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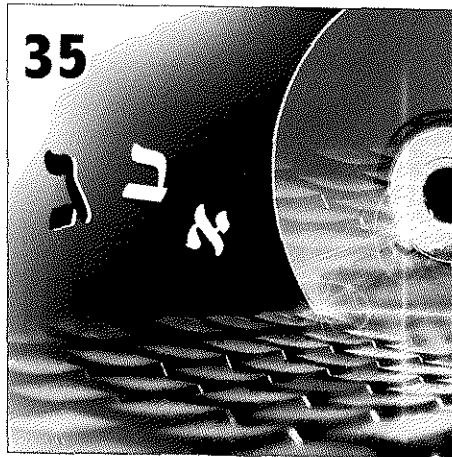
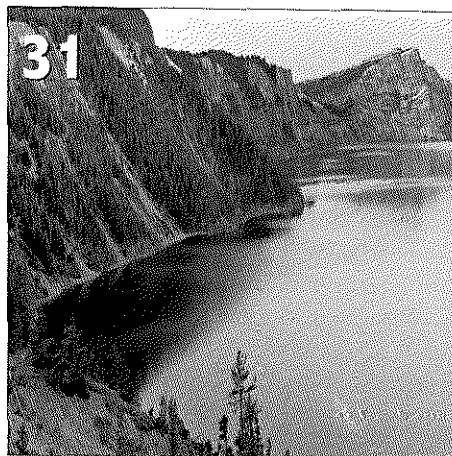
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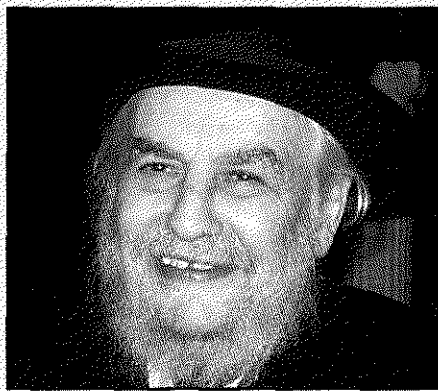
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Noted in Sorrow

The *Jewish Observer* joins *Klal Yisroel* in mourning the recent *petira* (passing) of two leading figures in the Torah world.



I.

Two days before *Yom Kippur*, the venerated Rosh Yeshiva of Yeshiva Beis Hatalmud of Bensonhurst, **Rabbi Binyomin Zeilberger**, זצ"ל was *niftar*. He was one of the last links with the pre-war Mirrer Yeshiva, embodying the ideals of greatness in Torah, total dedication to *hasmada* in Torah, and *middos tovos* that were molded by dedicated *avodas hamussar*.

Rabbi Zeilberger was born in 1921 in Koenigshausen, a village not far from Wurzburg, to his parents, Reb Yehuda and Chana. Under the influence of the well-known *Rav* and *mechanech*, Rabbi Shmshon Raphael Weiss, he and Naftoli Neuberger set out for the Mirrer Yeshiva as 14-year-old *bachurim*. Arriving in Mir after Pesach of 1936, he managed to hear several *shmuessen* from Rabbi Yeruchem Levovitz זצ"ל, the *mussar* giant, some two months before his *petira*. The *Mashgiach's* approach to *mussar* had a profound impact on the young *bachur*.

Reb Binyomin Zeilberger's phenomenal progress in learning could be attributed in part to his ability to attach himself to distinguished senior Mirrer *talmidim*, who were worthy of being *roshei yeshiva* in their own right, including Rabbi Leib Malin, זצ"ל one of Reb Yeruchem's closest *talmidim*; Rabbi Yonah Minsker זצ"ל (*Yonas Eilem*); and Rabbi Michel Feinstein זצ"ל, with whom he shared a *stanza* (room in a boarding house).

As the winds of war gathered over Europe in 1939, Reb Binyomin fled Poland together with the Mirrer Yeshiva to independent Vilna, then across Russia to Japan, finally settling in Shanghai, China, where it spent the duration of the war. In Shanghai, Reb Binyomin learned with phenomenal *hasmada* and developed into a *gadol baTorah*.

After arriving in America together with the yeshiva in 1947, he continued learning in the newly established Mirrer Yeshiva in Brooklyn, and married the daughter of Rabbi Yisroel Chaim Kaplan, זצ"ל (son-in-law of Rabbi Yeruchem Levovitz), *Mashgiach* of Beth Medrash Elyon of Monsey. Reb Binyomin then joined Yeshiva Beis HaTalmud which had recently been

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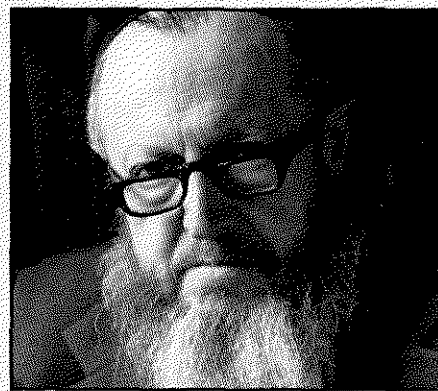
II.

Rabbi Naftoli Neuberger, זצ"ל, late President of Yeshiva Ner Israel in Baltimore, was *niftar* in his home on the Ner Israel campus on Friday night *Chol Hamoed* Sukkos. He was gifted with far-reaching vision, limitless energy, fine-honed administrative skills, and fidelity to the highest standards of integrity and dedication to Torah and *Klal Yisroel*. This extraordinary combination commanded the respect of *roshei yeshiva*, government figures, community leaders, and politicians, as well as the love of the *talmidim* of the yeshiva.

He was born in 1918 to Reb Meir and Breindel Neuberger in the town of Hassfurt, Germany. His father was *niftar* only four weeks after his Bar Mitzvah. Although they moved to Wurzburg, home to a yeshiva for teen-age boys, Reb Naftoli subsequently enrolled in the Mir, Poland, to continue his studies on an intensive level beyond what had been available in Germany.

Just before Kristallnacht in 1938, Rabbi Neuberger's relatives in New York sent him papers to immigrate to the United States. When in Baltimore that year, Rabbi Neuberger visited Ner Israel, and was taken by the spirit of the yeshiva, and – in his words – “fascinated by Rabbi

[Yaakov Yitzchak] Ruderman.” He enrolled in the yeshiva, and began working in its administration in 1940. In 1942, he mar-



ried Yehudis Kramer, younger sister of Rebbetzin Ruderman.

Rabbi Neuberger was a key figure in the yeshiva's growth – from erection of the Ner Israel Building on 4411 Garrison Boulevard in 1943 to the subsequent building and expansion of the yeshiva in its current 90-acre campus, which includes housing for 95 faculty and kollel families in suburban Pikesville. He was the guiding force in the yeshiva's *ruchniyus* development from a small school to one of today's premier Torah institutions.

Rabbi Neuberger was uniquely creative and widely influential in many communal and educational endeavors, and worked with Rabbi Moshe Sherer זצ"ל on many undertakings. Together, they were instrumental in gaining crucial government support for yeshivos. They joined with Rabbi Yaakov Weissberg זצ"ל in the founding of AARTS, an accrediting agency for *yeshivos gedolos*, accreditation by the U.S. Department of Education is a prerequisite to receiving federal funding. This proved a major factor in the growth of Torah in America.

Rabbi Neuberger was consulted constantly by *roshei yeshiva*, political leaders, and Jewish community leaders. His horizons went far beyond the needs of Ner Israel, and he became a pivotal figure in the growth of Torah institutions everywhere.

In the late 1970's, foreseeing the need for Torah leaders for Iranian Jews, he began bringing Iranian *bachurim* to Ner Israel,

Continued on page 41



Readers React... ...Authors Respond

A FORMER TALMID, AT HOME IN A YESHIVA SETTING

To the Editor:

I was taken aback at Rabbi Pinchos Jung's negative characterization of *baalei battim* who choose to make yeshivos their permanent *mekomos tefilla* ("Where Do You Belong?," JO, Tishrei 5766). As a *bachur*, I learned – and assumed that every *ben Torah* learned – that this is an objective that not every yeshiva man can achieve, but is an ideal that every *ben Torah* should strive for.

In one of his *Igros* (Collected Letters), Rabbi Yitzchak Hutner זצ"ל compared yeshivos in our days to Noah's *teiva* (ark), in that they provide shelter from the many negative influences that permeate the "*mabul*" outside their walls, and thus serve not only as places for Torah learning, but also as places where *talmidim* who wish to retain their Torah values can anchor themselves. The need for this oasis of sanity only increases when a *talmid* can no longer make the yeshiva his full-time home.

It is also an established fact that a person is influenced by the company he keeps, and *baalei mussar* therefore recommend that one associate with people who are on a higher *madreiga*,

rather than with spiritual peers, in order to facilitate *shteiging* – without which there is stagnation. What better place for a *ben Torah* who finds himself in the workplace to do that than a yeshiva, where he is in the company of individuals who are learning full-time, and in the presence of *roshei yeshiva*? Where else is he most likely to sit down with a *sefer* himself for at least a few minutes after *davening*?

And where else but a yeshiva is one most likely to find "quality" *davening* – where *zemanim* and other *hilchos tefilla* and *kria* have the appropriate credentials without compromise, there is ample time to *daven* with full *kavana*, and distracting *sichas chulin* background-conversations during *davening* and *leining* are not tolerated?

What better *chinuch* can a father give his children than to accustom them to a yeshiva *davening* as the norm? I venture to say, after reading the full text of Rabbi Wolbe's זצ"ל letter, that Rabbi Wolbe would have heartily concurred.

In the 35 or so years that I've been *davening* in my yeshiva (about 25 of them as a *baal habayis*), I cannot recall anyone "drifting" in to avoid the commitments of *kehilla*. On the contrary, the

rigor of the *sefer hatefilla*, the spartan nature of the *gashmiyus* of the *beis midrash* in comparison with the local *shtiebel* (few elaborate *kiddushim* here!), and the "early to rise" schedule, discourage "*lo lishma*" attendees. And besides, anyone who harbors the notion that he can hide from the local communal *mosdos* by *davening* in a yeshiva will quickly discover that they will manage to find him notwithstanding.

Rabbi Jung does not do our *roshei yeshiva* justice with the statement that "A competent *rosh yeshiva's* expertise will be in his own field," implying that "the *roshei yeshiva* who guide their *talmidim* through all stages of family life" are the exception rather than the rule. What is the basis for that conclusion, and for the implication that the typical shul rabbi is better versed or trained? In any case, a typical yeshiva has not one but several *roshei yeshiva*, in addition to *maggidei shiur*, a *mashgiach* and *sho'eil umeishiv* or two, and probably a *poseik* or two. How many *battei midrash* outside the yeshiva realm can boast such a wealth of resources?

My yeshiva, and most others, are full *kehillos* in every sense of the word, and those fortunate enough to call them spiritual home lack for nothing.

**MY YESHIVA, AND MOST OTHERS, ARE FULL
KEHILLOS IN EVERY SENSE OF THE WORD, AND
THOSE FORTUNATE ENOUGH TO CALL THEM
SPIRITUAL HOME LACK FOR NOTHING.**

- ELI WILLNER

**THOSE WHO, LIKE HIM, SUCCEED IN FINDING
ALL THE INGREDIENTS OF THE IDEAL KEHILLA
WITHIN THE YESHIVA OF THEIR CHOICE ARE
FORTUNATE INDEED. ASHREICHEM!**

- RABBI JUNG

They, their families, and those around them are all beneficiaries. It may not be everyone's cup of tea, but for those who relish it, *ashreichem!*

ELI WILLNER
Brooklyn, NY

THE AUTHOR RESPONDS:

Many thanks to Eli Willner (and others) who took the trouble to pen their observations on my recent article "Where Do You Belong?"

The title (and photograph) convey that, primarily, the intention was to challenge those who do not belong anywhere, or those who frequent places of no meaningful content or structure.

Mr. Willner concludes his letter stating that his yeshiva is a full *kehilla* in

every sense of the word. That being so, his situation is precisely what the article intended to encourage.

However, many would question whether this is true of "most other yeshivos," particularly the smaller ones. In fact, some yeshivos are known to discourage *baalei battim* from becoming "members," arguing (as mentioned in my article) that they do not feel equipped to cater to the needs of family men. This discussion prompted me to speak to some experienced local *rabbanim*. As a result, it was confirmed that one cannot generalize (as implied in the original article), but that it is unreasonable to expect even an accomplished *rosh yeshiva* to be as at home in *p'sak* as a competent *rav* or *dayan* would be.

Renowned *gedolim* have been known

to re-direct *halacha* enquiries to *poskim* i.e. *baalei hora'a*. They would even present their own personal *she'eilos* to the recognized experts in these fields. *Lehavdil*, a top oncologist will refer heart problems to the cardiologist, it would be cause for alarm if he would attempt to tackle them himself... (See *Rosh, Bava Kama, peirek 4:4*: "Rav and Shmuel").

The *Sfas Emes* (*Behar 5641*) points out that totality in wisdom cannot be found in any one person. Rather, one expert complements the other. This is the meaning of (*Avos, 4:1*) the true *chacham* is he who learns from each expert in his field.

So this distinction between categories of Torah sages should not be taken as an injustice to anyone. It should be seen as a realistic approach in view of the infinite amount of Torah knowledge to be mastered.

From the point of view of environment, serious *davening*, and spiritual growth, however, who would argue with Eli Willner? The desirability of the yeshiva as an "oasis of sanity" is too true. Those who, like him, succeed in finding all the ingredients of the ideal *kehilla* within the yeshiva of their choice are fortunate indeed. *Ashreichem!*

PINCHOS JUNG

**STATEMENTS OF COMPASSION
NOT BACKED UP IN ACTION**

To the Editor:

Yonoson Rosenblum makes a valiant effort to explain why the Chareidi world has been "almost completely silent on the Gaza withdrawal." Unfortunately, his defense falls short.

Rabbi Rosenblum explains that the UTJ's decision not to vote against the disengagement was due to "the strong preference of the Torah leadership to avoid casting the decisive votes on matters of national security, and especially not against the will of the majority of Israeli citizens."

How does Rabbi Rosenblum explain the fact that the Agudah parties consistently (and correctly) voted against all the Oslo Accords? This despite the fact

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that it related to Israeli security and was against the will of the majority of the people.

Rabbi Rosenblum goes on to recall HaRav Shach's opposition to settlement movement as further justification of the silence of the Chareidi world. Yes, Rav Shach was opposed to settlements for reasons which are becoming clearer with time. However, what does this have to do with caring about the plight of these fine Jews being cruelly expelled from their homes, shuls, and even cemeteries? Wouldn't a collective sigh of grief in their behalf have been in order? Moreover, what about the *passuk* of "Lo sa'amod al dam rei'echa" – Do not stand by idly as your comrade's blood is being spilled"? A *Tehillim* gathering for their sake during this awful time would have offered them sorely needed comfort. Sadly, only the Bostoner *Rebbe*, the Sadigerer *Rebbe* and the Stoliner *Rebbe* seemed to promote this.

Rabbi Rosenblum proudly quotes the statement of Agudath Israel of America, which says that we must "pause and share in the pain and anguish of our Jewish brethren in Gaza." How exactly did we share in their pain? This kind of empty platitude is so out of character for Agudath Israel that it seems to underscore the organization's ambivalence on this issue.

Perhaps the most convincing evidence that the silence was not for the reasons outlined in the article is the fact that virtually no Chareidim were present at the funeral for the dozen or so Jewish bodies that were removed from their resting place in Gaza and reinterred in *Yerushalayim*. Thousands of religious Jews from throughout the country felt compelled to join in the sorrow of these newly bereaved families. For some reason, Chareidim chose not to attend this almost unprecedented solemn event.

Here, there were no issues of security or of settlements. This was a time for all caring Jews to come together and offer *chizuk*. What a squandered opportunity for a real display of *achdus* and a *kidush Hashem*!

I am afraid the real truth dare not

be spoken. The disdain for Religious Zionism and its adherents has blinded the Chareidi community to the extent that it could not bring itself to rise to the occasion. A pity that all the talk we hear about the evils of *sinas chinam* (baseless hatred) and the importance of the unity of *Klal Yisroel* could not be put to practical use during these most difficult times.

Let us hope that the year 5766 brings us better tidings.

RABBI YOEL SCHONFELD
Kew Garden Hills, NY

YONOSON ROSENBLUM REPLIES:

Rabbi Schonfeld's letter appears to conflate two separate issues under the rubric the silence of the Chareidi world: (1) the lack of condemnation by *gedolei Yisroel* of the Gaza withdrawal on halachic grounds; and (2) the lack of sympathy for the settlers on the part of the Chareidi public. I am accused of defending both.

As to the first, the position of the *gedolei Yisroel* that the halacha does not forbid renunciation of Israeli

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sovereignty over territory where that renunciation will increase the safety of Jews has been reiterated many times in recent decades. With respect to the practical question of whether Jewish life will be more secure, the *gedolei Yisroel* have been reluctant to render a decision contrary to the opinion of the majority of Jews in Israel, especially where the matter is one of substantial doubt.

Oslo does not, as Rabbi Schonfeld claims, furnish a counter-example. There was no clear-cut majority for the Oslo Accords, certainly not at the inception. The initial Knesset approval was only obtained by "purchasing" the votes of two obscure backbenchers, who had been elected on the far-Right wing Tsomet list, with particularly brazen political bribes. And by the time of the assassination of Prime Minister Yitzchak Rabin, the pendulum had once again swung against Oslo. Polls taken prior to the assassination showed Binyamin Netanyahu, an outspoken critic of Oslo, with a clear lead over Rabin.

