TO AUSCHWITZ

For Pesach 1944, Mrs. Reichmann had intended to provide packages of matzos to Auschwitz through the Jewish Community of Hungary. With the German occupation in March, 1944, however, that order could no longer be filled. Undaunted, she made arrangements to send matzos from Tangier, necessitating much additional work, though it took some prodding by Mrs. Reichmann of the Tangier Jewish Community to convince them of the need and urgency to have the matzos ready on time.

The arrival of the matzos was a great moral boost to the inmates, as was confirmed to this writer in an interview with Mrs. P., one of the recipients. She gave me the original label from the package, which she had guarded with her life. She recalled, that "even more precious than the food," which she shared with a few friends, "was the incredible idea that someone outside cared for us."

After that Pesach, she made her first contact with the Sternbuchs in

The crowning achievement of her work was the rescue of at least 1200 Jews in Budapest during the war's final agonizing months, in the latter half of 1944 and early 1945.

Switzerland, who then allocated many thousands of dollars from Vaad Hatzalah funds for her project. (Dispatching money was not a simple matter, and most of the time circuitous routes were used.) Vaad Hatzalah in New York granted her official status as its representative in Tangier, which among other things, enabled her to make free use of the War Refugee Board communications system. It also gave her added stature in dealing with both the American *charge d'affaires* and the Spanish Government.

HER CROWNING ACHIEVEMENT

The crowning achievement of her rescue work was the rescue of at least 1200 Jews in Budapest during the war's final agonizing months, in the latter half of 1944 and early 1945. This extraordinary effort began soon after the occupation of Hungary. Jews were seeking all means of avoiding the Nazi measures of forced ghettoization and then deportation to Auschwitz. One of the few ways of evading the Nazi net was by obtaining a foreign passport, which with a few notable exceptions was generally respected by the Germans.

Such an escape route, by means of bogus papers, was pioneered by the Sternbachs in 1941, through the "purchase" of Latin American passports, especially Paraguayan, and was emulated by several, but not all, other Jewish organizations. These life-giving documents were expensive, costing from 500 to 3,000 SF each. Only Salvadoran citizenship

papers were given gratis—by the George (Mandel) Mantello. His assistant, Dr. Mattieux Muller⁴, in charge of "producing" these papers, was a refugee from France, where he had headed its Agudath Israel office for a half century.

Within ten days, the previously mentioned Swiss press campaign triggered a world-wide protest—by the Pope, Roosevelt, Churchill, and King Gustave of Sweden (who then dispatched Wallenberg)—against the Nazi decimation of Hungarian Jewry. On July 7, Hungary's Regent Admiral Miklos Horthy ordered the halt in deportations from Budapest to Auschwitz, despite pressures by Eichmann to complete the Final Solution in Hungary, which by this time had taken the lives of about a half million Jews. This created a new and more promising situation for the surviving 150-200,000 Jews in and around Budapest.

For the first time, Sweden, Switzerland, Spain, the Papal Nuncio and

4. Muller had been introduced in 1943 to Mantello by Chaim Yisroel Eiss, another Agudah rescue activist in Switzerland, who had long been active in obtaining Latin American papers and in sending food packages to the Polish ghettos with the support of the Swiss Agudah and American Zeirei Agudath Israel youth organization, headed by Reb Elimelech Tress and Harry Goodman of London, secretary of World Agudath Israel, and important rescue activist. The Germans even gave some sort of protective status to holders of Palestinian Certificates as British subjects (enemy aliens), rather than being considered as totally defenseless, stateless. As a result of the recognition of the Latin America papers, especially the Salvadoran citizenship papers, the Swiss were able to convince the Hungarian Government to provide protective status to the holders of "Palestine Certificates."

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the International Red Cross took an active interest in preventing further deportations from Budapest. This became particularly important, as political conditions in the capital deteriorated after October 15, when Eichmann was able to oust the vacillating Admiral Horthy and install the totally Nazi-like Arrow Cross Szalasi regime, which authorized the Germans to murder or to deport the Jews.

Analogous to the famous rescue efforts of Raoul Wallenberg, but less

known, were those of Swiss Consul Charles Lutz, who provided Swiss *Schutzpasse* to thousands of Jews, placing several thousand in what became known as the "Glass House." He also took over the interests of a number of Latin American governments, especially El Salvador, and the many thousands of bearers of their papers. His buildings, together with those provided by the Swedes and the ICR, formed what became known as the International Ghetto, which housed the "foreign" Jews, and

afforded greater protection than for those in the more vulnerable Jewish Ghetto.

UNDER SPANISH PROTECTION

On July 12, four days after the arrival of Wallenberg from Sweden⁵, the Jewish Council of Budapest was informed that the Spanish Government had given its approval for 500 Jewish children and 70 accompanying adults to travel to Tangier. It had also requested that they be permitted to travel under the auspices of the International Red Cross (IRC), to which the latter agreed. Eichmann, however, refused to allow these children to go to Tangier, even protesting such protection of Jews by Germany's erstwhile ally. Meanwhile they were placed under the protection of the IRC as well as of Spain, and this provided the legal framework for the IRC to broaden its rescue to the protection of thousands of "foreign" civilians.

