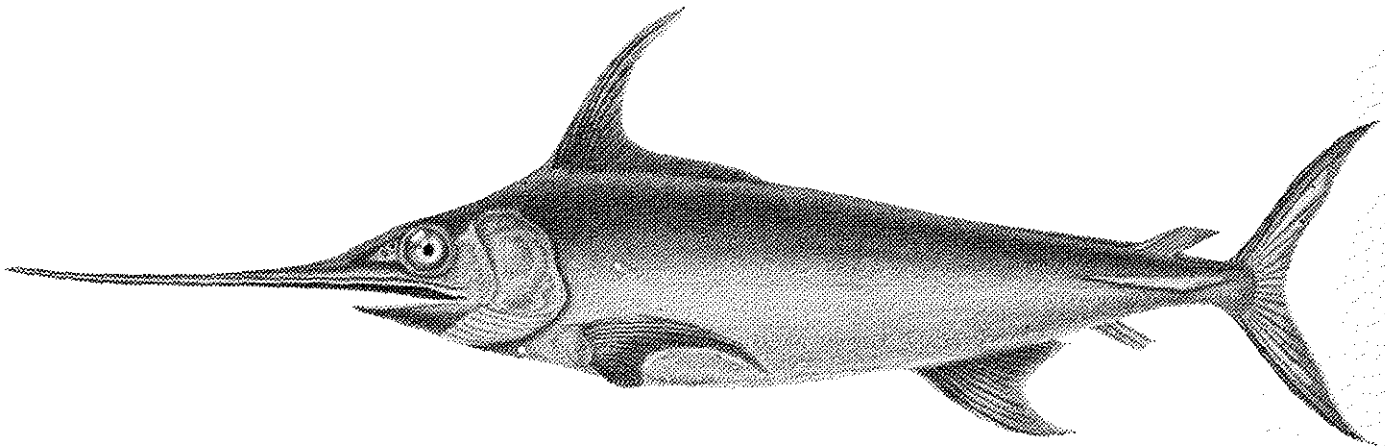


THE JEWISH OBSERVER

IYAR 5728 / APRIL 1968
VOLUME 5, NUMBER 2
FIFTY CENTS



The Halachic Status of the Swordfish

A Tesbuva With an Epilogue

To Picket... Or To Pray?

The Pursuit of Mishna

Citadels of Torah

A Graphic Report

THE JEWISH OBSERVER

THE JEWISH OBSERVER is published monthly, except July and August, by the Agudath Israel of America, 5 Beekman Street, New York, N. Y. 10038. Second class postage paid at New York, N. Y. Subscription: \$5.00 per year; Canada and overseas: \$6.00; single copy: 50¢. Printed in the U.S.A.

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APRIL, 1968 VOL. V, No. 2



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CORRECTIONS

In *The Varieties of Redemption*, by Rabbi David Bleich, in our March issue, a typographical error in the first column of page 8 changed the meaning of a crucial sentence. The word "not" was dropped.

The sentence should read:

But *akatei avdei Achashverosh anan*—so long as we are servants of Ahasuerus, so long as the Kingdom of

G-d is not established, thankful though we may be at our physical deliverance, our emotions must be restrained and we dare not recite Hallel until such time as our deliverance is complete.

The reply to Rabbi Spero's letter in our March issue was written by RABBI MOSHE EISEMANN.

To Picket... Or To Pray?

How do new ideas filter into Jewish communal life?

Can Judaism survive without being "relevant"?

How is the Social Gospel faring on the American scene?

Is "relevance" relevant to traditional Judaism?

The human mind is no longer the private domain that it used to be. Technology has not yet devised a technique to read our thoughts, but methods abound for injecting thoughts into the human mind. The nation was shocked several years ago, when the advertising industry experimented with sub-liminal advertising. A message was flashed on a screen for a fraction of a second, too fast for the eye to see it. But it was found that the message did enter the mind—by-passing consciousness, and rooting itself firmly in the brain. There was a roar of protest and predictions of dire consequences, and the experiment was abandoned.

IT HAS NEVER BEEN easy to trace the development of ideas in a human mind. Many are put there by education whose purpose it is to implant ideas in the mind at that stage in a child's development when they will take root and stand a good chance of survival. Man's history demonstrates that good ideas and evil ideas can each be as easily planted—educational techniques are amoral: they serve their master without regard for the morality of his purposes.