The reasons for opposing Oslo in a situation of an evenly divided electorate were precisely those stated by Rabbi Shach in his famous speech at Yad Eliyahu when he instructed Degel HaTorah not to join in efforts to bring down the national unity government headed by Prime Minister Yitzchak Shamir of Likud. If forced to choose between allying with the Left or Right, Rabbi Shach said at the time, the natural preference of the Torah world must be with the "*amcha Yidden*," those who have not lost their pride in the name "Jew."

As to Rabbi Schonfeld's second point, my article did not address whether the Chareidi community might have missed an opportunity to draw closer a disillusioned segment of the national religious community by failing to reach out with more concrete help to the evacuees. What I did point out was the reasons why the reaction to the National Religious community to the withdrawal was of necessity much stronger than that of the Chareidi com-

munity. For the former, the withdrawal was not only an immense personal tragedy for those whose communities were destroyed; it was a dramatic setback to realization of the fervent hopes centered on the settlement movement from 1970 onwards. Not so for the Chareidim. And it was also natural that on a human level, the National Religious community would identify with the suffering of the evacuees more intensely. Members of that community were far more likely to have friends and relatives whose lives were destroyed by the evacuation.

But the empathy of the Chareidi community for the suffering of those expelled from their homes is real and deep. There was nothing platitudinous about the expressions of sympathy for the Gaza settlers or the admiration for their courage and faith contained in the statement of Agudath Israel of America. I spoke at length to the person who guided the drafting of that statement prior to its issuance, and there is no doubt that the statement reflected his deepest emotions.

At the same time, it was understood in advance that the statement would never fully satisfy those to whom it was directed. The Chareidi community was incapable of offering the National Religious world what they wanted most: agreement that the government's actions clearly violated the imperatives of *yishuv ha'arets*. That inability is not due to any ambivalence on the part of the Chareidi world, but due to a different halachic perspective. (Perhaps it is worth noting that official statements of the more "modern" Orthodox Union similarly confined themselves to expressions of sympathy for the plight of those uprooted from their homes and communities, and did not address the wisdom or halachic permissibility of the withdrawal itself.)

In his eagerness to berate the Chareidim for their indifference, Rabbi Schonfeld infers too much from the lack of Chareidim at a particular event. Hundreds of thousands of National Religious Jews also did not attend the reburial – the type of ceremony gener-

ally thought to be private and familial. Were they also indifferent?

Over the last fifty years, Chareidim have manned the barricades alone in demonstrations against *chillul* Shabbos, wanton autopsies, and the like. But would we suggest that the National Religious community stayed away because it is unconcerned with *chillul* Shabbos, or because it harbors a disdain for Chareidim?

The different choices made by the Chareidi and National Religious worlds as to where to devote their main energies reflect differing ideological viewpoints. Nothing will be gained by pretending that these differences do not exist, even as we extend to our fellow *shomrei Torah u'mitzvos* the full measure of love and support.

YONOSON ROSENBLUM

ACCUSATION DENIED

To the Editor:

Avi Shafran's recent reference to my

THE EMPATHY OF THE CHAREIDI COMMUNITY FOR THE SUFFERING OF THOSE EXPELLED FROM THEIR HOMES IS REAL AND DEEP. THERE WAS NOTHING PLATITUDINOUS ABOUT THE EXPRESSIONS OF SYMPATHY.

- YONOSON ROSENBLUM

work and me in his "On the Agenda" column (Sept. '05) was titled "Fundamental Foolishness." No title could better describe his characterizations of what I wrote or what I believe. Although I am reluctant to point out Rabbi Shafran's many sins at this time of the year, I am afraid that he leaves me no choice, given his slanderous assertions. To begin with, he asserts that what he is really going after is my "unspoken but unmistakable message." Of course, the reasons that this "message" in which he claims that I see or present American and Israeli yeshivos as "incubators of dormant

Jewish terrorists" is unspoken is because I neither believe it nor have said it. To suggest I do is like my suggesting that because Rabbi Shafran has begun his column by quoting Corinthians 13:11, in which Paul uses the phrase "through a glass darkly," he draws his inspiration from the New Testament. That is the unspoken but unmistakable message. Rubbish.

Had the rabbi accurately explained my position (which any JO readers can see for themselves at the *Jewish Political Studies Review* <http://www.jcpa.org/cjc/cjc-heilman-s05.htm>), he would have

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understood that what I said was, among other things, that “cultural and social struggle is at the heart of fundamentalism,” a stance taken in madrasas no less than in yeshivos. I have urged that both these types of settings create in their students a feeling that life outside the place they learn, which both groups believe is surrounded by a kind of wall of virtue, is culturally dangerous and even toxic, that they are convinced that the texts they study offer the only real truth and a recipe for life, that in some of these schools there are people who believe that by their actions they can “hasten the Messiah,” and that by their activity, they are set apart from those “who have hopelessly compromised G-d’s will.” I have said that both those in yeshivos and those in madrasas often believe “that G-d is on their side.”

In my work, I also distinguish between “active” and “quiescent” types. The former are “willing to challenge the status and engage in world-transforming activities” – examples include those

who engage in outreach, settlement activity, or arguing that “Moshiach is on his way.” The latter, I explain, want to simply keep the toxic and destructive contemporary culture at arm’s length, engaging in what one Chareidi rabbi called “the heroic retreat” from concerns and entanglements in the modern world. Both these types can be found among Jews and Moslems.

Perhaps Rabbi Shafran has not looked at madrasas and cannot understand that there are parallels. To be sure, violence can and sometimes does occur from both these communities. Alas, we have had some yeshiva boys who have engaged in it, and surely the madrasas have produced their share of violence. But neither the word “violence” nor the word “terror” appears in my article. The fact that there are parallels between the worldviews of both the Islamic madrasa and the Jewish beis midrash is food for thought.

Another mistake that Rabbi Shafran has made is in his assertion that I “pine

for a time when Jewish observance in American Orthodox homes was compromised by social insecurity...” I doubt that my four sons, all of whom attended yeshivos both in America and Israel, would agree. What I pine for, if anything, is an Orthodoxy that is not characterized by “*sinas chinam*,” baseless hatred and vilification, an Orthodox Judaism that rather than seeing in the world outside of Judaism only useless wisdom and toxins, instead – in the words of Rav Aharon Lichtenstein – “encourage a sense of complexity and integration” and “rejects[s] the kind of black-and-white solutions appealing to others.”


Rabbi Shafran accuses me of demonizing a part of the Jewish world. For shame. He should know better. I did not, nor would I, do this. On the contrary, I have been maligned, demonized and misrepresented by him. And the good rabbi has done this during the month of Elul. This cannot be appropriate for one whose position is to be director of an organization that calls itself “*Am Echad*.” The late Rav A.I. Kook was quoted as saying that the previous *Beis Hamikdash* was destroyed by *sinas chinam* and the next one will be built only be *ahavas chinam*. Sadly, it seems the only thing still left from the *Beis Hamikdash* these days is *sinas chinam*. May we all merit a time when we can disagree with one another on the basis of *ahavas chinam*.

SAMUEL HEILMAN
*Distinguished Professor of Sociology
 & Holder of the Proshansky Chair in
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 Queens College (CUNY)
 Flushing, NY*

RABBI AVI SHAFRAN RESPONDS:

It is gratifying to read that Professor Heilman disowns the assertion that yeshivos are incubating potential Jewish terrorists. Unfortunately, his *Jewish Political Studies Review* paper, despite his indignation, suggests precisely that.


To be sure, as I noted in my earlier essay in these pages, he does not baldly state as much; he indeed omits words



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like "terror" and "violence." But sometimes the worst slander is the subtle sort (see *Megilla* 13b). As it happens, though, the professor was not even terribly subtle. I join him in encouraging readers to examine his essay for themselves; I will happily fax a copy to anyone who calls my office – 212 797-9000, ext. 307 – to request one.

Any careful reader will readily make out the paper's thesis, which is that both radical Islamists and "fundamentalist" Jews (including, prominently, the yeshiva world) are convinced that their beliefs are true, and that, as the former group has proven dangerous to society, we must be wary of the latter. The distinction the professor makes between "active" fundamentalists and "quiescent" ones is a scholarly red herring; "quiescent" means "inactive," with future activation always a possibility.

My post-secondary education was at that hotbed of fundamentalism, Yeshivas Ner Yisroel in Baltimore, so I asked Hofstra University Law School's dean, Professor Aaron Twerski, to give me his

I JOIN RABBI SHAFRAN IN OBJECTING TO HEILMAN'S PORTRAYAL OF TODAY'S ROSHEI YESHIVOS AS FUNDAMENTALISTS BECAUSE THEY REJECT PURSUIT OF SECULAR STUDIES.

IF THAT IS THE CASE, THEN SO WERE THE CHASAM SOFER, THE CHOFETZ CHAIM, ... AND ALMOST ALL GEDOLEI YISROEL FOR AT LEAST THE LAST THREE HUNDRED YEARS.

- PROF. AARON TWERSKI

reading of the paper. He responded:

"Professor Heilman's essay does indeed characterize the post-Holocaust yeshiva world as a counterpart to that of the Muslim fundamentalists, and that is simply ludicrous. Moreover, I join Rabbi Shafran in objecting to Heilman's portrayal of today's *roshei yeshivos* as fundamentalists because they reject pursuit of secular studies. If that is the case, then so were the *Chasam Sofer*, the *Chofetz Chaim*, the *Alter* of Slabodka,

the *Reb*bes of Ger, Vizhnitz, Bobov, and almost all *gedolei Yisroel* for at least the last three hundred years."

In fact, Professor Heilman's very use of the word "fundamentalist" to refer to Torah-dedicated Jews is itself worthy of condemnation. So is his ugly and errant characterization of "fundamentalist" Jews – "Chareidi Jewry, and in particular, the world of the yeshivos" – as being "much better at fighting *against* something than at simply defining what

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it is they stand for.”

Professor Heilman goes on to lament that what results from “Jewish fundamentalism” is that “the complexity of Judaism is lost...devolved into a few fundamentals.”

And then, he pointedly closes his paper as follows:

“If one considers what has happened to the rich culture of Islam as it has devolved into Islamist fundamentalism as a model, the Jews who espouse this option would do well to rethink their strategy.”

The professor’s comparison (which he seems to ignore in his letter) of the yeshiva world with the sewer that produces Islamist outrages is explicit, revolting, and wrong. At a time when every conscious human being readily and rightly associates “Islamist fundamentalism” with attacks like the one on our country four years ago and more recently in England, with shootings and beheadings, with suicide bombings and vows to conquer the world by, yes, terror and violence, the blithe insinuation that *bnei yeshiva* have any connection, however potential, to that blight is beyond shameful.

The professor protests that there are indeed parallels between madrasas and, *lehavdil*, yeshivos. Well, yes, just as there are between French gourmands and cannibals. But any academic who penned a scholarly paper warning of the “quiescent” danger posed by

gourmands – since, like cannibals, they too take pride in the preparation and consumption of their meals – would not be taken seriously. One hopes.

But the most such a paper would evoke would be laughter. In the case of yeshivos and, *lehavdil*, madrasas, the comparison is not only risible, it is irresponsible – to the point of dangerousness. It is all too easy these days for such insinuations, no matter how outlandish, to find their way to millions of sinister eyes, those that enjoy gazing at the multitude of publications and websites specializing in the demonization of Jews and Jewish beliefs.

The irresponsibility would be striking even if the insinuation contained some seed of truth, but here is it is even worse, as the professor’s comparison is baseless. I don’t know which “yeshiva boys” he refers to in his letter to whom he attributes acts of violence, but the perpetrators of the few acts of violence by Jews over the years (like the assassination of Yitzchak Rabin a decade ago, the massacre of Arabs in the *Me’aras Hamachpeila* eleven years ago, or the recent murder of several Arabs in Shfaram) stemmed from nationalist sentiments, not Chareidi ones; all of those inexcusable acts, moreover, were strongly condemned by the leaders of the yeshiva world. Does the professor have some secret

knowledge of assassins or murderers lurking in Lakewood, Ponevezh or the Mir? If so, he would do us all well to share it. If not, he would do both himself and us well to confine his imaginings to his imagination.

It is regrettable that Professor Heilman’s main reaction to my critique is to accuse me of *sinas chinam*, as if defending the most spiritually vibrant part of the Jewish world from slander is somehow an expression of hatred rather than love. I assure him that I have no hatred whatsoever for him; I think I have met him once, an interaction that was entirely pleasant. I have, moreover, spoken with one of his sons, a journalist, on several occasions, and been greatly impressed by his intelligence, fairness and good will. What I expressed, and still express, is not, *chas veshalom*, anything remotely akin to hatred, but rather astonishment – at the dangerous falsehood that the professor has placed in the public sphere. That is neither *sin’a* nor *chinam*.

Finally, “through a glass darkly” has indeed become an English idiom by way of a Christian religious text. But it originates in the Talmud and Midrash; it is a translation of the Greek/Aramaic phrase “*aspaklaria she’eina mei’ira*.”

Which, I reiterate, is no way to view Jews dedicated to *ahavas haTorah* and *yiras Shamayim*.

AVI SHAFRAN

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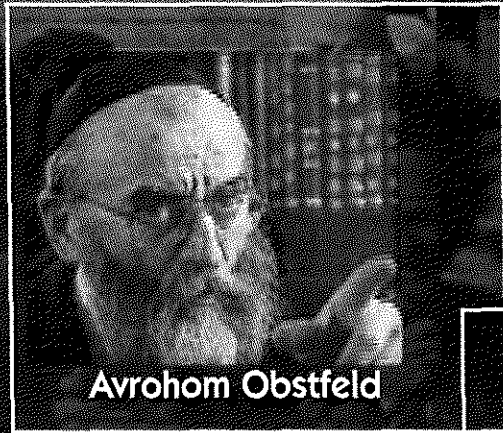


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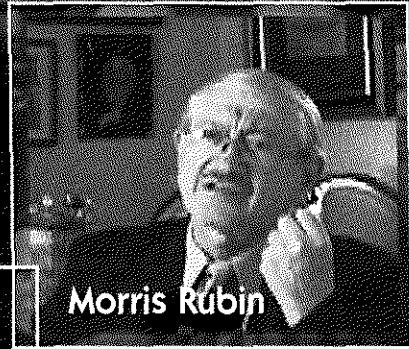
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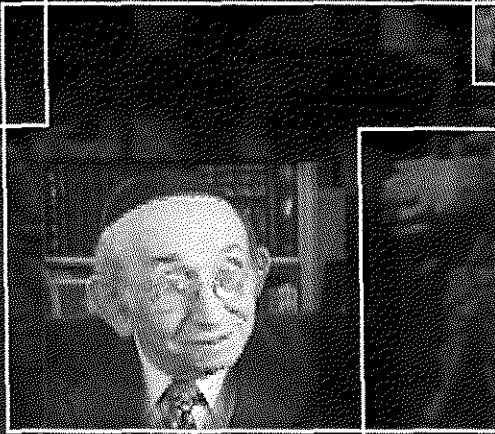
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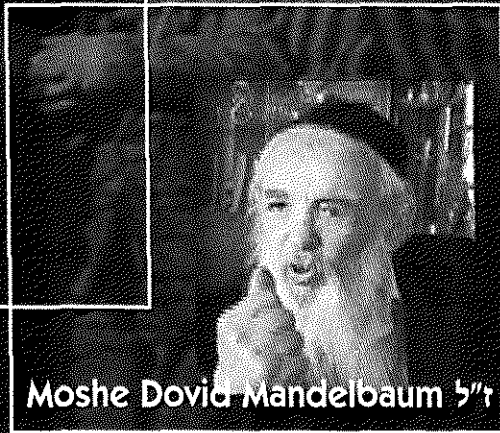
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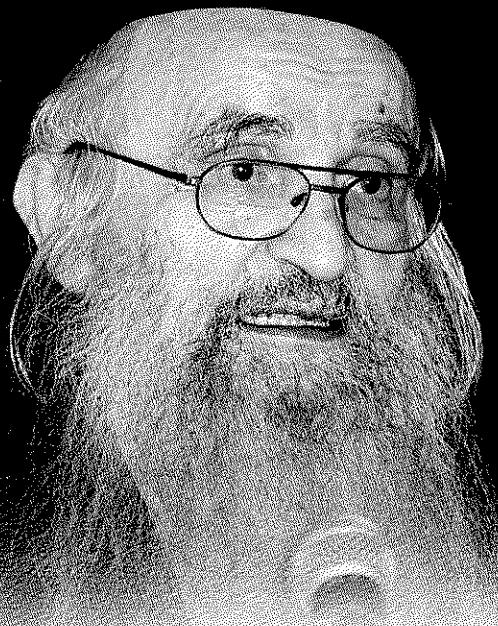
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Rabbi Abba BERMAN

זצ"ל



HIS EARLY YEARS

The *Rosh Hayeshiva*, Rabbi Abba Berman זצ"ל, was born 86 years ago in Lodz, Poland. His unusual intellectual abilities caught the attention of great scholars of that generation, starting with the *Chofetz Chaim* (of whom his father was a *talmid muvhak*), who tested him at age six on *Tosafos* in *Peirek Hamafkid*. The *Chofetz Chaim* told his father not to publicize his special genius. He said that the *Vilna Gaon* would have been much greater if not for the public attention that was accorded him. At age 9, he had a *sefer* in *Sefer Ketzos Hachoshen* (as was told to his grandson, who wanted to learn *Ketzos* at age 7 – “Zaidy didn’t learn *Ketzos* until nine”).