This was the culmination of much effort by Mrs. Reichmann, many miles away. It all began several months earlier, when leaders of the Orthodox community in Budapest, such as Philip Freudiger, Rabbi Chaim Roth and Samuel Frey, sought help from the Sternbachs in Switzerland to rescue as many Jewish children as possible, especially orphans. They, in turn, communicated with Mrs. Reichmann on the possibility of obtaining visas to Tangier for these children, an effort that required the approval of Madrid as well as the High Commissioner of Spanish Morocco.

Not having had any previous contact with the High Commissioner, Mrs. Reichmann sought the help of Rives Childs, the American *charge d'affairs* in Tangier, who was known for his good relations with him. In his memoirs, *Foreign Service Farewell*, Childs recalled his meeting with this indomitable Jewish woman:

5. Wallenberg also served temporarily as protector of the thousands of holders of the Salvador papers, until the Government in El Salvador extended its official recognition and Switzerland took over the interests of El Salvador in Budapest.



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duction to Mrs. Reichmann, then contacted General Orgaz and transmitted Mrs. Reichmann's plea, to which he received an affirmative answer. With Spanish and American intervention, the IRC provided a safe haven for this group for the balance of the war.

Word spread in Budapest of Reichmann's rescue effort, and more Jews appealed to Roth and Frey who contacted her once again via the Sternbuchs. Unfazed, Mrs. Reichmann made another appointment with Mr. Childs to present her case. When one of her children sug-

gested that perhaps she should try for 100 adults, she responded. "Let's ask for 700. He can always cut us down to 500."

The American charge d'affairs recalled this second plea as well, when he wrote:

After a few weeks Mme. Reichmann called on me again to inform me that the visas had been issued and the children saved. "And now, sir," she said, "would you be willing to approach General Orgaz again and ask him for visas for 700 adults?"

I could not help but smile. "Mme.

Reichmann, you Jews are all the same. You are never satisfied....But I can't say no," I added. So I went to Orgaz again and recounted this conversation I had with Mme. Reichmann. Smilingly, he said, "And I, in turn, can't say no."

Later Mme. Reichmann called to inform me that additional 700 adults had joined the original 500 children in a house which had been rented for their occupancy. Thanks to the visas they had received, they were accepted by the Nazis as under the protection of the Spanish Consulate in Budapest.

Reb Elimelech Tress had already begun a surreptitious distribution of thousands of Kosher food packages to the DP Camps, with the help of Orthodox servicemen and chaplains. But this was on too small a scale to meet the vast needs of the survivors.

Once the refugees had been given authorization to enter Morocco, the Spanish Legation in Budapest issued them a *Passport Provisoire*, which stated that the persons listed therein had an entry visa to Spanish territory and that the Spanish authorities would be responsible for their welfare.

The IRC then placed these people into several houses in the "International Ghetto," under the protection of the Spanish Legation in Budapest.

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appointed Mayor of Budapest, Szalasi's Arrow Cross henchmen had great respect for them. The thousands of Jews there, as well as in all the Protected Houses of the International Ghetto, were cared for and fed with money supplied by the Joint Distribution Committee⁶ through Saly Mayer, its Swiss representative. Incidentally, Mrs. Reichmann successfully applied for visas for the parents of most of the children of the first group, as well. These became part of the more than 3,000 Jews cared for by Spain's Consul Briz and, later, his successor, Georgio Periasca.

POST-LIBERATION CONCERNS

The liberation of Europe did not mean an end to Jewish suffering, nor of Mrs. Reichmann's relief efforts. In some respects, she and her staff (i.e., family and friends) were busier than ever, because the opportunities to help the survivors increased. Now all former inmates were able to receive packages and kosher food, yet the bureaucracies—the U.S. Army, UNRRA (the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration) and Roswell McClelland, the unsympathetic American WRB representative in Switzerland—all presented formidable obstacles. During the first year following the liberation, even the Joint was unable to set up relief centers in the DP Camps.

Reb Elimelech Tress had already begun a surreptitious distribution of thousands of kosher food packages to the DP (displaced persons) Camps, with the help of Orthodox servicemen and chaplains. But this was on too small a scale to meet the vast needs of the survivors from the camps and the returnees from Siberia. Mrs. Reichmann thus increased her allotment for distribution by the Sternbuchs, and constantly prodded them to demand more money from Vaad Hatzalah in New York. The IRC served as primary channel for transporting food from Tangier to Geneva, from where the Sternbuchs