And it is equally true that education for good or evil can fail; untaught ideas can find their way into the minds of child and man, as wild seeds dig into the earth and sprout alongside the planted seed—and with as much success.

There is an old myth that has it that Judaism is concerned with the *deed* to the exclusion of *dogma*—that beliefs are only of secondary importance in the religious life of the Jew. And myths, unlike living creatures, grow stronger as they grow older—stronger, and more dignified. Yet in truth, no body of law manifests more strongly than Torah Law, an awareness of the impact of ideas—of dogma, if we must—on man's behaviour. And the Torah invests ideas and mental activity with the power of deeds. "*Remember . . .*" the Torah demands over and again, as a *mitzvas asai*, a commandment to be worked at. "*Know the G-d of your fathers,*" the Torah thunders. And the Sages make similar demands of the Jew: "*Know from whence you came.*"

And no body of law demands of those it governs, as does the Torah Law, that each man hold up before the light of Law every idea, every belief which finds its way into his mind, that he may thereby determine where this idea came from: Will it enhance his life, will it strengthen him—or will it gnaw away at his life, and ultimately destroy him?

It could be no other way: only a Law given by the Creator of man's mind can know the full impact of an idea on man's behavior, on his every action. Only such a Law can legislate what a man *must* think, what he *must* believe. And in a world of sub-liminal indoctrination—*only in its grossest form has it been outlawed, and how can we be sure?*—only such a Law can be trusted. And the Jew who in any measure rejects the Law, leaves his mind and his heart and his body exposed like a fertile field for the wildest of seeds to sink into every aspect of his being, and to make of him an automaton whose mechanism is so constructed as to make him 'think' he is 'thinking.'

JEWIS ARE TODAY locked in civil war; we contend with each other as to who is more authentically Jewish. We are rough on each other, rougher, often, than we are with the non-Jew; but brothers have always been that way. One factor can save us—bring us closer to each other: a willingness to examine our ideas, knowing full well the seriousness for our survival* of the ideas which move us; willing at all times to search out their origin, and examine their validity in the light of Jewish tradition and experience.

IN THE MINDS OF MANY JEWS, as has been here noted in the past, unless Judaism can be shown to be relevant to modern man, it has outlived its usefulness; it has ceased to be . . . to be relevant. As we look back into the history of our people, this cry for "relevance" appears to be unique to our time. Where did it come

* Perhaps we would do better to speak of Jewish 'eternity'—survival seems so "vegetable" a term.

from? We have already agreed how difficult it is to trace the birth of ideas, but this certainly does not preclude an attempt. Read these words:

If our theology is silent on social salvation, we compel college men and women, working men and theological students to choose between an unsocial system of theology and an irreligious system of social salvation. It is not hard to predict the outcome. If we seek to keep . . . doctrine unchanged, we shall insure its abandonment.

What the man is saying is as simple as it is familiar: young people want religion to say something, to do something about the ills that plague man today; if religion doesn't do this for them, they will turn elsewhere. If religion doesn't adjust doctrines to the needs of today, young people will abandon religion in droves for social ideologies and movements which will give them what they want.

The words quoted above were not written by a Jewish leader, but they might have been. They read as though they appeared in a contemporary journal or newspaper—they did not. They are the words of Walter Rauschenbusch, a nineteenth-century Christian theologian.

The Social Gospel

Rauschenbusch's ideas—they came to be known as the "social gospel"—came at an ideal time. Religion was under attack, among many other reasons, for its association with the reactionary social and political forces of the time. In the mind of the masses, the churches were identified with those forces in American life who were responsible for exploitation of the working class, and the general attitude of big business expressed by the pithy phrase: "Damn the public." The social gospel swept through Protestantism and captured every major denomination, sparing only the fundamentalists. The Catholic Church resisted for decades the intrusion of religion into worldly affairs. Under the impact of ecumenism (which the Church adopted from Protestantism), Catholicism has to some extent adopted the social gospel, in some instances going even beyond Protestantism. But we are here interested in the impact of the concept of the social gospel on Jewish thinking.