At the relatively young age of 14, he joined the *Mirrer Yeshiva*, where the general practice was to enter in one’s late teens or early 20s. Nonetheless, he broke into the tight elite circle of established *talmidei chachamim*, where his fame

RABBI WOLPIN HEADS A KOLLEL IN KIRYAT SEFER.

spread quickly as one of the “lions” of the group, earning the nickname “Abba Einstein.”

When he arrived, he wanted to hear a discourse given by the revered *Mashgiach*, Rabbi Yeruchem Levovits זצ"ל. He was advised by an older acquaintance that

When Rabbi Abba Berman זצ"ל was *niftar* this past 3 Iyar/May 12, he left behind five sefarim (thus far) bearing the name “*Iyun Hatalmud*” – also the name of the yeshiva he headed – personifying his legacy of profoundly deep, analytical commentary on the entirety of Shas.

During his student years in the *Mirrer Yeshiva* in Europe and Shanghai, then, as a *Rosh Yeshiva* in America and in *Eretz Yisroel*, he established his legacy of *chiddushei Torah* (original Torah insights) and, ultimately, hundreds of dedicated *talmidim*, many of them *marbitzei Torah*, who keep his unique approach alive. In the pages that follow, **Rabbi Binyomin Wolpin**, a *talmid* of the last 20 years, shares his impressions of his *Rosh Yeshiva* with the readers of *The Jewish Observer*.

nobody understood the *Mashgiach* in the beginning, and it wasn’t worth the time. Reb Abba went anyway. Upon hearing the *shmuess*, he was convinced that he had plumbed its depths, as was verified by a skeptical older *bachur*.

The *Rosh Hayeshiva* of Mir – Rabbi Lazer Yudel Finkel זצ"ל – would grant

pocket-money as a welcome addition to the meager stipends the *talmidim* received in reward for a *chabura* of *chiddushei Torah*. It was common practice in Mir for a *talmid* short of funds to “speak in learning” with Reb Abba to pick up something original and impressive to say over to the *Rosh Yeshiva*. On more than one occasion, the *Rosh Yeshiva* said, “That sounds like Abba Lodzer’s insights.”

Generally, one who is intellectually gifted requires less effort to do as well as his colleagues, if not better. Although this was definitely the case with Reb Abba, it did not deter him from exerting vast energy and effort in learning and understanding things to the utmost.

He once described how he approached a *sugya* (topic in Talmud): He would sit down for a few hours and “take in” the *Gemara*, *Rashi*, *Tosafos*, *Rishonim* and *Acharonim* (earlier and later commentaries), until he had a clear picture of the entire *sugya*, including all of the apparent inconsistencies and difficulties in understanding the subject matter. He would then pace

the floor, back and forth, for hours on end – even over days and weeks – to delve into the depths of the *sugya*. His involvement was literally 24 hours a day. He would later demand from his *talmidim* that they go to sleep with a *kushya*: “Don’t you know that the mind continues to work even while you’re sleeping?” His family members would relate how he would remain awake, often pacing the floors in deep thought, in the middle of the night.

When yet a *bachur* in the Mir, he was known to be the first one in the *beis midrash* in the morning, and the last one out at night. He described his learning schedule in Shanghai in the winter of 1942:

The morning seder was Maseches Kiddushin, which he completed until daf Nun. At night, he learned Maseches Nazir and Mishnayos Ohalos with Rambam, Hilchos Tumas Meis with the 104 hasagos (challenges) of the Raavad, all of these be’iyun rav (great depth).

REACHING ACROSS THE GENERATIONAL GAP

When we contemplate Reb Abba’s combination of intellectual genius and arduous toil, we might wonder how he reached so many *talmidim* in our own generation, which is so distant from the greatness of the previous generation. A large percentage of these *talmidim* are currently *marbitzei Torah* of the highest caliber, including many *Roshei Yeshiva* in America and *Eretz Yisroel*. How was a connection made to facilitate communication between *rebbei* and *talmidim*?

An answer can perhaps be suggested from a Gemara (*Eiruvim* 13b):

“His name was Rebbe Nehorai, but he was known as Rebbe Meir because he would enlighten the eyes of the *chachamim* in halacha.” The name of a person describes his essence. The word “*nehorai*” literally means light, and his essence was light. But that was insufficient to describe him. He developed his character to become “*meir*” – someone

who enlightens others – to the extent that his name was changed to *Meir*. He applied his inborn gifts of light to illuminate Torah for others.

In his way, Reb Abba also passed wisdom and insight to others beyond the lines of conventional communication, using his own light to enlighten others, as Rebbe Meir did.

He would, in effect, take his *talmidim* “by the hand” and lead them to deeper vistas in understanding. This included clearly mapping out deep abstract concepts, giving clear guidelines and directions in a depth that at the time was not explained or articulated elsewhere. Not only did the *talmidim* gain from the actual explanations of many difficult *sugyos*, they also received a *mahalach* – an approach – in understanding that they continued to use in all areas of Torah.

Another factor was the willingness of the *talmidim* to invest tremendous effort in understanding the *Rosh Yeshiva’s shiurim* – as much as eight hours were dedicated to reviewing each *shiur*. Reb Yeruchem Levovitz used to emphasize that a *talmid* can only plumb the depths of his *rebbei’s* thought if he has the *cheifetz* and the *ratzon* – the desire and will – to understand his *shiurim*. So it was with Reb Abba’s *talmidim*. A novice *talmid* invested the effort, and found the newly acquired knowledge

to be illuminating. The joy of understanding the light shed on a difficult topic convinced him to continue to toil for more fulfillment, which he was sure would be forthcoming.

Rabbi Yeruchem Olshin, שליט”א, one of the *Roshei Hayeshiva* of Bais Medrash Govoha in Lakewood, was *maspid* (eulogized) Reb Abba in the yeshiva, noting that while he had had the privilege of hearing many *shiurim* from highly regarded *Roshei Yeshiva*, the *shiurim* that he heard during his years under Reb Abba were “*fun an andere velt*” – of a truly unique quality.

Similarly, Rabbi Yigal Rosen שליט”א, *Rosh Hayeshiva* of Ohr Yisroel in Petach Tikva, commented that whenever he thinks of the *shiur* that he heard from Reb Abba years earlier, it assumes the same freshness and clarity that it had when he first heard it. And Rabbi Dovid Kohein, *Rosh Hayeshiva* of Chevron, who also heard *shiurim* from Reb Abba, remarked that his was a greatness of earlier generations.

GIVING EXPRESSION TO THE ABSTRACT

There were many abstract concepts in Reb Abba’s *shiurim*, and he would toil tirelessly to find the precise word to convey the fine point that he was

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Rabbi Chaim Soloveitchik of Brisk was known for his original, deep concepts. Reb Chaim was once in the crowded central train station in Warsaw, deep in thought as usual, with his son Reb Velvel ל"צ at the other end of the station. Suddenly he called out: "Velvel! I got the right word!"

Reb Abba used to tell this story to stress the importance of precision in wording when explaining a concept, teaching this through both anecdote and example. Indeed, Reb Abba considered himself a *talmid* of Reb Chaim, having been initiated as such when he spent his lunch hour one winter *z'man* in Shanghai dining on Reb Chaim's *sefer*.

Rabbi Chaim Soloveitchik ל"צ had introduced a "new" analytical approach to understanding the concepts of *Shas*. He and his *talmidim* (i.e., Rabbi Shimon Shkop, Rabbi Boruch Ber Lebovitz, and Rabbi Isser Zalman Meltzer, among others) established many basic definitions for Talmudic principles (*yesodos*). The approach of the following generation generally involved working out different *sugyos* (topics) based on the *yesodos* that were established by their predecessor. Reb Abba was recognized for establishing new *yesodos* and definitions indepen-

dently, based, of course, on the full understanding of the words of *Shas* and the *Rishonim*. His approach was not really new, but, in some measure, exactly what Reb Chaim had been doing. In this manner, Reb Abba was indeed a *talmid* of Reb Chaim.

Rabbi Elazar Schach ל"צ would advise his *talmidim* to seek out Reb Abba's *shiurim*. He said that some people could always benefit from most *shiurim*, but everyone could benefit from Reb Abba. This is due to the special effort Reb Abba invested in the power of *hasbara* – explanation – and literally being *ma'amid talmidim harbei* – that is, helping the *talmidim* to stand up on their own. He would quote the Gemara in *Berachos* that questions an inconsistency in the *passuk* in *Tehillim* that first summons a person to study "*Toras Hashem*," then refers to it as *Toraso*, his Torah. The Gemara explains that before a person fully understands the lesson, it is *Toras Hashem*, but afterwards, the Torah is called *Toraso* – the person's own Torah. So, too, he would say with regard to his own *shiur*, "First it's my Torah, but when a *talmid* toils and fully understands it, it becomes *Toraso* – his own." He would tell his *talmidim*, "I don't want you to become another Reb Abba, I want you to become Reb Yoseif."

ACHRAYUS – CONCERN AND RESPONSIBILITY

The Rosh Yeshiva felt a deep sense of responsibility for *kevod Shamayim*, in general, and specifically, for the dignity of Torah. He would constantly ask himself, when making a decision, if this is consistent with his purpose in the world. This approach goes back many years:

When the Rosh Yeshiva was a child of 6, two younger siblings succumbed to a deadly epidemic. This affected the family and, as the only surviving child in the family, young Abba took the situation to heart and developed a severe speech defect that accompanied him to a degree for the rest of his life.

When he arrived in the United States after World War II, his speech was still difficult to understand. The Joint Distribution Committee tried to prepare him for gainful employment, and for two years sponsored sessions in speech therapy several evenings a week, with no success. The Joint then informed him that he had no hope of becoming a rav or a rebbi, since his speech was unintelligible, and recommended that he become a physicist. His intellectual strengths would guarantee him success, and they would sponsor his education. He could spend his spare time learning while supporting his family. The Rosh Yeshiva, however, asked himself – Is this what Hakadosh Baruch Hu brought me here for? Is this the purpose of my intellectual abilities? He decided that, come what may, his life would be dedicated to harbotzas Torah.

*Several years later, he suffered severe back pains. The doctor prescribed a medication that failed to relieve his back ache, but restored control of his speech. He successfully gave *shiurim* for half a century thereafter. He always attributed his recovery to his *kabbolas ol Torah* – assuming the responsibility to teach Torah.*

He would remind his *talmidim* to constantly ask themselves: "What does the Creator want from me now?" He was never heard saying that he wants

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something. Even when it was time to eat, he would not say, "I would like to eat." Rather, he would say: "Me'ken essin." His concern and care for his health, or anything that would affect his physical well-being, would sometimes seem exaggerated. He would respond: "We're not our own bosses. We're in charge of taking care of our bodies, so we can properly serve Hashem."

He put special emphasis on his responsibility to train *talmidim* to develop expertise in fully understanding the depth of Torah, and spreading it. In his later years, he would constantly reexamine all of his past decisions to see if he might have made some mistakes regarding his "career" and place of teaching. "Maybe I should have answered Rabbi Moshe Feinstein's invitation to say *shiur* in Staten Island." "Perhaps I should have joined that *Chassidische* Yeshiva in Bnei Brak." "Should I have stayed here or gone there?"

...

There was a period when the yeshiva was going through difficulties; financial support from the community was not forthcoming. This had a detrimental affect on his health and mood. One day, however, he was in an ecstatic state. When asked for an explanation, he said that he was visited by an old talmid with a special request. One of the large yeshivos was planning to open a branch just across the street, where he'd be heading the kollel. He was wondering if the Rosh Yeshiva could help him solicit funds from the neighbors. The Rosh Yeshiva was overjoyed with the opportunity to try and help in harbatzas Torah. When he was challenged why he was so eager to help others while he's in such dire straits, he responded sharply, "Torah is not a private enterprise. It's the Eibishter's Torah!"

He would constantly quote a *Midrash Tanchuma*. "Should a person learn Torah and not teach it to others – his learning is void." Even what we learn is not our own, but meant to be passed on. In his later years, his many physical ailments began to affect his memory. Someone tried to comfort him by quoting *Chazal*

that when a person leaves this world, a *malach* comes and reminds him of all the Torah that he had learned during his lifetime. This did not appease him.

He said, "That's fine for me, but what about *Klal Yisroel* and the Torah that they'll be missing?"

He would constantly request and

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demand of his *talmidim*, "I don't know how many more years the *Ribbono shel Olam* has for me to live. Please see to it that you continue spreading our *divrei Torah*. I'm relying on you."

DEVEIKUS BATORAH - TOTAL IMMERSION IN TORAH

The *Rosh Yeshiva's deveikus baTorah* was exceptional. He would tell the *talmidim*: "The *Ribbono shel Olam* has nothing - *ein Lo* - in this world but the four cubits of Torah.' If *Chazal* say '*ein Lo*,' that means that that is all that exists for *Hakadosh Baruch Hu*. Nothing else counts!" And that was just about all that existed for the *Rosh Yeshiva*. Over the years, he underwent many *galuyos* - exiles - starting in Lodz, and then to Mir, where, after a few years, he joined them in their exile across Russia to Japan and Shanghai. Then, on to New York, where he taught in the *Mirrer Yeshiva* in Flatbush, then in *Kaminitz*, then *Bnei Brak*... *Boro Park* to *Far Rockaway*, then *Monsey*, to *Yerushalayim*, then *Kiryat Sefer*. Somebody asked him if all of these wanderings ever bothered him. He answered: "One is required to go into *galus* to a *mekom Torah*. '*Baruch HaMakom Baruch Hu*.' My *makom* is where the *Eibishter* is. I'm always with *Him*, no matter what the place is called."

He would comment on the *Gemara (Shabbos)*: "When *Rebbi* is involved in one *Gemara*, do not ask him about a different one." "This is not due to the lack of *Rebbi's* power to answer elsewhere," he said. "On the contrary, his involvement in this *masechta* was so complete that nothing else existed, not even another *masechta*." This concept was "beautifully preached and beautifully fulfilled."

His family members recall him sitting with the family, with deep furrows on his countenance - obviously contemplating very difficult passages. Suddenly, he would break into a broad smile, clapping his hands in joy - a breakthrough!

The entire family (wife and six

daughters) lived with the *masechta* that was being studied in the Yeshiva. "That happened in *Yevamos*." "Wasn't that in *Bava Kama zman*?"

TORAS EMES

The foremost aspect of the *Rosh Yeshiva's* teaching was his adherence to the exact teachings of the *Rishonim*. The most basic issue in learning was that it should be *Toras Emes*. He would toil for hours and days to understand a deep concept, only to discard his conclusion because it didn't fit perfectly with the terminology of the *Rishonim*. He would instruct his *talmidim* to approach the text without any preconceived notions. The *Rishonim* say exactly what they mean. Especially the *Ramban*. The *Ramban* is known by scholars to be especially difficult, due to his cryptic, concise manner of writing, leaving no room for creative interpretation. This made it a favorite for the *Rosh Yeshiva*.

He would explain the *tefilla* "Ahava Rabba," where we ask for *hatzlacha* in our Torah study: "*lishmo'a, lilmod, u'lelameid* – to listen, to learn, and to teach." Note the sequence, he would say. To begin to learn, we must first be *shomei'a* – to absorb what we are being told. Otherwise, as nice as our comment may sound, it is not *emes*. There's no such a thing as "*lav davka* – not necessarily as it is expressed" in the statements of *Rishonim*. And of course, a *sevara* (rationale) must be soundly based and fully understood without distorting or twisting the text; otherwise, it does not fully meet the test of *emes le'amito* – uncompromised truth. There were some *shiurim* that he discontinued saying after many years, because he no longer felt the *emes* in them.

His strict adherence to *emes* was not only limited to his *derech halimud*. It touched every aspect of his life. When people would inquire about *talmidim* for *shidduchim*, he wouldn't exaggerate. He would say the precise truth without embellishment. He was not always understood properly, and some *shid-*



duchim almost fell through until things were explained. When his *Rebbetzin* רב"ר would tell someone, "Thanks a million," he would ask: "A million!?" He would not give *haskamos* (letters of approbation) on *sefarim* written by *talmidim*, because that would put him in an uncomfortable situation when he would have to decline others. He would not consider writing something that would not fully be *emes*.

But more than anywhere else, the *midda* of *emes* was manifest in his efforts to assure that his Torah be *Toras emes*. There was no *be'erech* – fuzzy assessment. He would take pains to precisely define and explain concepts that were generally taken for granted and used by others. He had no use for *vertlach* or plain *drashos*. When asked to speak at a *bris*, he declined, pointing out that he already explained the *inyan* of *bris* on another occasion. Why say it again?

He was not embarrassed by the demands of *emes*. If there was something that he didn't fully comprehend, he would openly, unabashedly admit to it.

TORAS CHAIM

The first and most prominent aspect of the *Rosh Yeshiva's* approach to learning was how the Torah was alive and real for him. This was palpable in every single *shiur*, when he would delve into the depths of the most abstract concepts of *Shas*. The Gemara quotes Shmuel regarding his expertise: "The paths of the heavens are as clear to me as the paths of Naharda'a [his hometown]." Such was the *Rosh Yeshiva's* clarity in the depths of every single topic in *Shas*. While participating in a *shiur* on a *kinyan* (formal act of acquisition), one could actually see it taking place, and feel the *chalos* (ultimate effect of the act) as it happened, be it by the *gavra* (person) or the *cheftza* (object). The most abstract concepts came to life. As one *talmid* remembered: "When the *Rosh Yeshiva* would say over the *Chofetz Chaim's* quote of the *Yerushalmi* on *Pei'ah*, that all of the mitzvos do not measure up to one word of Torah, you could see the scale in front of your eyes, and watch

Other Areas of Concern

In the days before his *petira*, he would spend a few minutes coursing through a *sefer* on Jewish history. One evening, he was immersed in contemplating the era of the *Rishonim* (the early commentaries, 11th–15th centuries). His countenance glowed with joy and pride: "In the world at large, it was the Dark Ages, and look how much light of Torah we were *zocheh* to through the *Rishonim*!"