6. The Joint was the major Jewish relief organization that had cared for Jews the world over since the first World War.

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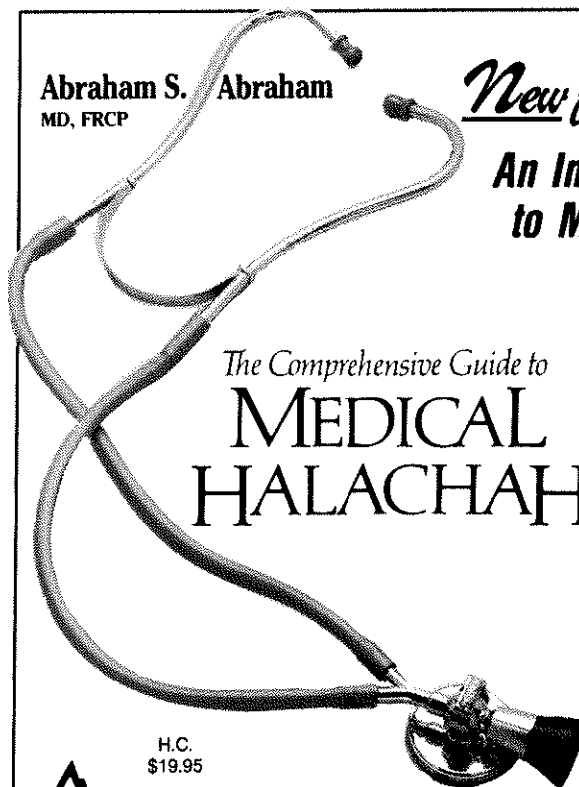
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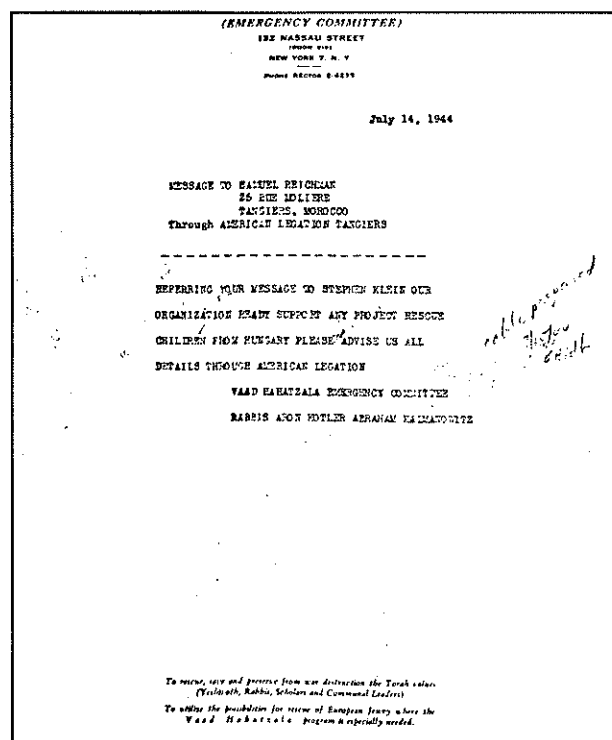
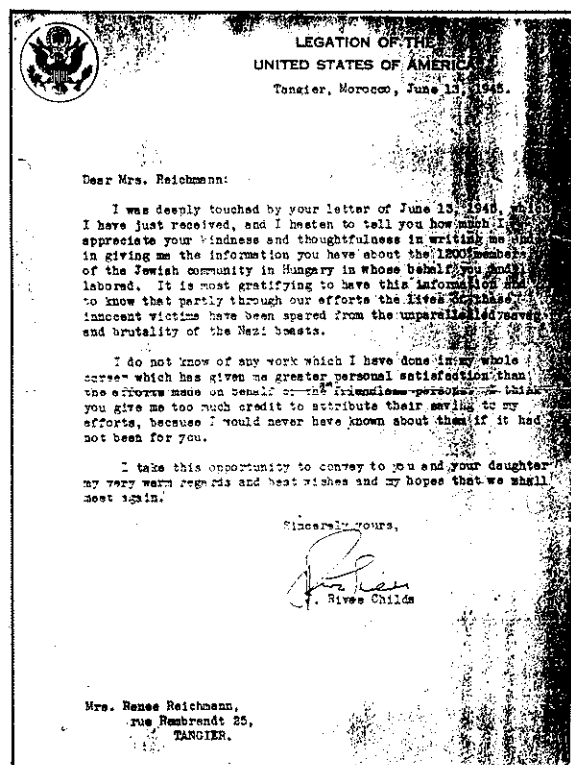
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distributed it to the DP Camps. The Joint also turned to Mrs. Reichmann to serve as their channel to liberated Europe. She was already known to them as a highly efficient relief organization through Mr. Isaac Laredo, their representative in Tangier. As Mrs. Reichmann noted in a letter to the Sternbuchs, several days after Germany's surrender, on May 9th:

....the representative of the Joint asked me to send parcels in their name and put on [sic] my disposition any amount of money. Since two weeks I send daily about 4,000 kilogram of food packed by friends and my children. The goods are sent to the Red Cross in Paris at the Joint's disposal....

Her "Joint relief operation" soon reached a level of two-to-four tons of food daily. In this instance as well, the Joint printed up labels that listed the addressee as Renee Reichmann,

Tangier, via the Spanish as well as French Red Cross. All this in addition to her Vaad Hatzalah operation.