The next evening he was involved in the era of the *Tanna'im* (the rabbis of the Mishna). His face was darkened with pain from the *chillul kevod Shamayim*: "How is it that the *Tzeddukim* (Sadducees, who denied the validity of the Oral Law,) had so much power and such a presence in the great era of the *Tanna'im*?" He was greatly disturbed by the *chillul Hashem* of 2,000 years ago.... The next morning, he did not wake up.

it tip to the side of the Torah."

This approach to Torah – as real and alive – affected not only his understanding of the deepest *sugyos*, but also how he regarded Torah and mitzvos in general.

In The Mir, there was a bachur with leanings towards haskala (culture of "enlightenment"). He would ridicule Torah and mitzvos. He once challenged Reb Abba, "Does Hakadosh Baruch

Hu really care if I smoke on Shabbos? How could it bother him if I take one small puff?"

Reb Abba didn't miss a beat, and quickly responded: "What about a drop of cyanide? Just one drop? How would it bother you? Oh, because that's a metziyus (palpable reality) of lethal poison! Well, the Torah is the greatest metziyus. When the Torah says 'Mechaleleha mos yumas – Those who desecrate Shabbos will surely be put to death,' that creates the most lethal poison!"

He lived, learned and taught with the Torah being *Toras Chaim* – alive and existing on the highest level of existence – "*die greste metziyus*."

He had a precise *mashal* for everything; from the deepest explanations in learning to a simple idea in life, he would always bring an example. A case in point:

The mother of a talmid wanted her son to go to college to learn a profession. She explained that her husband underwent professional training, and now he supported his family with a few hours of work, leaving him the rest of his time for Torah study. Why couldn't her son do the same? The Rosh Yeshiva responded with a query: "If your children were on a boat in the middle of the ocean and one son fell overboard, and he miraculously swam to safety, would you push your next son overboard?"

• • •

A true description of the *Rosh Yeshiva* and his life could be derived from an explanation of the statements by *Chazal* that one should seek Torah only from someone who is similar to a *malach*.

A *malach* is a creation whose entire existence is his *shelichus* – his mission defines his essence. Nothing else exists with a *malach*. So, too, is a *rebbe* of *divrei Torah*. Nothing exists with him other than his *shelichus*.

The *Rosh Yeshiva's* entire life, including every minute and every action, was fully dedicated to bringing Torah into the world, by understanding every single word of Torah and training *talmidim* to do the same, each on his own level, within his own personal sense of undertaking.

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A Matter of Life and Death... for Mechanchim



THE DISCOMFORT FACTOR

Death is probably the most avoided topic in the world. People not only shy away from the topic, but the word "die" itself is almost taboo. We hear of individuals *נפטר* "passing away," being *ניפטר*, or "going to the *Olam Ha'emes*," but almost no one ever dies! Despite the fact that many people in the field of mental health attribute this choice of words to yet another attempt at evading this most painful topic, it would seem that the reason goes much deeper than just avoidance. In reality, using these euphemistic terms reflects an affirmation of one of the most basic *yesodei ha'emuna*, the very foundations of our belief. These expressions articulate our belief that every individual is endowed with an eternal *neshama*, which does not perish; only the physical dimension of a person dies. In that sense, these modes of expression also help us cope with the enormous pain and grief that accompany death. In addition, we avoid mentioning the threat of death in explicit terms in keeping with the Talmudic admonition, "One should never give Satan an opening" (*Berachos* 19a).

In school situations, there are times when the subject of death intrudes. We may resort to veiled and indirect references in our conversations and classroom discussions, but there are times when the teachers and the principal

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simply cannot escape the subject itself... when a child loses a parent or a sibling, the group loses a classmate, or – most unavoidable of all – a faculty member passes away.

On the whole, many teachers and *rabbei'im* are very uncomfortable approaching their students' bereavement issues. They fear saying the wrong thing, or they are not sure as to what would be helpful or not, and many are not familiar enough with the approach of *Chazal* to present the subject properly.

In truth, this topic is not included in most yeshiva curricula or in teacher-training programs. Thus, the tendency is to avoid the topic, even though the shadow it casts on the classroom is undeniable. In addition, everyone brings with them a host of observations from personal experiences, as well as impressions and opinions regarding this topic. As a result, when such a dispiriting occurrence takes place, the school administration may invite outside help to guide the staff. Obviously, these consultants must be in command of the relevant comments of *Chazal* and the Torah-based *hashkofos* that grow out of them. They can then assist others – *mechanchim* and mental health professionals – to honestly confront and come to grips with their own feelings concerning death. Educators can then utilize this introspection as a catalyst to develop their own counseling skills and grow in this area. Ultimately, an informed, perceptive staff will ensure that our *chinuch*, and attempts to advise and console, will not be tainted by personal sensitivities, and that our views will be in line with *daas Torah*.

ASSUMING A TORAH PERSPECTIVE ON LIFE... AND DEATH

Developing the knowledge and the awareness of helpful and appropriate practices is an ongoing process, far beyond the scope of this article. But the following anecdote highlights the benefits and importance of this approach.

This past summer, a rav in a camp was asked to speak to "Chaim" – a thirteen-year-old boy who had been called by his mother to inform him that his father and brother had gone to Eretz Yisroel because his grandfather was close to death. The young boy became quite perturbed and somewhat depressed. The rav asked Chaim, "Why are you so upset?" Chaim answered, "Because my grandfather is dying."

When questioned, it was ascertained that Chaim had met his grandfather only once, and usually spoke to him once a year on the telephone.

The rav asked, "If you hardly knew your grandfather, why do you think you're so upset?"

He responded, "I don't know."

The rav shared some thoughts with Chaim. "Some young people feel bad in such a situation because their father is in pain. Some may truly be worried that this may happen to them. But I believe that most boys your age would be upset because they think that dying means it's the end, everything is all over. We members of Klal Yisroel, however, don't believe that at all. We believe that our pres-

ence in this world, while we're alive, is very temporary. 'Dying' is when we move on to our next existence, preparing and waiting for *techiyas hameisim* (resurrection of the dead) and the World to Come. As a matter of fact, in due time we will see and be with our beloved *niftarim* once again."

This seemed to help, and Chaim was encouraged to return any time he wanted to talk again. A few hours later, Chaim came back to the rav to say, "Thank you very much. You made

me feel much better."

Knowledge of the basics of our *emuna* as taught to us by *Chazal* is crucial to supporting the bereaved. But it doesn't stop there. It is insufficient for the "helper" to simply be familiar with "*Kol Yisroel yeish lahem cheilek laOlam Habba* – All Jews have a share in the World to Come," *Moshiach*, *techiyas hameisim*, reward and punishment, "*da mei'ayin basa...*" know from where you come and where you are destined to go...." To just know such concepts is not

enough. The depth of one's belief should be reflected in the manner in which he or she relates this to the bereaved. When one's existence, and especially that of the bereavement counselor, is permeated with *emuna*, then he will view death, although painful, in a very different manner. It no longer signifies the end, but rather an integral part of an ongoing life. It ushers in a new existence and represents a significant step closer to a Jew's ultimate goal.

A DELICATE PATH TO BRINGING COMFORT

Nichum aveilim can also be a delicate task. Not only are the halachos important, but it is a mitzvah that requires sensitive and sensible responses. What to say, and how and when to say it are important insights one must have in mind when performing this mitzvah.

The object of the mitzvah is to console. Unfortunately, when done improperly, it can have an opposite effect. When trying to be *menachem*, professional practice teaches the importance of being truthful. Nevertheless, frightening *mussar* statements, which may be true, are far from helpful when attempting to bring *nechama* (consolation). There are enough uplifting, appropriate *hashkafos* and anecdotes to promote and bolster the healing process. When used appropriately, the words of *Chazal* are full of *nechama* and genuine hope. Just reciting *tefillos* and *Tehillim* is uplifting to most children, even when they do not understand the meaning of the words.

The issue becomes more complex when we are confronted by grieving students who may be angry and find it difficult to relate to *Hashem*. On the whole, these children are the exception. Certainly, they need support and understanding, and should not be pressured to do things such as accepting *kaballos* (commitments to undertake acts of *chessed* or Torah

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study as a merit for the deceased) and special projects upon themselves. Nevertheless, they should be made aware that grief is not a *petur* (dispensation) from performing mitzvos or living up to our usual high standards of conduct. Allowing children to say whatever they please publicly, or even privately, to enable them to express themselves, can be counterproductive and irresponsible. Would we accept cursing or obscenities from a grieving student without question or delicate direction?

It is apparent that good judgment is critical in this sacred endeavor. "Do-gooders" who lack the requisite knowledge and keen wisdom have the ability to *create* problems that did not exist before. It is unquestionably important to provide a forum for students to question and express themselves. But it must be done with understanding and insight, in keeping with the guidelines set down for us by *Chazal*. *Rabbei'im* and *moros* must also be aware that sometimes there are questions that can not be fully discussed within a large group. There are instances when it is best for the leader to delay answering questions and challenges to a more appropriate time and setting. Yet, the delay must be done in a manner that gives credence to the question and shows the leader's interest in answering it.

THE ROLE OF GRIEF COUNSELORS

In light of the above, there is reason for another serious concern. In recent years, many yeshivos and day schools have opted to bring

professional "grief teams" into their schools when faced with the death of someone whose passing impacts greatly upon the school population. Although this initiative is laudatory, it also calls for some inquiry and analysis. The members of these teams



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should be Torah-observant Jews. They must be knowledgeable of the Torah *hashkafa* on death, bereavement and *nechama*. More specifically, the relevant Torah *hashkafa* must be at the core of the counsel that is presented. Too often, professionals' beliefs and practices are at odds with the *chinuch* we aspire to transmit to our students, and their services cannot be utilized.

By no means do we mean to cast aspersions on the important role of

mental health professionals. Rather, we must define where and how their expertise can be best utilized in our schools. While their involvement is essential in assisting those individuals who have had severe reactions, when an entire class or larger group is being addressed, the task should fall to sufficiently knowledgeable *rabbanim* and *mechanchim* who are capable of setting the tone suitable for Torah institutions.

Along with the support mental

health professionals extend to our children, they also have much to offer our *mechanchim* (educators). Their expertise can undoubtedly be utilized in making educators cognizant of when it is appropriate to show overflowing *rachmanus* (compassion) and at what point it could be detrimental. It is incumbent upon *rabbei'im*, *moros*, teachers, and certainly *menahalim*, to become familiar with the nature of grieving children's responses and behaviors. What is normal and to be expected in one situation, may, under different circumstances, be considered a red flag calling for intervention. Age, maturity, intellect and experience all play significant roles in determining how best to respond to a bereaved child.

IN SUM...

In sum, it is imperative that each school, led by the *menaheil* or a designee, set up a program to educate and train the staff in how to help bereaved students. On one level, we must educate the staff so that they understand and can present the Torah perspective on issues relating to dying. It is also important that the staff of *mechanchim* be encouraged, through workshops and group sessions given by Torah-guided mental health professionals, to develop an awareness and appreciation of the nature of children's responses and behavioral changes that may occur. Minimally, one or two *mechanchim* could be trained to be "the experts" of the school. The ones chosen, obviously, must have the warmth, sensitivity and good judgment needed to advise others in this *avodas hakodesh*. Through increased knowledge and skill, our *rabbei'im* and *moros* will be ready, willing and able, *בע"ה*, to provide the direction and leadership required to successfully fulfill their mandate. May we soon merit the day when all the above will be obsolete, in keeping with the prophecy: "He will eliminate death forever, and *Hashem Elokim* will erase tears from all faces" (*Yeshayahu* 25,8). □

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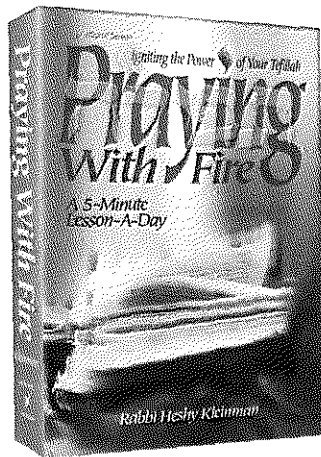
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REVIEW ARTICLE BY RABBI LABISH BECKER



Igniting a Spark for Meaningful Tefilla

Praying With Fire: a Five-Minute Lesson-a-Day, by *Rabbi Heshy Kleinman*, published by Mesorah Publications in conjunction with the Ani Tefillah Foundation, Brooklyn, NY 2005, \$22.99 HC, \$19.99 SC.

LIVING IN A STATE OF VULNERABILITY

Cataclysmic and catastrophic events seem to have become the order of the day during the past few years. Ever since September 11th, when terrorists flew hijacked airplanes into the World Trade Center, the world seems to have entered a period of increased vulnerability. There is a pervasive sense that terrorism and all its attendant horrors can strike at any time, anywhere, to anyone.

This feeling of fragility is not just precipitated by acts of human beings, but by so-called acts of G-d, as well. In this past year alone, the world has experienced a tsunami, which killed more than one quarter of a million people, devastating earthquakes, hurricanes, floods, and numerous other natural disasters. It would seem that the prescient words of Rav Amnon in

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“Unesaneh Tokef” have come to pass. When we recite “Mi bamayim... who by water, who by fire, who by sword, who by beast, who by earthquake, etc.,” it seems that it was written with our generation very much in mind.

People have the distinct feeling that no matter what material possessions they own today – whether it be a large, elegantly appointed and spacious house, a beautiful car, or magnificent artwork... the trappings of material and economic well-being – they could all be gone tomorrow, or even today.

The Baal Shem Tov once asked a man how he was doing. The man's reply was, “I'm doing well, thank you. I have many fields, many servants, I own ships at sea, and I have considerable holdings in many companies. Everything is fine.”

The Baal Shem Tov remonstrated with him, “Aren't you going to say Baruch Hashem? After all, all of your bounty comes from Hashem.”

The man refused to do so, saying, “Look, even if Hashem would take away my fields, I still have my ships. If He takes away my ships, I still have my stocks. If He takes away my stocks, I still have my bank accounts. What are the odds that all that could possibly happen?”

Shortly thereafter, the man was

faced with total ruin. He soon returned to the Baal Shem Tov, begging his forgiveness and promising that from that day on, when asked how he was doing, he would always say Baruch Hashem.¹ For he now understood that all his possessions, all of his wealth, and all of his success came from Hashem and Hashem alone. He now knew that the name of Hashem, Ribbono shel Olam, means what it says.

DEALING WITH THE TRUE CAUSE

The genius of the Jewish people has always been able to understand that while events that occur in the world may on the surface seem to follow a visible pattern of geopolitical cause and effect, the true cause and effect is a *ruchniyus* matter, relating to the behavior of the Jewish People and their relationship with the *Ribbono shel Olam*. When people feel a sense of unease, of foreboding, the Jewish response has always been to turn to the *Ribbono shel Olam* in *tefilla* – to pray, to beseech and to implore the Master of the World for help in understanding and overcoming the challenges of the day.

¹ See Day 45 in the book under discussion for further reading material on this subject.

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Like our friend in the story, who learned the hard way, we have seen in the past few years a tremendous upsurge in interest in effective *tefilla*. An increasing number of books have been written, lectures delivered, and *shiurim* initiated to help people *daven* better. Indeed, Agudath Israel last year launched the National Tefillah Initiative as a project of its Commission on *Kedushas Beis Haknesses*. It was highly successful in bringing hundreds of shuls together, offering them *shiurim* on *tefilla* and assisting people in improving their *davening*. This is but one of many excellent programs that have been started.

As part of this trend, the Ani Tefillah Foundation was established, with the purpose of increasing awareness of the importance and power of *tefilla*, and providing education, inspiration and tools for more sincere *tefilla*. The Foundation's initial effort in its initiative is the publication of the book *Praying With Fire*, which has already become a classic in the field. At the time that this review is being written, it has already reached its third printing within two months! There are many reasons for this success, not the least of which is that *Praying With Fire* is well researched and well written. It is divided into "89 lessons," each dealing with a different aspect of the *tefilla* experience. As the book cover promises, each lesson takes about five minutes to read and digest. Not a great chunk of time, but one that can make an incredible difference in a person's entire day. Rabbi Kleinman has gone to great lengths to make the book readable, including numerous stories, parables, and astonishing insights. Tough questions are not avoided: "Why, if I *davened* so hard, are my *tefillos* not answered?" and: "How can some one so imperfect and small as myself reach out and be heard by the Omnipotent?"

A KEY TO THE SEFER'S EFFECTIVENESS

This *sefer* can move us from our ossified understanding of *tefilla*, which took form when we were

children (and perhaps hasn't changed very much since), to a very deep and rich appreciation for *tefilla*.

The chapter titles attest to this progression. They include Chapter One, "The Immeasurable Power of *Tefilla*"; Chapter Two, "How We Can Achieve Personal Growth Through our *Tefilla*"; Chapter Three, "How We Can Understand What *Kavana* Means";... and most importantly, Chapter Six, "What Practical Strategies Are There For Us to Actually Achieve True *Kavana*?"