MORE THAN FOOD PACKAGES

Mrs. Reichmann's postwar efforts for the survivors did not end with food packages. She worked equally hard at winning permission for several hundred survivors to settle in Tangier. The difficulty proved to be the collective guarantees assuring the authorities that the immigrants would not become public charges. With the help of the Vaad Hatzalah, she was able to secure guarantees for about 100 survivors, from various camps, to come to Tangier, while the Joint provided for their room and board.

In addition, she was able to send hundreds of Tangier-entry-visas to stateless Jews for whom these served as transit visas to leave Poland in

1945-1946, and get to France, Belgium, Italy, or eventually Eretz Yisrael. This was in addition to a collective guarantee for the entire Nitra Yeshiva, whose remnants Rabbi Weissmandl had painstakingly brought together from among the survivors; however, he chose not to utilize her generous offer, opting instead for the United States, where he eventually re-established the Yeshiva in Mount Kisco, N.Y.

Once the one hundred survivors came to Tangier, they received daily support of the Joint. Many of them arrived in tatters, or rough clothes sewn from bed sheets had to be completely outfitted. The first group of eight survivors were girls from Bergen-Belsen, whose entire families has perished in Auschwitz. Mrs. Reichmann channelled them into "normal" life, and within a half year, she got five of them married, their weddings no less festive than the one

she made for her own son. While she and her "volunteers" bore the brunt of the work, most, but not all, of the financial support came from Vaad Hatzalah.

In one of her typical letters to Vaad Hatzalah, apologizing for the delay in sending back detailed reports, she describes her daily preoccupations:

My house is like a travel bureau, constantly filled with people coming or going, with all kinds of major or minor concerns, unfamiliar with the language, requiring intervention on all levels, with any number of governmental bureaus. Some need an apartment, others train or airplane fares, a visa or any of numerous general purchases. [Moreover]...I have to do everything with the help of my children, who are also over-worked.

Even her wartime Tangier visas found a new lease on life, as she found out at the Agudah Convention in London in December, 1945. A member of the Budapest Kehilla informed her that with these "visas," they were able to prevent the Russian occupation forces from deporting over 400 of the orphans in the Spanish houses to institutions in Russia. It occurred to someone from the Budapest Kehilla to "resuscitate" the Tangier visas. With the help of the IRC (Spain had no relations with Russia), they convinced the Russians that these children had been authorized to go to Tangier where they would be reunited with their relatives. They were then given over to the Kehilla and eventually sent to Israel or the U.S.

POSTSCRIPT

Mrs. Renee Reichmann נר and her daughter, Eva, were thrust by Hashgacha into historic events and places. They were among the chosen few to meet the challenge head on, and make the most of their talents: personality, drive, intelligence and above all, the ingrained trait of *mesiras nefesh* to help their fellow Jews in need, to seize the crucial moment and its opportunities. It is an extraordinary legacy in which Mrs. Reichmann trained her family and left as a model for Klal Yisroel. ■

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Awakened by thunder, I lie in the dark
yet there in the dark I cannot lie.
There was a dream but I can't recall
what I was doing there at all.
I was in a dream but lightning caught fire
on the hem of the dream and I awoke.
I tried to remember, but no longer tired,
forgot the dream as the thunder spoke:

"What are you doing? Where do you stand
among all the dreams that by day you planned?
There was a day but you can't recall
what you did yesterday at all.
Thousands of words in a drift of sand.
Thousands of deeds in a drift of sand."

The clock ticked its questions, the skies told time.
The stars behind clouds called my bluff, and this rhyme
got twisted up in my blankets. All asunder
went my plans for tomorrow. Continued the thunder:

"Your dreams are but dreams, by day or by night.
How is your wrong all that different from right?
Wake up! Go to sleep! It's all the same thing.
You dream you're awake and awake when you dream.
Your days fly by on ego's wings,
Your days are filled with empty things
Thousands of thoughts in a drift of sand.
Thousands of moments in a drift of sand."

I switch on the lamp and Reader's Digest
fills up my mind with American dreams.
At last, determined to get my rest
I turn it off.

It's strange. It seems
that what in the light is easily denied
in the night's too bright for me to hide:
The only kindness I do that's kind
is the kindness I do with You in mind,
my only words less false than true
are those I know are heard by You,
the only ground that does not slide
away from my feet like sand on either side
is the ground I walk in search of You.

...The hours drag by, but at last—what's this?
The darkness is blowing a goodbye kiss
and now at the window a tentative dawn
is whispering greetings. The stars are gone.

As morning gropes softly with long ale gloves
I linger back to the sleep my heart loves,
and when I awake, curtain lifting on a breeze
inform me the day arrived.

Oh, what a tease
that darkness! How heartless thunder's anger,
scaring me like that when there was really no danger.

Sarah Shapiro, who lives in Jerusalem, is a frequent contributor to these pages. Her book, *Growing With My Children*, was published by Targum Press.

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Legacy of a Tel Aviv Grocer

This story begins strangely enough with a visit to a local dry goods store to purchase several pair of support hose. The proprietor is a diminutive *Poilshe Chassidishe Yid* who possesses dancing blue eyes, an engaging smile and a quick wit. We frequently encounter each other in a local *beis hamidrash* where our friend says a *daf yomi shiur* each evening. From time to time I have caught snatches of his *shiur*. It is clear that he is articulate, well-organized and thoroughly prepared. Having made my purchase, what do Jews talk about? *Daf yomi*, of course.