In truth, it is impossible to review a book such as this, which has so many hundreds of separate insights into effective *tefilla*. Nonetheless, I would like to share just a few of the profound thoughts that are key to understanding *tefilla* and its importance.

In the lesson for Day 2, Rabbi Kleinman writes:

According to Rav Tzodok Hakohen², every problem is structured in such a way that *tefilla* can overcome it: "Anything that *Hashem* desires to bring to the world or to an individual can... also have opposite effects, Heaven forbid... and when the person feels an appropriate fear and prays, the result is that good occurs."

Elaborating on this crucial point, Rav Yeruchem Levovitz³ זצ"ל, *Mashgiach* of the pre-War Mirrer Yeshiva in Europe, says that it is our feelings of fear that cause us to pray, which in turn enable good to occur. Our usual way of thinking is that when trouble occurs, we must pray to *Hashem*; we would prefer, however, that the difficulty not arise in the first place.

Rav Yeruchem explains that this perspective indicates a lack of understanding as to what is actually taking place. In reality, the purpose of the trouble or pain is to rouse us to pray and to pour out our hearts to *Hashem*, and for Him to then respond with the salvation. He conveyed this point with an anal-

² Tzidkas HaTzaddik, Os 170.

³ Daas Chochmah U'Mussar, Vol. 1, Maamar 4; Vol. 2, Maamar 72.

ogy: Before a tree can bear fruit, the ground must be plowed and the saplings planted. Similarly, the afflictions that we must endure in life represent the plowing and sowing that compel us to pray to Hashem so that we can then reap the fruit of His salvation.

Thus, misfortune must be recognized as a necessary component of Hashem's deliverance, to the point that perhaps it should be referred to as "a part of our salvation."

When the *Chazon Ish*, the leader of his generation, was told of bad news or faced a troubling situation, he would often comment, "Nu, Hashem must be eager for us to daven!"⁴

If we can see the troubles in our world and in our own lives in this light, the anxiety we endure will serve its purpose. Instead of draining us, it will energize and activate us, bringing us to call out to Hashem with all our might, which in turn will bring us the salvation for which we are so fervently longing.

We now perceive the entire concept of *tefilla* in a totally different light. It is not that we daven to change an event, but the very purpose of the event was to engender our *tefilla*. Realizing how important *tefilla* is galvanizes us to attempt to become more effective in that very *tefilla*.

THE PRACTICAL PERSPECTIVE

In addition to being inspiring, *Praying With Fire* gives eminently practical suggestions on our road to davening better. The chapter on practical strategies for achieving true *kavana* includes daily readings on Quieting the Mind, Take Time to Prepare, Feeling the Need, Understanding the Meaning, Revise Old Habits, Find Joy, A Spirit of Excitement and most importantly, The Power of Visualization.

⁴ Cited in *Kovetz Sichos Maamar Mordechai*, Vol. 1, p. 123.

IT IS NOT THAT WE DAVEN TO CHANGE AN EVENT, BUT THE VERY PURPOSE OF THE EVENT WAS TO ENGENDER OUR TEFILLA. REALIZING HOW IMPORTANT TEFILLA IS GALVANIZES US TO ATTEMPT TO BECOME MORE EFFECTIVE IN THAT VERY TEFILLA.

(You will have to read the selection to understand what this means.)

The book is also enhanced by a touch of gentle humor and irony that begins many lessons. For example, in the lesson entitled "A Spirit of Excitement Part II," we find an opening paragraph that may make many of us feel slightly uncomfortable.

"Oh, hi," said the man to his friend, whom he had met in the same spot every morning for the past twenty-two years. His voice was a perfect monotone as he recited the same words he said each time. "Nice to see you. You're great. I'm desperate. Think you could give me and my family a day of life again

today? How about some breakfast? Well, whatever."

One of the best ways to achieve excitement in *tefilla* is to read books such as *Praying With Fire*. This will help a person become reenergized about something which perhaps many have forgotten

THE COMMUNAL FACTOR

Finally, the book tackles a real issue for *Klal Yisroel*: *tefilla* on a communal level. This is arguably one of the most important tasks of the Ani Tefillah Foundation. *Praying With Fire* takes on one of the most

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distressing problems – not only *davening* effectively, but the *tzibbur's* entire relationship with the *Ribbono shel Olam*. The lesson for Day 88 confronts head-on the plague of talking during *davening*. It consists basically of a letter of a business man who, through an interaction with the *gaon* Rabbi Chaim Kanievsky, came to understand the workings of *tefilla*. The following excerpts provide a glimpse of his own awakening:

Dear Friends,

Three weeks ago in *Eretz Yisroel*, I had the *z'chus* to have an incredible and inspiring visit with Rav Chaim Kanievsky, which I would like to share with you.

I asked Rav Chaim if he would be *mispallel* (pray) for a *refuah sheleimah* (recovery) for a good friend of mine from our shul. You can imagine my reaction when Rav Chaim asked me, 'Do they talk in your shul?' I

responded, "Yes, but it's much better lately." Rav Chaim immediately said, "That's not enough. The talking **must stop completely!**"... Rav Chaim point[ed] to the *Mishnah Berurah* that says that one should not speak the **entire davening**. "Speak to the people in your shul," Rav Chaim continued, and tell them that they should all be *mekabeil* (accept) on themselves, *b'li neder*, not to speak at all during *davening*, and in that *z'chus* your friend will have a *refuah sheleima*.

"That's not enough," I said.

Rav Chaim looked at me questioningly and asked, "What do you mean?"

I replied, "Nowadays, sometimes quoting the *Shulchan Aruch* is not enough. I need to tell them that Rav Chaim personally requested that there should be no talking in shul."

"All right, you can tell the congregants, **in my name**, that in this *z'chus* your friend will have a *refuah sheleima* and I will be *mispallel* not only for him, but for the success of all the congregants of the shul as well."

I left Rav Chaim feeling very moved and eager to convey his message.... The other night my doorbell rang, and my friend who had been ill stopped by for a visit. I was shocked! I knew that as of the day before, he still had not been doing well, and there he was in my living room, looking wonderful. To my great joy, he told me that he was really feeling much better...."

Enough said. This book belongs in the home of every Jew who wishes to improve his commitment to and understanding of the awesome power of *tefilla*. This book will take him on an awesome journey with a very happy ending, with a relationship with *Hashem* that he could not have possibly imagined when he began his trip.

May *Hashem* grant that *Praying With Fire* be an important vehicle in opening the hearts of *Yidden* everywhere to the unlimited potential in their relationship with "*Mi she'amar vehaya ha'olam.*" ☞

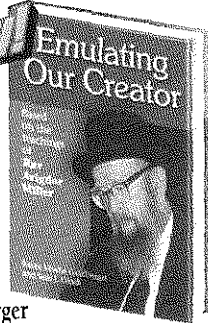
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YISRAEL RUTMAN

On Shabbos afternoons between
Sukkos and Pesach, we sing –

“Borchi Nafshi”

Our eyes on
creation, our
souls reach for
the Heavens

“When one considers His wondrous and great creatures and deeds...they will be a gateway for the understanding man to love Hashem” (*Rambam, Yesodei HaTorah 2:2*)

“The study of science reveals G-d as Creator. The sacred writings of Judaism, Rabbi Hirsch asserted, are filled with summonses ‘to keep our eyes and senses open to the revelation of G-d in the phenomena and laws of nature.’ Thus the Jew studies science for one primary reason: to reveal Hashem as Creator of the Universe” – Rabbi Eliyahu Meir Klugman, *Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch*, pp. 204-5.

The Talmud *Yerushalmi* (*Chagiga*) asks: “Why does the [letter] *Beis* have two *uketzin* [spurs], one pointing upward, the other pointing backward? We say to the *Beis*: Who created you? It points upward [to Hashem]. And what is His Name? It points to the letter *Aleph* [preceding it in the *Aleph-Beis*], which means to say that His Name is One.”

Parshas Bereishis, which tells of the creation of the physical universe, begins with the letter *Beis*. The *Beis* is adorned with *uketzin* that teach us that as we approach nature, we must always bear in mind the One Who created it. Like *Bereishis*, chapter 104 in *Tehillim* is referred to by its two initial words, “*Borchi Nafshi*,” which begin with the letter *Beis*. For its message is the same: Hashem reveals Himself in nature.

YISRAEL RUTMAN TEACHES GEMARA IN YESHIVAS
OHR YAAKOV, ZICHRON YAAKOV.

Borchi nafshi es Hashem!
Bless Hashem, my soul!

The *Ibn Ezra* explains that the structure of *Borchi Nafshi* parallels that of *Ma'asei Bereishis*, and so it begins with light, which is mentioned first in the Torah, and then moves on to the other elements of Creation. Thus, it is customary to read *Borchi Nafshi* and other *Tehillim* that speak of the wonders of Creation, commencing with the Shabbos afternoon after Sukkos, *Parshas Bereishis*, and continuing until two weeks before Pesach.

Hashem Elokai, gadalta me'od
Hashem, My G-d, You are very great!

Commenting on the *passuk*, “*lo yirani ha'adam va'chai*” (*Shemos 33:20*), the *Sefer Ha'ikarim* (2:1) says that it is not possible for man to know Hashem's

essence. He can be known only through His deeds. That is why the Torah begins with *Ma'asei Bereishis*, because it is through comprehension of the physical world that Hashem has created that we can have knowledge of Him. That, he says, is also the message of *Borchi Nafshi*. It begins with the declaration, “*Hashem Elokai, gadalta me'od*,” meaning that He is beyond our comprehension. From there the Psalmist goes on to delineate the wonders of the *Bri'a*, because that is how one may come to know Hashem.

... *oteh ohr kasalma*
... He enwraps Himself
in light like a garment

Rabbi Dessler flags the paradox: in the Torah vocabulary, light signifies revelation, whereas a garment is a fabric of concealment. How does Hashem enwrap Himself in revelation

that is concealment? The answer is that *Hashem* created a world in which He hides Himself – the Hebrew word *olam* is related to *heleim*, concealment. But since the purpose of existence is for us to seek Him out, and since the purpose of a thing is its essence, then the essence of nature (garment) is, in fact, revelation (light).

... *hod vehaddar lavashta*
 ... You have donned
 splendor and majesty

The physical creation is a garment for the Divine Presence (*Radak*). *Hod* is an inner splendor relative to *haddar* (*Malbim*). There are levels upon levels of the glory of *Hashem* in creation. The more that astronomers probe the heavens, the more billions of stars are discovered; the more biologists study the human body, the more awesome the complexity they find.

Hamekareh vamayim aliyosav
 He Who roofs His upper
 chambers with water

This refers to the clouds, which are made of water vapor, that are stretched out across the sky like roof beams to shield the earth from the sun's rays (*Radak*). As we have come to learn in recent years, if the ozone layer would be torn beyond a certain extent, there would be nothing to shield us from the lethal effects of ultraviolet radiation emanating from the sun.

Yassad eretz al mechoneha,
bal timot olam va'ed
 He established the earth upon its
 foundations, that it never falter

Some are of the opinion that MAD saved the world from destruction during the Cold War. MAD is an acronym which stands for Mutual Assured Destruction. Both the U.S and U.S.S.R. possessed a nuclear arsenal that was (and probably still is) sufficient to destroy the world many times over. The knowledge that each side had of the other's retaliatory capability served as an effective deter-

rent to either one starting a nuclear war. Why start a war in which your own destruction is assured?

The Jewish view is not based on MADness. We do not believe that the self-serving pragmatism of nations can serve as humanity's safeguard. Nor is it due to any blind force of nature. The *Alshich* comments here that thirty *tzaddikim** in every generation guarantee Creation's permanence. The world was created for *Bereishis*, as *Rashi* famously tells us, for *Klal Yisroel* and Torah, which are called *Bereishis*, and if they are absent or failing, the existence of the world is at risk.

Harim hagevohim la'ye'eilim...
 The high mountains
 for the wild goats...

"At first glance, the remote and barren mountains appear to serve no purpose, but in fact they were created to provide a habitat for the wild mountain goats (*Rashi, Radak*). Contrary to the theory that species survived only by adapting themselves to hostile environments, the Psalmist says that G-d created the setting to suit the needs of the species" (Rabbi Nosson Scherman, *Siddur Kol Yaakov*).

Regarding environmental issues, the focus has shifted somewhat over the years from the endangered star species such as whales, tigers and songbirds to the habitats themselves. An ecosystem will survive the loss of one or two of its prominent members, but the habitat that supports them, made up of soil, bacteria, insects, etcetera, depends on a delicate balance that scientists are as yet groping to understand and are unable to replicate. Without that support system, nothing survives.

Ma rabbu ma'asecha
 How great are Your works

The word "*rabbu*" in this context may be taken to mean either great or numerous (*Radak*). Contemporary studies of the biosphere can help us to update our appreciation of what numerous might mean. The number of known species

– including all living organisms from tigers and penguins down to plankton and rhizomes – is said to be upwards of 1.5 million.

Now, for most of us, a shark is a shark, a finch is a finch, a beetle a beetle. In fact, however, although the star of "Jaws" was the Great White Shark, it is only one of a cast of hundreds (350) of different kinds of sharks. They include such distinctive specimens as the hammerheads, lemon sharks, threshers, sawsharks, cookie-cutters, pygmies, lanterns, spotted wobbegongs, megamouths, and more.

The variety of finches is fascinating to behold. Some are fitted with slender bills for insect capture and nectar-sipping. Others are equipped with thick bills, designed for tearing apart fruit and cracking open seeds. Vampirical ground finches peck at the feather roots of large seabirds called boobies, and drink their blood. (Never promised you a rose garden.) And, lest we think that the Creator's inventiveness is limited to the diversity of bills, there is the woodpecker finch for us to contemplate. This bird lacks the curved bill or extrusive tongue that others use for getting insects out of the crevices of tree bark. Instead, it uses its bill to pick up twigs, which are then wielded for probing and picking out its prey, one of the rare instances of tool manipulation in nature.

Naturalists have a rule: the smaller the creature, the greater its diversity. The beetle, for instance. There are some 290,000 species of the little beasties worldwide, and they come in every kind and color imaginable. (Some of them very pretty, too.)

Why are there so many different species? Wouldn't one kind of finch or one kind of beetle be sufficient? For function, perhaps. But the purpose of contemplating the *Bri'a* is, as *Rambam* and others have said, to discover the

*In *Sukka* (45b), we find the more familiar number of 36. In *Chullin* (92a), however, the number is 45. The *Maharsha* in *Sukka* points out the apparent contradiction, and resolves the problem by explaining that the *tzaddikim* in *Chullin* are righteous "merely in good deeds," whereas in *Sukka* they are *chachamim muskalim* – perceptive wise men.

glory, the wisdom and kindness of the Creator. Accordingly, each member of each species exists as yet another reminder of the Divine Presence. And because we are creatures of habit, whose appreciation diminishes with familiarity, *Hashem* has provided us with an inexhaustible inventory of natural wonder to inspire us.

...*malla ha'aretz kinyanecha*
...the earth is full of Your possessions

Just as *Chazal* say of every *passuk* in the Torah – “*Im reik, mikem hu reik* (If it appears to be empty, the void lies within you)” – so, too, it may be said of Creation: If there is a place on earth that is empty, it only seems that way because we are empty; we lack the tools of perception. However, as the Psalmist says here, no portion of *Hashem's* world, however remote or barren it may seem, is empty. Nothing is wasted; every spot is full of wondrous creations, which testify to *Hashem's* wisdom (*Radak, Ibn Ezra*).

Nor should we think that this is mere poetic license. Scientists are today discovering a whole new realm of biological diversity in the form of bacteria. A single gram of soil may contain literally thousands of species. Some newly found varieties of bacteria, called lithoautotrophs, dwell inside solid rock two miles below the earth's surface. *Malla ha'aretz kinyanecha!*

...*sham remes ve'ein mispar*
...there are creeping
things without number

About 13,000 new species are “recognized” scientifically each year. Their taxonomic *baruch habba* is in the form of the traditional double Latin name. This means that almost three new species are discovered somewhere on the planet every hour!

Yet, the biosphere remains largely unexplored, or at least uncatalogued. Scientists know a great deal about the physical universe, and with mind-boggling precision. For example, that the mean diameter of the earth is 7,913 miles; that the membrane of a

cell in the human body is 1/10,000th of an inch thick; that the mass of an electron is 9.1×10^{-28} grams; that the volume of the sun is 1.3 million times that of earth. Yet, we have only the vaguest notion how many organisms are sharing the planet with us. Extrapolations from the available data lead to an educated guess of as many as 100 million species. Some experts say that a final number will never be assigned.

...*chayos ketanos im gedolos*
...small creatures with the large ones

This phrase has been rendered elsewhere as “creatures great and small.” But one has to weigh the gain in euphony versus the loss in accuracy. For in *Lashon Hakodesh*, the syntax indicates that the small ones are secondary to the large ones.

Even though the large swallow up the small every day by the myriads, nevertheless, the preyed-upon species are not annihilated, for they have been blessed with a wonderful procreative efficiency (*Malbim*). The Midrash says that if it were not for this blessing (which land creatures did not receive), the fish in the sea would become extinct due to human predation. (*Bereishis Rabba* 11:3) Indeed, only the relentless, heedless overfishing of the world's oceans has resulted in serious reduction of the fish stock.

There is, however, another sense in which the *passuk* can be understood, namely, in terms of symbiosis, the intimate coexistence of different species in nature. The smaller animals that live with the larger ones can be taken as an allusion to the symbiotic creatures that live inside and on their larger hosts.