This being my first time through the regimen, I told our friend that I regretted not having undertaken the *daf* many years ago. From there, the discussion turned to *Maseches Eiruvin* and the difficulties of explaining the complex diagrams to his *talmidim*. I was about to take my purchase in hand and leave the store when our friend suddenly said, "*Ihr hot efsher a por minut?* (Do you have perhaps a few minutes?) *Ich vill eich nisht oifhalten.* (I don't want to keep you). *Ich vill eich epes fahrrzehlen* (I want to tell you a story)."

Dr. Aaron Twerski, a professor of law at Brooklyn Law School, Chairman of Agudath Israel of America's Commission on Legislation and Civic Action, is a frequent contributor to these pages.



I placed my package on the counter and asked our friend to proceed,

"My father," he said, "owned a grocery in Tel Aviv. He worked very hard for his livelihood. He would arise in the wee hours of the morning to learn Torah. And he always had a *Gemora* at his side. *Bein koneh l'koneh* (between one customer and the next), he would remove his *Gemora* from the cubby hole and study. When my father was seventy-years-old, my mother passed away. Shortly thereafter, he announced to us that he was going to sell the store and devote himself to the study of Torah. 'The years past seventy,' he told us 'are *geschenkte yohren*. They should be totally devoted to the *Ribbono Shel Olam*.'

"My brother and I viewed his de-

cision with considerable consternation. We were concerned that my father would have time hang heavy on his hands. So we came up with a plan. My brother owned a weaving mill on the outskirts of Tel Aviv. We suggested to our father that he might go to work for several hours a day at the mill. My brother suggested that 'traveling to the mill takes an hour and returning takes another hour. You'll work for two hours and *shmuess* for another hour. The day will go by pleasantly.'

"My father looked at us with disdain. '*Oi veyh. Bonim gedalti veromanti v'hem poshu bi.* I have raised children and exalted them and they have betrayed me. Listen, *kinderlach*. After *me'ah ve'esrim* (one hundred and twenty years), we will have to account for the time we spent on this earth. When I am asked how I spent my days and weeks, I shall have to acknowledge that much of it was spent in the grocery earning a living. But, for that I shall have an explanation. I had children to raise, mouths to feed, *s'char limud* (tuition) to pay. I had to marry off my children and provide for them. And then I shall be asked, What did you do after you married off your children? Did you still have to work in the grocery? And for that, too, I shall have a response. Your mother was fearful of retirement. As long as we had the

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store she came *tziwischen mentchen*, she socialized. I had to keep the store for her. And what happened after she passed away? Why, I shall tell them. I spent an hour on a Tel Aviv bus going there, an hour back, two hours weaving and the rest schmuessing. And for that I will get a *knip in becke* (a pinch in my cheek for good behavior)."

Our friend of the dry goods store paused. "Let me tell you. For the next thirteen years of his life, my father put in twelve to thirteen hours a day studying Torah *behasmoda*, filling in his spare time with acts of *chessed* and the like."

Having heard this moving tale, I readied myself to leave. But our friend had yet more to say: "You know, almost eight years ago when I began saying the *daf yomi shiur*, I took on the task with some trepidation. I had other *shiurim* that were staples in my life and was concerned that I was overloading. But, thank G-d, I have slowly been able to recapture those *shiurim*. The preparation for the *daf* takes me several hours a day. Teaching the *daf* is another hour and my other *shiurim* take substantial time, as well.

"I think what I'm doing is important. I recently had experience with one elderly gentleman in our *shul* who retired. I fully expected that now

that he had time, I would see him at the various *shiurim* more frequently. Instead, as the months passed, he began missing even the *shiurim* that he attended pre-retirement.

"One day I ran into him and asked 'Vos iz dos mit eich? What's the matter with you? Why aren't you coming to *shiur*?' He answered me that he was looking for a job. I knew that this gentleman had sold his business for a handsome sum and did not need the money.

"When I looked at him quizzically, he responded, 'I'm sorry I just can't sit and learn. I must be active at work.'"

My friend the shopkeeper eyeballed me. "With four hours a day preparing and teaching the *daf yomi* and two hours devoted to my other *shiurim*, I am readying myself for retirement. To be sure, I am a *knakker*. I would not be able to do this if my wife would not relieve me at the store and send me home to do my learning. When I am finally able to close this shop, I will merely be adding four or five more hours to my Torah regimen. I will hopefully be prepared to do that which my father did."

I finally took my package and left. It was hard crossing the street. My eyes were misty and I was reeling from the blow. It was time to begin training for the Olympics. ■

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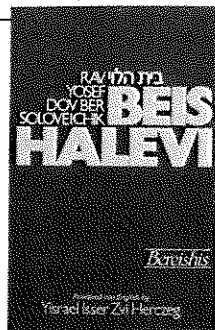
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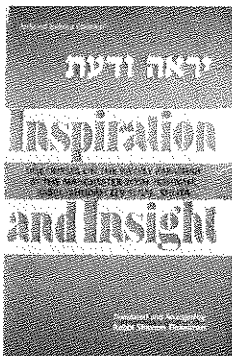
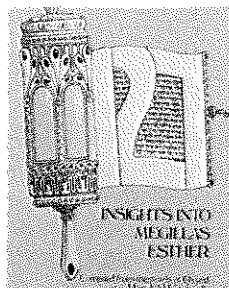
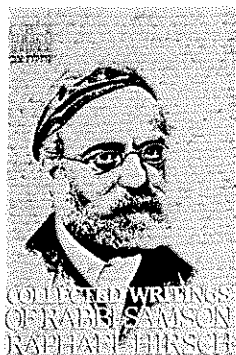
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phasis on the central role of Torah study within each community. Equally important is the stress on the fact that a *Kehilla* must be exclusively under Torah control. "Austritt" is not a policy of wanting to isolate ourselves from non-observers, but of stressing that the Jewish People as a whole, and likewise its building blocks, the local communities, can only be authentically organized on the basis of Torah; hence we cannot join those who want to establish communities on a different basis. Since this volume reports on the controversy between Rav Hirsch and Rav Bamberger over "Austritt" in Frankfurt, it is important to stress that the latter agreed to the "Austritt" principle in general—and in due course, it became the basis of Agudath Israel, and of the decision of the

Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch, the Collected Writings, vol. VI: Jewish Communal Life and Independent Orthodoxy (Feldheim, Spring Valley, 1990, \$18.95). This volume (translated from the original German) includes the author's discussion of what a true *Kehilla* should be like, in contrast to the communities taken over by the Reform movement; and they chronicle his efforts to create such a *Kehilla*, independent of the Reformers. At first glance, the topics treated might appear to be of interest only to a researcher into Jewish history, but in truth they

make a special claim on our attention — the ideas expressed in this volume are of the most urgent concern to us. In the first place, the development of American Jewry down to the present day, and the tragedy of millions of Jews lost to our people, are closely related to the failure to establish *Kehillos* rather than "congregations," as a result of social, economic, and cultural pressures. Progress has been made in this respect and the essays in this volume are truly an outline of what such *Kehillos* should be. Particularly inspiring is Rav Hirsch's forceful em-

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poskim in 1957 against participation in the Synagogue Council of America. The reader will find in this volume a clear presentation of Torah teachings as they apply to our communal life.

127 Insights Into Megillas Esther, compiled from the words of Chazal by Mendel Weinbach (Targum/Feldheim, Southfield, 1990, h.c. \$12.95). The author gathered from the Talmudic tractate *Megillah* the explanations and elaborations on *Megillas Esther* offered by our Sages. He found 127—corresponding to the 127 provinces of the Persian Empire over which Esther ruled—a remarkable reflection of the inner unity of *Tanach* and Talmud. Many of the Talmudic explanations are well-known; however, all of them are here presented clearly, beautifully interpreted according to the classic commentators, and bound together in a pattern that provides a much fuller understanding of the story of Purim. At the same time, this book provides a running commentary on the *Megillah* and an excellent source to enrich the Purim *se'uda* with Torah thoughts.

Turnabout, the Malbim on Megillas Esther, represents another treatment of the Purim story by the same author (Targum/Feldheim, Southfield, 1990, h.c. \$10.95). Originally published in 1971 and reissued in a revised edition, this work is a retelling of the *Megillah* in depth. The *Malbim*, in line with his usual approach in his *Tanach* commentary, raises a number of incisive questions on the text and answers them by elaborating on the concise account of the *Megillah*. He speculates on the motives and goals of the main actors in the story and arrives at a coherent and sophisticated interpretation. Rabbi Weinbach not only tells the Purim story as the *Malbim* understood it, but offers the reader the Hebrew text of the *Megillah* and the *Malbim*, as well as an English translation of the *Megillah* and the *Malbim's* questions. A historical introduction and a brief biography of the *Malbim* round out this fascinating volume.

The Concise Book of Mitzvoth, compiled by the Chofetz Chayim, translated by Charles Wengrov

(Feldheim, Jerusalem, 1990, regular size \$12.95, pocket size \$6.95). This work—small in volume—was the last *sefer* written by the Chofetz Chaim; he obviously saw a great need for each Jew to be fully aware of all the *mitzvos* which the Torah obligates him to observe in our time. It went through a number of editions, which were marked by such improvements as the addition of sources and a listing of the *mitzvos* applying only in *Eretz Yisroel*, which the Chofetz Chayim, writing for the Jews of the *golah*, had not included. Feldheim Publishers have now issued a new edition in which, among other improvements, textual mistakes are corrected; at the same time, they also have published an edition containing an excellent English translation. In addition to regular-size copies, it is also available in pocket-size, to be carried along and studied wherever one may find himself. This work is beautifully produced and represents a great contribution to the Torah world, that should be taken full advantage of by everyone.