They range from the common to the exotic, from the esthetic to the life-sustaining. A common example is the termite, which does not live on wood alone; bacteria and protozoa residing in its abdomen actually do the digesting for it. Arguably, nothing is more exotic than the mite that battens to the hind feet of the

soldier caste of one kind of South American army ant. Coral reefs are the beautiful end product of mutual aid between the jellyfish-like polyps that are the primary organisms of the reef and the single-celled algae that supply them with energy. Mycorrhiza is a term that describes the ongoing exchange of nutrients and carbohydrates between plants and the fungi that attach themselves to the root systems. Without this food-for-food program, most of the world's vegetation would disappear.

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of tzedakah,
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—Rambam

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...ve'el afaram yeshuvun
...and to their dust they will return

The best-kept secret of the life cycle is death. Everything from elephants to aphids are biting the dust around us all the time – yet, we hardly ever

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see it. That we are spared the sight of this incessant morbidity is surely another *chessed* of the *Borei Olam*. He has programmed His creatures with an instinct for unnoticed exit when the instinct for survival has run its course.

On a deeper level, Rabbi Hirsch has explained that *tumas meis*, defilement resulting from contact with the dead, has a key philosophical purpose: Death is the inexorable fate of all living things, and it reminds man that he, too, is subject to natural forces beyond his control. As such, contact with it undermines belief in his own free will, so integral to the Jewish worldview (Hirsch Pentateuch, *Vayikra* 7,19, *Bamidbar* 19,22, *Horev*, "Additional Notes of Dayan Grunfeld," p. 582). Similarly, it may be that *Hashem* has for the most part shielded our eyes from it, lest we forget that we are not merely physical entities, but possessed of *neshamos* that transcend the forces of decay that prevail in nature.

...yismach Hashem be'ma'asav
...Hashem will rejoice in His deeds

"...and all the hosts of heaven have dissolved, and the scroll of the heavens has been rolled up, and all the hosts withered..." (*Yeshaya* 3,4). The stars in the firmament dissolve from pain and grief when they do not reach their fulfillment rolled up like the book of heaven, like a book into which no one inquires (*medakdekim*)... (from Introduction to *Ha'ameik Davar*)

But if our inquiry into the wonders of Creation inspires us to love and fear *Hashem* and to keep His Torah, then *Hashem* will rejoice in His deeds, the physical world He created, for it has thereby been brought by man to its fulfillment.

...yitamu chatta'im min ha'aretz,
u'resha'im od einam
...may sins perish from the earth,
and the wicked no longer exist

It is the Psalmist's hope that one's contemplation of nature will result in such an awareness of its Creator's existence, that he will, as the *Rambam* says, be filled with love and fear of the Creator, and that thereby sins will perish from the earth. (Indeed, one may take the phrasing in reverse: from the earth – from a study of its countless miracles – will sins perish.)

...borchi nafshi es Hashem,
Halleluka!

Here, at the completion of his discourse of praise for *Hashem's* creations, the Psalmist returns to the declaration with which he began. That which was initially intuitive is now manifest. That which was always known to the *nefesh* is now evident to the faculties of perception and reason, as well: that every living thing depends on *Hashem* for its existence, and each one is a reflection of *Hashem's* infinite wisdom. Therefore, our praise is directed not toward any of the parts of creation, no matter how wondrous, but to their Creator. *Borchi nafshi es Hashem – Hashem*, and no other.

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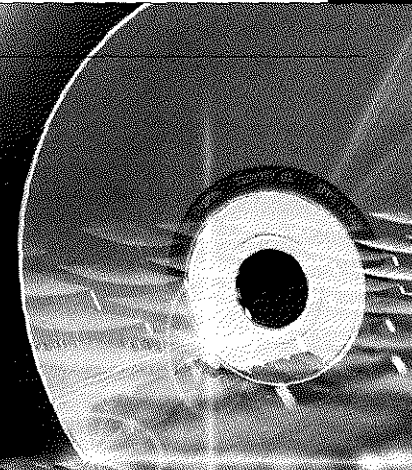
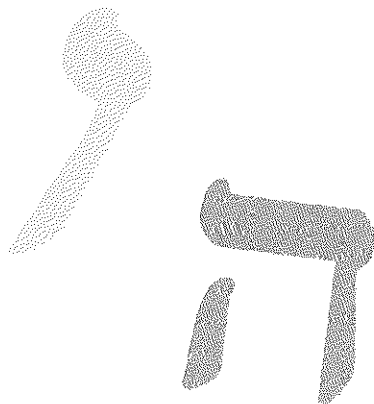
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DAN ROTH



The Power of the Unwritten Word

TRANSCRIBE, RELAX...
AND FORGET

Today's technology has provided the Chareidi world with new and more efficient ways of spreading Torah. Devices such as DVDs and MP3 players store massive amounts of information and are increasingly being used to record and retain Torah *shiurim*. Obviously, *Chazal* never had such tools, so you won't find any explicit mention of them anywhere in their writings. As I hope to show in the following article, however, *Chazal* did deal with principles that relate directly to the use of such equipment.

In the third chapter of *Avos*, Rabbi Akiva says, "*Masores seyag laTorah* – *Masores* is a protective fence around the Torah." *Masores* means something that is passed down verbally from one generation to the next, and refers to the Oral Law. One would have thought that the way to ensure that the Oral Law never be forgotten by the Jewish

people is to write it down, thereby preserving it forever. Rabbi Akiva informs us that the opposite is true. The best way to preserve the Oral Law is *not* to write it down. By keeping it unwritten, people feel responsible to remember it. Knowing that the weight rests solely on their shoulders, they will work day and night to ensure that no law escapes them. They will not go to sleep until they are certain they have memorized it completely. By writing the *Masores* down, though, that tension is lost. Feeling secure that the information is on paper, people breathe a sigh of relief and relax, knowing that the information can always be verified.¹ Transmitting the Torah by word of mouth as opposed to recording it is, therefore, the surest protection against forgetting Torah.

The idea that writing down the Oral Law weakens the impression it makes on one's being is stated by the *Mabit*² (1500-1580) and *Midrash Shmuel* (1540-1605). However, G-d *did* command us to write down parts of Torah, namely the Written Law. If writing something down really weakens the impression it makes on a person,

1 *Midrash Shmuel*

2 Introduction to *Kiryas Sefer*

where does the Written Law fit in to the scheme of things?

DELIBERATE AMBIGUITY

The answer is that the Written Law itself was not written in such a manner that it could be understood on its own. If not for the oral interpretations, we would have no way of understanding what the Written Law is teaching us. For example, we would have no idea that *pri eitz hadar* refers to an *esrog*, that *totafos* is translated to be the *tefillin* on one's head, or which *melachos* (labors) are forbidden on Shabbos. Thus, the fact that the Written Law is written down does not obviate the responsibility of remembering it.

Rabbi Shimshon Refoel Hirsch compares the Written Law to shorthand notes.³ Unless one heard the original lecture, the shorthand notes themselves are meaningless and look like nothing more than scribble. To the student who heard the lecture, however, the notes enable him to repeat the entire lecture verbatim. Every word jogs his memory and reminds him of what the

3 *Shemos* 21:2

DAN ROTH LIVES WITH HIS FAMILY IN HAR NOF, JERUSALEM. THE ABOVE ARTICLE IS AN EXTRACT FROM HIS FORTHCOMING BOOK ON PIRKET AVOS THAT SHOWS HOW EACH MISHNA IS RELEVANT TO OUR GENERATION.

lecturer said. Thus, one could argue that not only does the existence of the Written Law fail to contradict the idea that writing something down weakens the impression it makes on a person; it actually strengthens the idea. After all, G-d specifically chose to have it written in an ambiguous form, thus making it necessary for man to remember the details.

In our Mishna, Rabbi Akiva is making a profound point about human nature: Knowing that something is recorded elsewhere removes the burden of embedding it in one's mind.

G-d wants the Torah to be alive in every Jew's heart. Thus, writing it down would be detrimental, as it would deny people the feeling that they are playing a vital role in its transmission. Only when people feel that they alone carry the burden of storing its information does it occupy all their thoughts, becoming the air they breathe. People then identify with the Torah so closely that they will never forget it, just as they will never forget their own identity.

WHEN TO TAKE NOTE...

That is not to say that today we should not write down any Torah. Rabbi Yehuda Hanassi, who lived after Rabbi Akiva, saw that with the passage of time, the generations were growing weaker, and therefore wrote down the Mishna so that it would not be forgotten.⁴ But, as Rabbi Yitzchak Hutner points out, even Rabbi Yehuda Hanassi made sure to write the Torah in such a manner that the teacher-student link would not be lost.⁵ For example, although Rabbi Yehuda Hanassi was known for his clear language,⁶ his Mishnayos do not always follow a chronological order,⁷ and at times even have sections missing,⁸ such

4 Rambam, Introduction to *Mishneh Torah*
 5 Pachad Yitzchak, *Chanuka*, first topic. See p. 180 for his source.
 6 Rambam, Introduction to *Peirush Hamishnayos*.
 7 *Ein seider leMishna*
 8 *Chisurei michasra*

that they still need the explanation of a teacher. In this way, although the Oral Law was written, it still retained its oral nature.⁹ Thus, there is no contradiction between the writing down of the Oral Law and Rabbi Akiva's point.

The *Chazon Ish* and the Steipler strongly encouraged students to write down every insight they had.¹⁰ The *Maharsha* even went as far as to say that the main benefit from learning comes from that which one writes down.¹¹ Writing helps crystallize one's learning. One often thinks he understands an idea clearly, but when he tries to write it down, he realizes it needs further clarification. But at the same time, one needs to be aware of Rabbi Akiva's warning – namely, that the writing not become a substitute for the Torah's residing in the person himself. Listening, learning, absorbing and integrating the knowledge must precede writing, lest these be displaced by writing. Erich Fromm, a German-born psychoanalyst and professor of psychiatry at New York University in the 1960s, noted this negative aspect of writing. He comments, "Teachers can observe that the students who carefully write down every sentence of the lecture will, in all likelihood, understand and remember less than the students who trusted their capacity to understand and, hence, remember at least the essentials."¹²

HOW TO ABSORB AN IMPRESSION

The main purpose of a Torah lecture is the impression it makes on the listener, not on his notebook. If the notes just sit on the shelf gathering dust, then of what use are they? A student who comes away from a *shiur* having understood only one point, but who is deeply touched by it to the extent that it becomes a part of him for the rest of his life, is a thousand times better off than a student who understood

9 Pachad Yitzchak, *ibid*
 10 *Igros Chazon Ish* 1:4; *Karyana De'igressa* 1:5
 11 *Bava Basra* 10b
 12 Erich Fromm, *To Have or To Be?* p. 32

the whole *shiur* but fails to internalize any of it. In the words of Erich Fromm, "...the content does not become part of their own individual system of thought, enriching and widening it. Instead, they transform the words they hear into fixed clusters of thought, or whole theories, which they store up. The students and the content of the lectures remain strangers to each other, except that each student has become the owner of a collection of statements made by somebody else."¹³ In our Torah study, we conform to *Hashem's* desire that we not become robots who can regurgitate a lecture word for word, but respond as people who take the information to heart.

The same is true not only of writing, but of owning *sefarim*. It is not how big your library is, but how much of a living Torah you are. Take the *Shaagas Aryeh*, for example. He was so poor that he only had one Gemara. If he wanted to learn a new Gemara, he had to exchange it for another volume. Yet, his lack of *sefarim* did not hinder his learning; it pushed him harder to learn. When he came across a new *sefer*, he committed it to memory, knowing that that was the only way he would have access to its contents. He once stayed with a wealthy *talmid chacham* who had a large collection of *sefarim* and was amazed that his host was so knowledgeable – despite his having so many books! *Chazal* say: Take heed of the poor, for from them Torah will come forth.¹⁴ Said Rabbi Chaim Ozer Grodzensky, "Do you know why Torah will come forth from the poor? Because they have no *sefarim!*"

In our generation, Rabbi Akiva's message is even more poignant. Technology has opened new ways to record information. For a small price, you can buy *Tanach*, *Midrash*, *Talmud* and every other *sefer* you are likely to need on one compact disc. That so much Torah is available at our fingertips and can be accessed easily is a wonderful thing. But let us never allow this surge of information to prevent us from internalizing the Torah. It is easy to fall into a false sense of security, feeling

13 *Ibid.* p. 29
 14 *Nedarim* 81a

that one knows Torah when really it's the computer that "knows." G-d wants us, not our computers, to become living *sifrei Torah*. He wants us to think about Torah constantly, making it the center of our lives and the longing of our souls. If Rabbi Akiva said that writing could detract from identifying with Torah, how much more so can the knowledge that one has the whole Torah available at the click of the mouse lessen one's attachment to Torah! Technology is meant to *help* us further our Torah knowledge, not to be a *substitute* for it. When the Heavenly Court tests a person at the end of his life regarding his Torah knowledge, laptops will not be admitted.

TO PRESERVE THE MOMENT... OR INTERNALIZE IT?

Another application of Rabbi Akiva's principle in today's world is photography.

Like many others in Jerusalem, I prefer to do *kaparos* on *Erev Yom Kippur* with a real chicken. It is a powerful experience. Being only a few hours away from the holiest day of the year, and knowing that this animal will soon be slaughtered as atonement for me, never fails to move me. Last year, though, I saw someone taking pictures of his children holding the chicken over their heads. This kills any feelings of holiness one can draw from the event. We are no longer able to savor the moment without reaching for our cameras. When going to the *Kosel*, some tourists see everything through their viewfinder instead of focusing on the intensity of their prayers. Even when visiting tragic places such as Auschwitz and other death camps, I have seen people busy taking photos instead of using the heartrending moment for deep thought and reflection.

On numerous occasions, Rabbi Shlomo Wolbe זצ"ל told his students who were about to go on an outing that photographing a scenic view comes at the expense of "living the experience." By turning every event into a photo op, we are becoming numb to what it means to be alive. Instead of being a living,

feeling, thinking person, our character is becoming as thin and shallow as a digital memory card. What started as an aid is quickly turning into a handicap, preventing us from being touched by the magic of the moment.

This does not mean one should never take pictures. Photos provide mementos of special occasions. They also enable those who could not be there to join in the event. Photographing is no worse than writing down, which, as we mentioned earlier, Rabbi Yehuda Hanassi saw was a necessary memory aid for the weaker generations. My point is just

to draw attention to a potential danger – namely, the possibility of destroying an event's impact because we know that it's being recorded and can always be seen later.

In conclusion, Rabbi Akiva's message about the significance of an oral tradition has not faded with time. If anything, it is even more relevant in our day. Knowing that something is recorded elsewhere weakens its effect. Our challenge is to see and hear everything with open eyes and ears, and – most importantly – with an open heart. 70


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Some people dismiss the description "Ben Torah-Businessman/Professional" as self-contradictory. How can one become engaged in the outside world and still maintain the pristine, unspoiled character of a person fully immersed in Torah?

Some people try to reconcile the two by dividing their

inner selves in accord with the world they are inhabiting at the moment – living a spiritually schizophrenic life, as it were.

Others actually succeed at this attempt by making their Talmudic studies and efforts at self-improvement the focal point of their lives, its defining element. All else is either supportive of that

spiritual core, or reflects its values. In fact, we refer the reader to the words of the late Rosh Hayeshiva, Rabbi Yitzchok Hutner זצ"ל, on the topic, taken from one of his published letters (see sidebar on facing page). To give a human dimension to this concept, we present two profiles of men who

were, indeed, prototype B'nei Torah-Businessmen or -Professionals:

- "Rabbi Judah Dick ז"ל," by Avrohom Birnbaum;
- "Lessons in Leadership: The Life of Rabbi Yisroel Bloom ז"ל," by Rabbi Yaakov Bender and Moshe Benoliel, with a sidebar by Avrohom Birnbaum.

RABBI AVROHOM BIRNBAUM

Rabbi Judah Dick, ז"ל



FOUNDATION OF TORAH

Rabbi Judah Dick ז"ל – a lawyer by profession – was a prime example of how a person can surround himself with the walls of the *beis midrash* even when outside of their confines, thereby ensuring that every action is performed through the prism of Torah and halacha. Indeed, he was the epitome of the *Shulchan Aruch's* explanation of "*Bechal derachecha da'eihu* – Know Hashem in all your ways" (*Orach Chaim* 231): Both on a personal and professional level, his conduct was dictated by the concern, "What does Hashem require from me at this moment?" Without question, his many accomplishments, both in the rabbinic field and in the legal world, were rooted in his lifelong pursuit of Torah study at the most advanced levels.

Even as a young man, Yehuda Dick

RABBI BIRNBAUM, AN EDUCATOR LIVING IN LAKEWOOD, IS A COLUMNIST FOR *Hamodia* AND A FREQUENT CONTRIBUTOR TO THESE PAGES. MOST RECENTLY WITH HIS ADAPTATION OF AN ADDRESS BY RABBI MATSYAHU SALOMON: "THE ESSENCE OF *Kabbalas Ol Malchus Shamayim*" (OCT. '04).

was brilliant and motivated. He was never content with perfunctory knowledge of anything that he learned, but plumbed to the depths of even the most obscure and sometimes neglected areas of Torah.

As a 20-year-old learning in Beis Medrash Elyon, in Monsey, N.Y., he engaged in correspondence with Rabbi Moshe Feinstein, the leading *poseik* of the generation, in a range of halacha topics. These responsa formed the basis of Reb Moshe's well-known decision to rely on government inspection of dairy farms in special circumstances, permitting the milk even if there is no supervision by a Jew.