Bais Halevi-Bereishis, rendered

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into English by Yisroel Isser Zvi Herzog (Targum/Feldheim, Southfield, 1990, \$11.95). Rabbi Yosef Dov Ber Soloveitchick, the Rabbi of Brisk, who passed away almost one hundred years ago, is universally known as the source of the legacy of Brisk. Among his works is his commentary on *Chumash* of which, unfortunately, only the first volume, on *Bereishis* and *Shemos*, ever appeared. On the surface merely a homiletic work, albeit brilliant in its wide sweep of Rabbinic literature and depth of interpretation, it really clarifies many fundamental concepts of the Torah worldview. Thus it has become a classic, universally admired and used. The present volume (which will be followed by a second volume, on *Shemos*) now makes the *Bais Halevi's* teachings available to the English-speaking public. The translator has succeeded in conveying the author's ideas in sparse and concise words that effectively capture the essential points and prove a boon to those who cannot study the Hebrew original (it goes without saying

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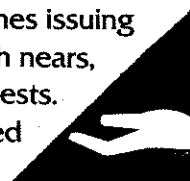
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that those who can are well advised to go back to the original, as in all cases of translation). The translator wisely chose to omit the halachic discussions on *Chanuka*, which are included in the Hebrew edition, since they have no connection to the *Chumash*. On the other hand, the readers would greatly benefit if the next volume would include the aggadic essays that appear in the Responsa of the *Bais Halevi*, which deal in great depth with many of the themes of *Bereishis* and *Shemos*.

The Juggler and the King, by Aaron Feldman (Feldheim, Spring Valley, 1990, \$14.95). Rabbi Feldman is well known for his earlier works, notably **The River, the Kettle and the Bird**. This present volume, however, is without question the most remarkable and original of his writings. In Talmudic literature can be found many aggadic passages that puzzle the student—among them, the travel tales of Rabba Bar Chanah and the riddles of the Elders of Athens. The Gaon of Vilna

wrote a little-known, brief interpretation of these passages, and Rabbi Feldman here presents us with an elaboration of the Gaon's interpretation of the wisdom hidden in them. In addition to the commentaries in the *Eyn Yaakov*, more than 25 books have been written on these stories. However, it is the Gaon's explanations as elucidated by Rabbi Feldman that turn these strange passages into a guide to the most fundamental concepts of Judaism—thus the book opens with a chart listing the topics (and subtopics) dealt with in the various riddles and parables.

Rabbi Feldman also provides a general introduction to the nature and role of *Aggada*, and an English rendering of Rabbi Moshe Chayim Luzzatto's *Essay on Aggadoth*. Finally, the complete Hebrew text of the Gaon's commentary is included. Thus this work serves a dual function: an introduction to the proper approach to *Aggada*, and a statement of *Chazal's* teachings on the most profound questions of existence. Clarity of language and excellent design and lay-out will help the reader gain a full understanding of

these themes.

Inspiration and Insight, Discourses on the weekly *Parasha* by the Manchester Rosh Yeshivah, *Rabbi Yehuda Zeev Segal*, translated and arranged by *Rabbi Shimon Finkelman* (Mesorah Publ., Brooklyn, 1990, h.c. \$17.95, p.b. \$14.95). The Manchester Rosh Yeshiva's influence on *Klal Yisroel* and on the innumerable individuals who seek his sage counsel need not be underscored. This volume provides a most welcome introduction to his teachings. It represents discussions of basic, yet down-to-earth topics, arranged by the *Sidros* of the year, culled from the two-volume collection of his *Mussar* talks, *Yirah Vodaas*. The personalities described in the *Chumash*, Talmudic sages, and *Gedolei Yisroel* down to our days, and their actions and sayings, provide the starting point for the *Mussar* concepts here propounded; the goal: to point out which path to chose, and what to avoid in order to serve G-d as one should. Scholars will be moved by the author's words—but one does not have to be a scholar to understand and absorb them. ■



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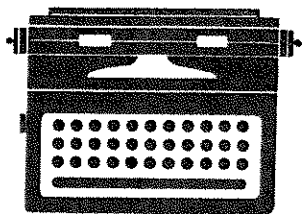


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Letters to the Editor

WHEN READERS ANTICIPATE, DOES JO DELIVER?

To the Editor:

1) The opening paragraph of "When Feminists Demand, Can Judaism Deliver?" (JO, January '91) gave an impression that the article was intended as a definitive response to Jewish feminists, as if all the questions could be answered in a four-page essay. Surely this is not so, and the article's intent was to focus on one specific issue, the common misconception that the Torah limits women's opportunities for religious experience and spiritual growth. While this is an important concern, perhaps the central concern of many women who have difficulty approaching the Torah, we should not close our eyes to other concerns that exist. Perceptions that women are unfairly treated by the Torah or by the Torah community are issues that need to be addressed on their own, for the sake of *kiruv rechokim* and also to understand for ourselves as much as we can of the *dvar Hashem*.

2) One could easily take issue with the article's list of "daily mitzvos", e.g. why tzeddaka was not mentioned as a separate obligation, or whether all *poskim* agree with the details of the *mitzva* of *tefilla* given. Surely the article intended merely to provide a sample "to-do list" to paste on the alarm clock or refrigerator door, and the distinction between a usable suggestion and an authoritative listing should have been made clear.

RABBI YISROEL MILLER
Pittsburgh, PA

WOMEN, AND THE SYNOGOGUE AS A VENUE FOR MITZVOS

To the Editor:

Rabbi Yisroel Miller's (Jan. '91) recent article on Judaism and feminism is very thought provoking and inspiring.

The concept relating to the status of the synagogue in the scheme of authentic Judaism is an intriguing one, which requires elucidation.

One of the issues we have been dealing with lately, in the *Daf Hayomi* of *Mesechta Eiruvin*, is the question of where and how an *eiruv* can and should be made. There are cities and areas where a common *eiruv* is ineffective and invalid, according to our Sages. This leads to a demand by women who desire to come to *shul* on *Shabbos* with their little children in tow for some amelioration in the situation.

In response to this demand, Harav Binyomin Silber writes in *Oz Nidberu*, Vol. 7, Resp. 89 (last paragraph): "I am amazed! What is wrong if women who are raising children *daven* at home? They surely do not have a *mitzva* to pray with a group in *shul*! Besides, it is known that the Vilna Gaon thought it better for women to *daven* at home...although there are obvious differences between the Gaon's generation and ours—women coming to *shul* (for us) is a fortification of their *Yiddishkeit*. However, when they bring little children who are below the age of *chinuch*, the *poskim* have already decreed this practice for it disrupts the prayers...."

In conclusion, however, the *sefer Oz Nidberu* refers us to the famous words of praise that the Ramban (at the end of *Parshas Bo*) uses to describe the ideal purposes of a synagogue: "The intention of all *mitzvos*

is that we should believe in our G-d and thank Him for creating us. This encompasses the entire purpose of Creation....The reason for raising our voices in prayer in *shul*, as a group, is to have a place where we gather to praise *Hashem* and to publicize to each other that we are His creations."

Thus, the *shul* is the most perfect setting for many of the goals that Rabbi Yisroel Miller sets forth in his article. The *mitzvos* of the mind and emotions, and those dealing with the interactions between people, are developed in a *shul* setting, and then enhanced by this most sacred institution, which is designed as the core for teaching us how to structure our lives around the presence of *Hashem*.

RABBI MOSHE GOLDBERGER
Staten Island, N.Y.

(The writer is author of a number of booklets on halacha and hashkafa themes.)



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S.L.=Second Looks

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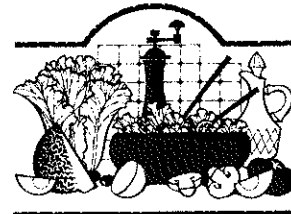
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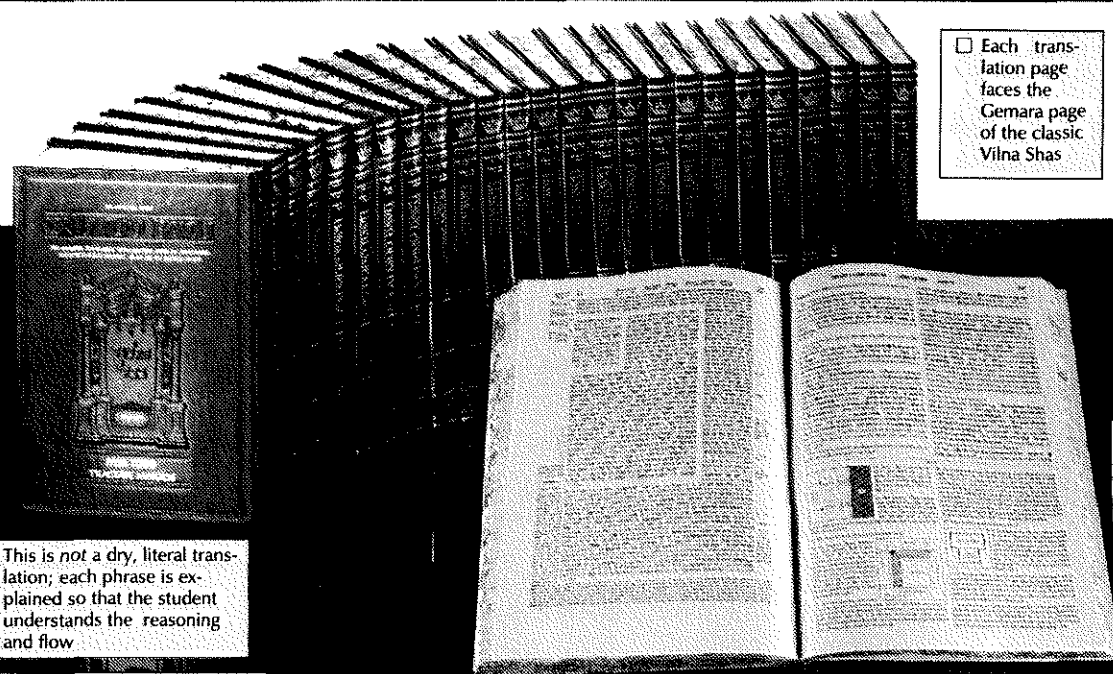
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