Throughout his lifetime, Judah Dick published numerous in-depth Torah *chiddushim* in Torah journals such as *Hapardes* and *Hamesivta*. Even after he left yeshiva, he continued to immerse himself in complex areas of Torah. In fact, Judah Dick published a fascinating *sefer*, drawing on his wide-ranging knowledge, compiling a *minyan hamitzvos* (precise count of the 613 mitzvos) according to the *Ramban*, as opposed to other methods of grouping them.

THE INTERPLAY BETWEEN HALACHA AND SECULAR LAW

Without a doubt, one of Judah Dick's important contributions to the world of Torah and halacha was his seminal work on the interface between halacha/Torah law and (*lehavdil*) secular law. Any *sugya* (topic) in halacha that contained a component related to contemporary law was learned by Rabbi Dick with depth, clarity and an emphasis on its practical application. Indeed, he was intimately familiar with the field of law from many angles, and was instrumental in the enactment of numerous laws to protect religious observance, which Orthodox Jews today take for granted.

Another major contribution to this field was his trailblazing work in estate planning, spelling out how to write a will in accordance with both halacha and state laws.¹ Until he wrote on this subject, almost all written wills did not

¹ His article was published in the *RJJ Journal of Halacha and Contemporary Society*, Vol. III, Spring '82.

comply with halacha. He was, in fact, often consulted on this matter by rabbinic figures. He also did pioneering work in pre-nuptial agreements and their halachic validity.

Indeed, his *rav* at the Agudah of 9th Avenue (Boro Park), where he *davened*, Rabbi Elozer Yonah Ginsburg, related that he had known Judah Dick for twenty years and, during that time, he had spoken "in learning" with him virtually every *Shabbos*. "Throughout that entire period," said Rabbi Ginsberg, "I never came across a Talmudic or halacha topic with which Reb Yiddel [as he was affectionately known] was not intimately familiar. The less known portions of Torah were his specialty."

ON BEHALF OF THE COMMUNITY (ASKANUS)

In the early 1960s, under the initiative and guidance of Rabbi Moshe Sherer, a group of Orthodox lawyers established COLPA (the National Jewish Commission on Law and Public Affairs), with Judah Dick as one of its founders and most active members. The mandate of COLPA was to harness the talents of Orthodox Jewish lawyers and professionals for the benefit of the broad community.

Undoubtedly, one of his most important accomplishments was drafting the Sabbath law that prohibited employers from discriminating against employees for being *Shabbos* observers. This was to remedy the tragic situation in America during the first half of the 20th Century – Jewish immigrants being forced to choose between desecrating the *Shabbos* or not having a job and starving. In fact, when New York Governor Nelson Rockefeller signed the bill that Judah Dick helped draft, Rockefeller presented him with the pen as a token of his appreciation. The New York State law served as a precedent for similar rulings in other states. Who knows how many Jews would not have been able to maintain their *Shabbos* observance and their Judaism had Judah Dick not been around to protect their interests?

TO AN INDIVIDUAL EMBARKING ON A CAREER

... I do not need to tell you that I have never, under any circumstances, consented to a double life....

I recall my visit to the hospital of Dr. Wallach (Shaarei Tzeddek) in *Yerushalayim*, when I saw him approaching the bed of a patient about to enter the operating room. Dr. Wallach asked the patient the name of his mother so he could pray for him before the operation. When I related this incident to one of the great men of *Yerushalayim*, he exclaimed, "How envious one must be of this Jew, who has such marvelous opportunities to serve as an instrument for the honor of *Hashem!*"

Tell me the truth, my dear friend: Does the doctor's reciting *Tehillim* on behalf of the well-being of a patient about to enter the operating room constitute a double life?

• • •

Another important issue was the amendment to the New York State autopsy law. At that time, the law dictated that whenever the cause of death was unknown, the state had the right to order an autopsy. This law created difficulties for the observant community, which deems *kevod hameis* a sacred obligation, and forbids any form of mutilation of a corpse. Rabbi Dick argued before the courts that the law was unconstitutional. In the end, largely due to his brilliance and perseverance, the law was amended to require the government to demonstrate that there was reason to suspect foul play or a potentially dangerous public health epidemic before ordering an autopsy.

Another major legal battle that he fought was in regard to ascertaining the time of death from a halachic and legal standpoint. Here, too, he was in contact

And you, my cherished one, Heaven forbid that you turn double vision on yourself and see yourself leading a double life. "Whoever prolongs the '*Echad*' [of *Shema*] has his days and years prolonged." To the contrary, your entire life should be as one who prolongs the "*Echad*" – unified, and not double....

A multitude of points scattered, one under the other, certainly has the quality of disunity; but that same multitude of points arranged around a central point is ONE circle.

This, my friend, is your obligation: put the "*Echad*" at the center of your life, and do not at all concern yourself with duality. Each new "point" you acquire will but extend the circle, without disturbing its integrity....

TRANSLATION OF THE ABOVE LETTER FROM RABBI YITZCHOK HUTNER זצ"ל IS BY ELIAKIM WILLNER, A TALMID OF THE LATE ROSH HAYESHIVA.

with leading *poskim* of the generation, and much trailblazing work in this area was to his credit.

In the years before Agudath Israel had its own in-house legal staff, Judah Dick was one of Rabbi Moshe Sherer's closest confidants on a host of legal matters. The two would speak on a regular basis. He was involved with Agudath Israel in drafting legislation for allocating government funds to parochial schools. He played a major role in helping develop a halachically acceptable approach toward helping *agunos* through the secular legal system. He also helped draw up laws to control how defunct or non-functioning shuls disposed of property and assets, often worth large sums of money; unfortunately, unscrupulous trustees had pocketed substantial amounts of such funds.

In 1984, *The New York Times Magazine*

published a major story on Orthodox Jews. When preparing the article, they approached Rabbi Moshe Sherer for an interview; he sent them to Judah Dick, whom he deemed qualified to present the authentic Orthodox viewpoint on legal issues.

The beauty of Judah Dick's life was how he used his gifts as an erudite *talmid chacham* and skilled lawyer to increase the honor of Heaven.

FAITHFULLY CONDUCTING BUSINESS

In today's society, many view lawyers as lacking integrity. Judah Dick, however, was a paragon of *yashrus* – fidelity, not only to the letter of the law, but to the spirit of the law, often generating a tremendous *kiddush Hashem*. His

the bank loaning the money for the mortgage Jewish-owned? – posing the possibility of the prohibition of ribbis (usury). For two hours, the prospective parties sat waiting in his office. Judah Dick refused to proceed with the deal until he verified that the bank was not under Jewish ownership.

For a time, he worked as a lawyer for the City of New York. A religious co-worker noticed that whenever he photocopied a personal document, he would go to the lobby, insert a dime in a public copier, and make his copy there. While employees would periodically use the office copier for personal copies, what everyone else did had no effect on Judah Dick. For him, right and wrong were the only determining factors.

Despite the fact that law was his source of income, on countless occasions, especially when his services bene-

JUDAH DICK WOULD REFUSE ANY CASE THAT WAS NOT COMPLETELY ABOVE BOARD; IT DID NOT MATTER WHO THE CLIENT WAS, WHAT THE CASE WAS ABOUT, OR HOW MUCH MONEY HE COULD EARN.

dealings seemed to anticipate Chazal's statement, "One of the first things a person will be asked when he reaches the Heavenly Courts is, 'Did you conduct your business affairs with *emuna* – integrity?'"

Indeed, Judah Dick would refuse any case that was not completely above board; it did not matter who the client was, what the case was about, or how much money he could earn.

A talmid of the Philadelphia Yeshiva who was leaving to train to become a lawyer consulted his Rosh Yeshiva, Rabbi Elya Svei, שליט"א. Rabbi Svei advised him, "If you want to be an ehrliche (upright) lawyer, speak to Judah Dick." (Years later, Judah Dick's son married Rabbi Svei's daughter.)

One client recalls how, at a real estate closing, a she'eila arose – was

fitting the klal, he would not charge for his work. This often involved hours, days, or weeks of painstaking work; nevertheless, when Judah Dick saw an opportunity to increase kevod Shamayim, money was not part of the equation.

In his early years as a lawyer, a client sent someone to him to compose a halachically binding will. Judah Dick spent much time working on the will and, after it was completed, circumstances dictated that it be redone. It was a complex will that spurred him to draw on many difficult halachic sources until he could feel certain that it was correct. The client received a bill for a paltry sum, not at all commensurate with the enormous amount of work done. Judah Dick explained, "I hesitated to send you a bill because, through

working on the will, I was afforded the opportunity to clarify many halachos that were relevant to your case. I derived such satisfaction from this learning that I almost felt as if I should pay you."

SELFLESS CHESSED

He dispensed free legal advice to people from all walks of life, as an act of *chessed*.

When the government's Section 8 program was instituted, assisting low-income families in paying their rent, Judah Dick recognized that this program could benefit struggling members of the community. He immediately went to the government office to pick up forms for a distinguished *talmid chacham* who neither had heard of the program, nor would know how to fill out the forms. Judah prepared the application, brought it to the family to sign, notarized it on the spot, and mailed it in, bringing immeasurable relief to this family.

His brother, Reb Nochum Dick, is deeply involved in helping Jews from the former Soviet Union rediscover Torah Judaism. Reb Nochum was friendly with a Russian medical student who had emigrated to America and was now studying in an off-shore university. When the young man was ready to start his residency, he was met with a seemingly intractable problem. The university would under no circumstances allow him to take Shabbos off. Judah Dick offered to represent the student at the University's hearing on the matter and presented the dean with a copy of a law that was written 40 years earlier for the New York Board of Regents that stated that an institute of higher education cannot force one to take exams on Shabbos. Even though the cases were not completely analogous, the off-shore university—a foreign school not bound by American law—accepted Judah's argument. Reb Nochum commented that, besides the obvious *chessed* of taking the time

RABBI YAAKOV BENDER AND MOSHE BENOLIEL



Lessons in Leadership

from the Life of Rabbi Yisroel Bloom ז"ר

Much has already been written about the life and achievements of Rabbi Yisroel Bloom ז"ר, who passed away *Erev Yom Kippur* last year, at the age of 66. A multi-faceted individual, Reb Yisroel was a successful businessman whose primary occupation was learning, and a devoted father and husband whose myriad *klal* activities had an impact on countless Jews across the globe.

In this era, when our burgeoning nation is acutely in need of *askanim* (activists) involved in *chessed* and *klal* work, Reb Yisroel's record of devotion and productivity can surely provide us with critical lessons and instruction.

IN YEHUDA'S FOOTSTEPS

Most striking about Reb Yisroel was his sense of *achrayus* (responsibility). The obvious example of this would be his founding of Yeshiva Darchei Torah.

On the first night of Pesach, 5732 (1972), Reb Yisroel and his wife were blessed with their first son. His thoughts immediately turned to the *chinuch* he would eventually have to provide for the infant. Their Far Rockaway neighborhood was a fine Jewish community, with

RABBI BENDER IS THE ROSH HAYESHIVA OF YESHIVA DARCHEI TORAH IN FAR ROCKAWAY, NY. **MR. BENOLIEL** IS THE YESHIVA'S DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS.

its share of shuls, a boys' *mesivta*, and an elementary school for girls – but no *cheder* in the immediate vicinity.

That very year – with his son's entry to Pre-1A a good four years away – Reb Yisroel resolved to create a yeshiva loyal to the *mesora* in Far Rockaway. Immediately after *Yom Tov*, Rabbi Bloom convened a meeting around his kitchen table with five like-minded *baalei battim*, and informed them that, with their help, a yeshiva would be established, and he would accept the burden of fundraising. Beginning on a shoestring budget, Yeshiva Darchei Torah was founded.

During those early years, whenever the yeshiva could not pay educators' salaries on time, Reb Yisroel would call an emergency meeting – again, around his kitchen table – and politely, yet firmly, inform each participant of his expected contribution: "Berel, you'll bring in a thousand. Chaim, I'm sure you can deliver two thousand." And so on.

This sense of *achrayus* was Reb Yisroel's secret, the essence of his leadership. It brings to mind the following:

When the sons of Yaakov Avinu returned to their father from Egypt, informing him of the demand of its viceroy, Yoseif, to meet their youngest brother, Binyamin, Yaakov adamantly refused. None of his sons' arguments held sway – except one. When Yehuda promised his father,

"I will personally guarantee him; of my own hand you can demand him" (*Bereishis* 43,9), Yaakov relented. He was assured by this assumption of responsibility. Moreover, because of his sense of *achrayus*, Yehuda was *zocheh to malchus*, to be the progenitor of the kings of Israel.

Rabbi Bloom took care of all the details, from getting the school chartered, to serving as *de facto* principal for the first six years of its existence. Working alongside him in the administration was a young Rabbi Yehuda Frankel, now the *menahel* of Yeshiva of Spring Valley (NY). There is no question that Far Rockaway's development into one of America's finest Torah communities is due in large part to his efforts.

GLOBAL REACH

Reb Yisroel's activity was not limited to Far Rockaway. Shortly after his son enrolled in the high school of the Yeshiva of the Telshe Alumni in Riverdale, NY, Rabbi Bloom became a driving force on the yeshiva's board and was eventually installed as chairman. He was a hands-on leader, often arriving for a meeting in Riverdale late at night, after a long day's work. The yeshiva recently published a tribute to him entitled *Reb Yisroel Bloom: The Life of a Great Man*. In addition, their soon-to-be expanded campus will be

renamed in Reb Yisroel's memory – an indication of his critical role as a pillar of the institution.

About 20 years ago, Reb Yisroel learned that the *kollel* stipend in Lakewood's Beth Medrash Govoha had not been increased in forty years. A weekly payment of \$40 may have been acceptable in the 1940s, but in the 1980s, it was far from adequate. Together with Mr. Dov Wolowitz, Reb Yisroel approached the Lakewood administration and personally undertook to cover the doubling of the weekly check. For a number of years, he was involved in almost every administrative decision, big and small, that the yeshiva undertook. His day started on the phone with Lakewood and finished on the phone with Lakewood. He helped hire the administrative staff and was *moseir nefesh* to ensure that the yeshiva met its financial obligations. He brought fundraising to a new level, trying literally hundreds of different innovative ideas to help raise the requisite funds. Not all of them were successful, but his drive, zeal and refusal to give up ultimately ensured success.

Reb Yisroel was not an alumnus of the Lakewood Yeshiva. When he realized that they needed help, however, he did not wait for someone else to step in, but rather saw it as his Heaven-sent mission.

Among the many other *mosdos* that benefited from his involvement was Bnei Brak's Yeshivas Rashbi, headed by Rabbi Meir Tzvi Bergman שליט"א. Rabbi Bloom hosted the yeshiva's annual Far Rockaway parlor meeting in his home until his *petira*.¹

Reb Yisroel's sense of *achrayus* manifested itself in other ways, as well. As part of his real estate holdings, he managed a building situated at a very prominent location. A billboard company wanted to rent part of its exterior wall to sell advertising space. It was a lucrative proposal, but Reb Yisroel insisted on veto power over each ad's content, and the deal subsequently fell through. His associates suggested that he seek a *heter* – not to be accountable for what the leaser chose to display. He refused: He

could not be even remotely responsible for a potential *bor bi'reshus harabbim* – a spiritual pit in a public thoroughfare.

When he saw a need, he jumped to fill it. He was at the front lines – and his contemporaries could not help but be inspired, and follow. This trait expressed itself not only in the "big projects," like his involvement in yeshivos, but on a "small" level, as well. There was an elderly widower who lived on the Blooms' block. When this man took ill, he had no one to take care of his personal needs. For a number of months, Reb Yisroel went to the man's house each evening to undress him and put him into his pajamas. He could have sent one of his children to do the mitzvah. He chose instead to lead by example – quietly and without fanfare.

THE ENGINE OF HIS SUCCESS

Above all else, Reb Yisroel was a genuine *talmid chacham*. Nothing could stand in the way of his learning. He could be found studying at home from the crack of dawn, and would resume after *davening*, not leaving for work until 10:30 or 11:00 in the morning.

As a true *ben Torah*, Reb Yisroel never sought physical or material luxuries, but was always alert to possibilities of spiritual gain.

Initially, he found it challenging to learn for long periods of time without interruption. So he purchased a calendar, and in it recorded the hours and minutes spent studying each day, aiming at surpassing the previous day's total. For a period of time, he was a member of a small *chabura*, a group of men who would gather in Brooklyn to study *mussar* and encourage each other in *tikkun hamiddos* (character improvement). Reb Yisroel arranged to have the *Mashgiach*, Rabbi Matisyahu Salomon שליט"א, address them on a monthly basis. His learning and his focus on character improvement were undoubtedly the fuel that enabled him to accomplish all that he did.

One final point. In every area of his

askanus, Rabbi Bloom always deferred to *daas Torah*, as testified by Rabbi Avrohom Ausband, *Rosh Hayeshiva* in Riverdale. Indeed, Rabbi Bloom was guided throughout his career of *chessed* and Torah support by the instruction that he received from Rabbi Shach, זצ"ל, that his primary focus be on helping yeshivos and *kollelim*.

CONCLUSION: OUR MANDATE

Kal Yisroel today is in desperate need of leadership, and it is incumbent upon those who are able to fill such a role to step forward and get involved. The needs are many, ranging from finding shidduchim for older singles to assisting the poverty-stricken Jews of *Eretz Yisroel* to ensuring a respectable income for our yungeleit and mechanchim here at home.

The message of Yisroel Bloom's life is one that should resonate with the young people of our nation – as well as with the less young. We must take *achrayus*. We should be the initiators, and not wait for others to get involved. In the process, we must not neglect the study of Torah and the lifelong process of *tikkun hamiddos*. And we need to consult with the *gedolei hador*, those beacons of light in the darkness of *galus*.

Each one of us can truly make a difference. ✪

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During his years in Yeshiva Rabbeinu Chaim Berlin, Reb Yisroel Bloom developed a close relationship with the *Mashgiach*, Rabbi Avigdor Miller זצ"ל, from whom he absorbed the phenomenal *midda* of using every second of the day to the utmost. There was no such thing as "wasting time" with Reb Yisroel. Indeed, no one, not even close family members, ever remembers seeing him sit idle; he was always learning or busy with other spiritual pursuits. It was Rabbi Miller who encouraged Reb Yisroel to begin delivering *chaburos* in the challenging and stimulating *sefer Sheiv Shemaatesa* every Friday night. This was the first of many *chaburos* and *mussar vaadim* that Reb Yisroel organized throughout the years.

A defining period in Reb Yisroel's life was when he was a *talmid* in the Ponovezh Yeshiva in Bnei Brak, where he bound himself to the *Mashgiach*, Rabbi Yechezkel Levenstein, זצ"ל. Although he was a *talmid* in the yeshiva for a short period, the impression that the *Mashgiach* left on him lasted a lifetime. He would constantly repeat *divrei Torah* and *mussar* that he had heard from Reb Chatzkel, as well as experiences he had shared with him. Even years later, he would often remark, "Reb Chatzkel's *shmuessen* had penetrated my very bones." (In later years, he would return to *Eretz Yisroel* each summer and renew his connection with *gedolim* in Bnei Brak with whom he had forged a relationship, including Rabbi Elazar Shach, זצ"ל, and יב"ל, Rabbi Shach's son-in-law, Rabbi Meir Tzvi Bergman.)

There was always a picture of Reb Chatzkel prominent in his home. During his last months in the hospital, a friend brought a

striking portrait of Reb Chatzkel to adorn Reb Yisroel's room. During that hospital stay, Reb Yisroel would constantly gaze at the picture and derive strength from it. Merely looking at his countenance enabled Reb Yisroel to better bear the burden of those final, pain-racked weeks. In his last week, an object was obscuring his view of the picture, and he insisted that it be removed.

Perhaps the most prominent lesson that he absorbed from Rav Chatzkel was his iron-clad *midda*

A Talmid of His Rebbei'im

AVROHOM BIRNBAUM

of *emuna* and *bitachon*. His was a rock solid, deeply ingrained *bitachon* that could not be swayed.

One of his young granddaughters interviewed her grandfather for a report on the subject of honesty. "Did you ever have the temptation to deal dishonestly?" she asked.

"No," was Reb Yisroel's immediate reply. "Why

should I? Every Rosh Hashana, Hashem decides how much I am going to make. Why would I want to do it dishonestly?"

Even when in excruciating pain during his final illness, he would constantly say, "I accept all of my suffering *be'ahava*, with love." Once, a family member came into his hospital room and found him doubled up in pain. He bent down to try to help him, and heard Reb Yisroel whispering through clenched teeth, "*Be'ahava, be'ahava.*"

A close friend came to visit him before Rosh Hashana. Even though he was suffering, he greeted his friend with contagious excitement, "Look, a new *sefer* came out with some of Rav Chatzkel's *Elul Yamim Nora'im shmuessen* translated into English. Let's learn the first one." He then proceeded slowly and deliberately to learn the *shmuess* with his friend. Indeed, he lived with Rav Chatzkel's teachings continually on his lips... and that is the way he died.

In his early married years, when Reb Yisroel lived in a one-bedroom apartment and had three children, he was faced with a problem. If his children would sleep in the living room, he would not be able to learn at night. So they all slept in the one bedroom while he learned peacefully in the living room.

At his *levaya*, one of his children said, "He never once took a vacation, but he did travel to Belgium, France, Switzerland, Los Angeles and numerous other places on behalf of yeshivos. He raised astronomical sums of money for Lakewood and other yeshivos, traveling at his own expense."

Gutta: Memories of a Vanished World:

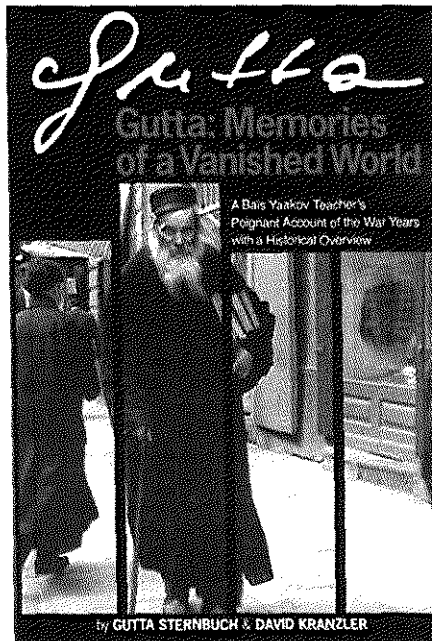
A Bais Yaakov Teacher's Poignant Account of the War Years, with a Historic Overview by Gutta Sternbuch and David Kranzler, Feldheim Publishers (Jerusalem, 2005) \$23.95 HC

Gutta: *Memories of a Vanished World*, by Gutta Sternbuch and David Kranzler, traces the experiences and struggles of a Chassidic girl from her youth in pre-War Poland, through her imprisonment in the Warsaw Ghetto, to her miraculous escape and survival. It portrays her experiences as a student in a Jewish *gymnasium* in Warsaw, torn between her desire for higher education and loyalty to her Chassidic upbringing. It follows her intellectual and spiritual development as a student at the Bais Yaakov Seminary in Cracow, and her career as a Bais Yaakov teacher in the small village of Stopnitz. It describes her heroic acts in the Warsaw Ghetto, where she conducted an underground Bais Yaakov school, wrote articles for the Ghetto newspaper, and organized Orthodox religious activities in the orphanage of the famed educator, Dr. Janusz Korczak. It documents her rescue from the Ghetto by means of a Latin American passport, her imprisonment in the internment camp Vittel in Northern France, and her miraculous escape from deportation.

Gutta Sternbuch's memoir presents a rare, authentic portrait of Chassidic Jewish family life in pre-War Warsaw and in the small villages of pre-War Poland. It describes the daily life of the Chassidic Jews, their poverty and their struggles. It describes the challenges posed to young Chassidic men and women by secular ideologies, and the way in which Gutta and other young women attracted by these ideologies were strengthened in their *emuna* and in their commitment to an Orthodox Jewish way of life through the Bais Yaakov Seminary in Cracow. The book brings to life figures who had a major influence on Gutta – her grandfather,

DR. SARA KADOSH IS A HISTORIAN AND DIRECTOR OF THE JDC ARCHIVES IN JERUSALEM.

BOOKS IN REVIEW



REVIEWED BY
DR. SARA KADOSH

Reb Berel Gefen, a Chassid of Mezeritch; Rabbi Yehuda Leib Orlean, the head of the Bais Yaakov Seminary; and Rivka Alter, granddaughter of the Gerrer *Rebbe* (the *Imrei Emes*).

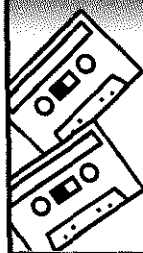
The memoir is an important Holocaust document. It brings to light

information on religious life in the Warsaw Ghetto, on the *rabbanim* and yeshiva students in the Ghetto, and on the activities of Dr. Hillel Seidman, Dr. Rabbi Orlean and others. The book is one of the few sources of information on the fate of some three hundred Polish Jews with Latin American passports who were transferred by the Germans from Warsaw and elsewhere in Poland to the internment camp Vittel in Northern France. Among these Jews were Gutta and her mother. Gutta Sternbuch's descriptions of life in Vittel, of the efforts to keep the mitzvos, observe the Jewish holidays, and provide an Orthodox Jewish education for the children, are an important addition to the few existing memoirs of Vittel written from a non-Orthodox or non-Jewish perspective. Gutta Sternbuch's memoir is especially important because it describes the deportation of the majority of the Jews in Vittel to Auschwitz, while documenting the miraculous escape of Gutta, her mother, and a handful of others.

A MOVING PERSONAL STORY

Apart from its historical significance, the memoir presents the moving personal story of Gutta Sternbuch herself. It also sheds light on Rabbi Orlean, who sent Gutta to teach in the small village of Stopnitz, where she was inspired by the *emuna* of the village Jews even as she taught their children. Gutta Sternbuch's memoir describes her brief career as a student at the University of Warsaw, where the atmosphere was anti-Semitic and where the university

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studies appeared to her as superficial in contrast to the more profound, spiritual climate at the Bais Yaakov Seminary. The spiritual strengthening she received at the Seminary enabled Gutta to cope with the horrors of the Warsaw Ghetto and with her personal tragedies, including the death of her beloved brother and the disappearance of her father. Gutta Sternbuch's memoir is a tribute to those who helped and supported her and who enabled her to rebuild her life after the war. It is an inspiring story of hope.

This book brings to life a world that exists no more. Written with great

charm, the memoir draws the reader gently but compellingly into the world of a Chassidic family in Warsaw. We can picture Gutta's grandmother dancing around the kitchen table with her women friends to celebrate the completion of preparations for Shabbos. We see the poverty-stricken mother walking down the street in Warsaw on a cold winter's day with a single piece of coal with which to heat her tiny room. We see the vegetable seller in his stall, offering a few rotten vegetables for sale. We hear the *schocheit's* wife in the town of Stopnitz singing to herself, thanking

G-d for a healthy child who is learning to walk. We picture the hungry children coming to the Bais Yaakov school in the Warsaw Ghetto with increasingly thin and pinched faces until they come no more. What Roman Vishniac did with photographs, Gutta Sternbuch has done with words. Her memoir evokes the spirit, the *neshama* of Jewish life in that Vanished World.

TWO HISTORICAL ESSAYS

Gutta Sternbuch's memoir is supplemented by two excellent essays on Jewish life in pre-War Poland. The first traces the development of Agudath Israel and the Bais Yaakov movement, and the second describes the emergence of the secular ideologies that so attracted Orthodox Jewish youth. Researched and written by Dr. David Kranzler, the noted historian of rescue during the Holocaust, these essays bring together for the first time the information necessary for an understanding of the history of Orthodox Jewish education and communal life in pre-War Poland. The essays explain in detail how the Bais Yaakov movement was founded, how the seminary in Cracow developed, and what challenges it faced to attract and influence Orthodox Jewish women. The essays provide an understanding of the social and political changes in the Orthodox Jewish community that form the background to the events described in Gutta Sternbuch's memoir. Although it is possible to read and enjoy the memoir on its own, anyone seeking a deeper understanding of the life of Chassidim in Poland and of Gutta's experiences would do well to read these essays.

Gutta: Memories of a Vanished World is a book the reader will come back to again and again. Written in a fast-paced, easy-to-read style, it is a book that, once begun, is difficult to put down. Dr. Kranzler has done an admirable job of organizing the book. His scholarship and attention to detail are evident throughout. The book is a major contribution not only to our knowledge of the Holocaust, but also to the history of Orthodox Jewry in Poland. □

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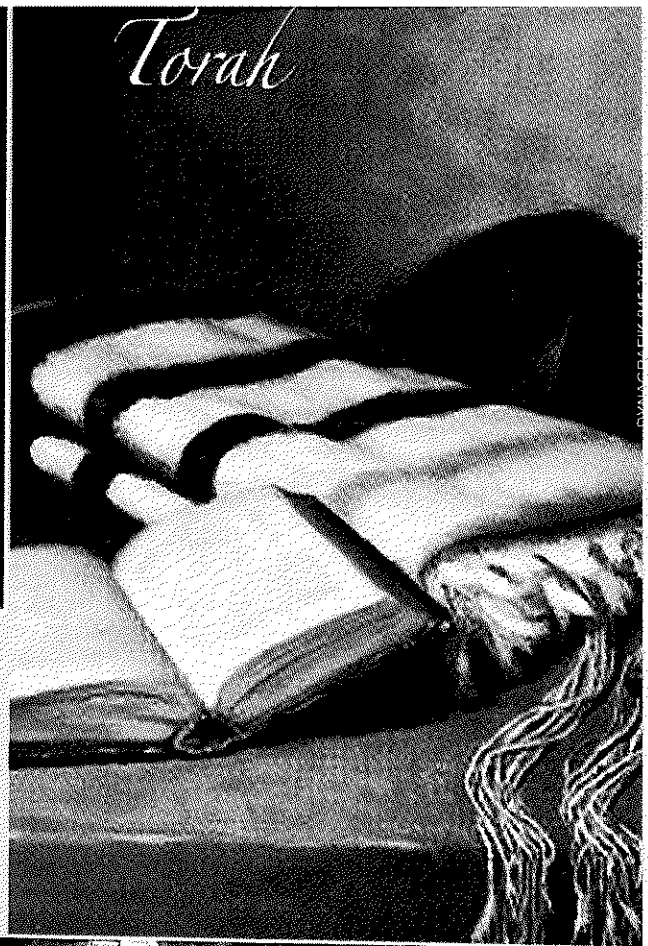
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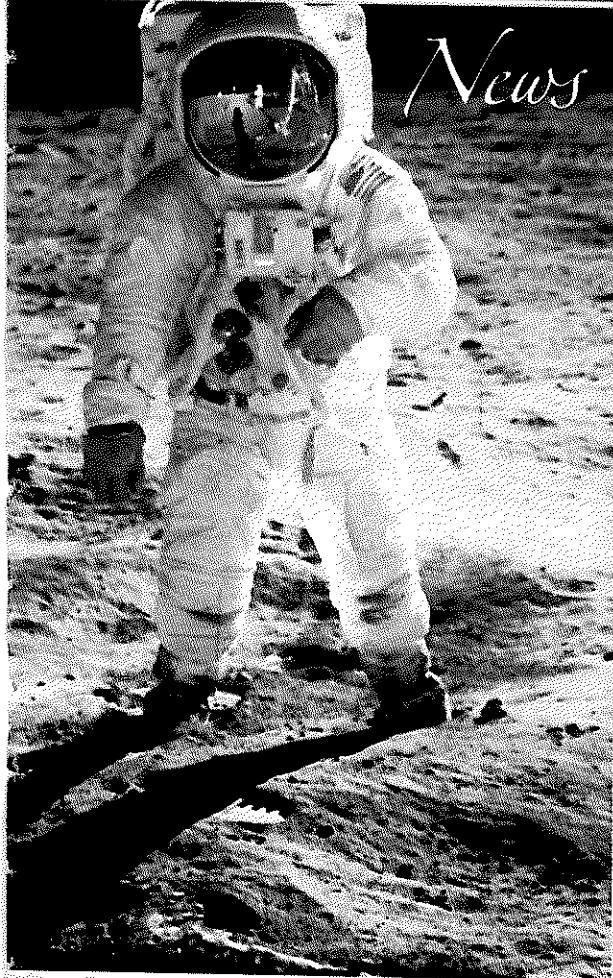
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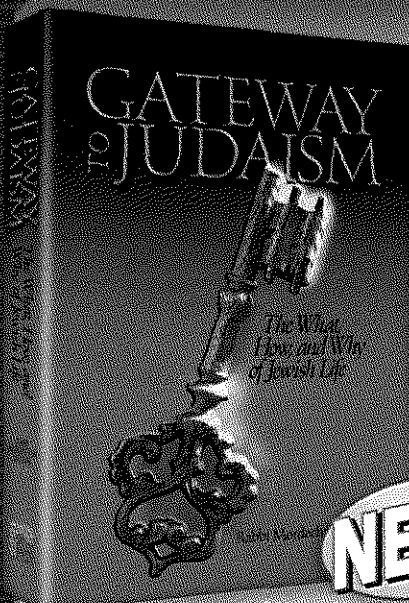
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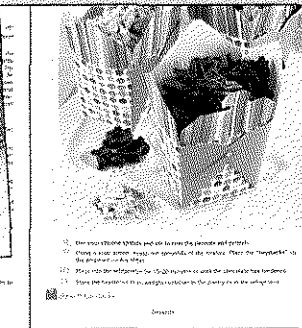
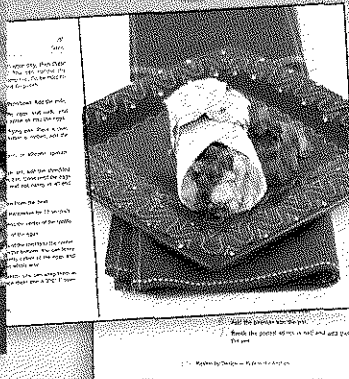
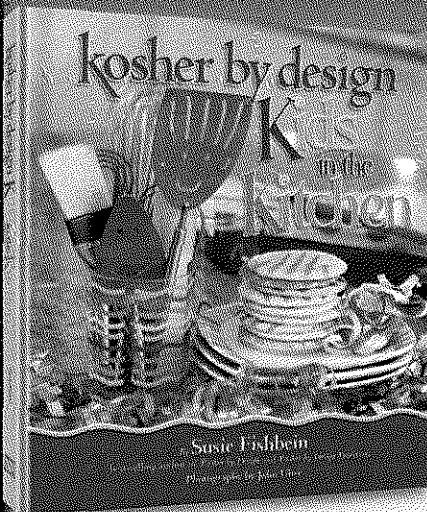
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