AS WE LOOK at Jewish life in America, there is a pattern that often manifests itself—a sociologist might call it the "law of conceptual percolation," or the "pecking-order of ideas." It works this way: Protestantism evolves a new technique for attracting people to their churches. When it appears to be successful, it is adopted, perhaps with changes—perhaps with none, by Reform Juda-

ism.* From there it moves slowly into Conservatism. Usually, by this time, the idea has been worked to death, and the goyim are bored with it, and giving it up . . . and then . . . some Orthodox congregations will pick it up. Take Sunday School—the churches are disillusioned with its effect, Reform and Conservatism are seriously questioning its efficacy; yet Orthodox congregations in many American communities are still sponsoring Sunday Schools.

This Is 1885 !!

It did not take long for the social gospel to gravitate into Reform Judaism. In 1885 Reform leaders met in Pittsburgh and created the "Pittsburgh Platform," a declaration of their new creed. While rejecting all "Mosaic and Rabbinical laws as regulate diet, priestly purity, and dress, originated in ages and under the influences of ideas altogether foreign to our present [1885] mental and spiritual stage, they go on to say:

. . . In full accordanec with the spirit of Mosaic legislation, which strives to regulate the relation between rich and poor, we deem it our duty to participate in the great task of modern times, to solve, on the basis of justice and righteousness, the problems presented by the contrasts and evils of the present organization of society . . .

Paradoxically, while it was the extremism of the Pittsburgh Platform which served as an impetus to the creation of the Jewish Theological Seminary and the Conservative movement, they too, became enraptured with social actionism. A contemporary example of the social gospel in Conservatism emerges from a report of the annual convention of Atid,** Conservative Judaism's collegiate affiliate, which appeared in *The New York Times*, and opened with these words:

A group of Jewish college students has attributed the alienation of the current generation from Jewish cultural and spiritual life to the failure

* I remember asking a group of non-Orthodox rabbis how they justified their adaptation into Jewish life of the Christian sacrament of Confirmation. Their answers were varied. "It keeps the children in Hebrew School past their thirteenth birthday" said the neo-Orthodox rabbi whose congregation was not yet affiliated with the Conservative movement, "so we can get them to wear tefilin." "It's written in the Torah," said the Conservative rabbi, but without a copy handy he was unable to cite the chapter and verse. "So what if Confirmation is a Christian sacrament" the Reform rabbi asked—"haven't we adopted organ-music and other Christian modes of worship?"

** Atid is an interesting switch: Conservatism aping Orthodoxy. Conservatism had functioned on the college campus through the Hillel Foundation which insists on its Jewish "non-partisanship." With the rise of Yavneh, the organization of Orthodox Jewish college students, coupled with a growing awareness of the sterility of Hillel, Conservatism, which had in the past been critical of injecting partisanship into Jewish campus life, created its own college student group.

of the synagogue to deal with such social issues as poverty, civil rights and peace . . .

Criticism was voiced against congregational lay leaders for spending large sums on the construction of lavish buildings. One student said such buildings were "seldom used except during the Jewish High Holy Days when a smaller building could have been constructed and the remaining money sent to aid Negroes in the South or Harlem or other worthy programs.

Perhaps they never read or even heard of Raushenbusch, but his ideas have certainly influenced these young Jews.

Writing in *Tradition* (Spring-Summer 1967) Rabbi Maurice Lamm, while himself not espousing the cause of "relevancy," clearly states the position of its Orthodox Jewish proponents:

Among these [Orthodox] activist forces, number one on the agenda of modern Jewry is relevancy. The most important concern today is relating Judaism to the world. Only as this is done will Judaism survive modern secularism . . . Jews will not become or remain observant unless they see that Judaism is pertinent to their condition.

Rabbi Lamm cautions that "the over-emphasis on relevancy leaves us open to the obvious pitfall of then considering valid only that which is relevant . . . [a] yardstick . . . never used in traditional Judaism, as it was in Reform . . . the trap of over-emphasis must be avoided, even at the cost of the idea of relevancy itself."

Now, what is it that the Orthodox social actionists want us to do? Assuming—as we have here—that social actionism is essentially the fallout of the Protestant social gospel, let's first take a look at how they have been doing.

INHERENT IN THE CONCEPT of the social-gospel, or social activism, are several postulates:

- that religion, being a spiritual force, is above the partisanship of the politicians;
- that religion has an inside track to truth, so that, for example, a call by a religious body for the admission of Red China to the U.N. (or for barring them, for that matter) has greater validity than a position taken by a secular or political group;
- that once a position on any question based on principles of social justice is evolved and widely accepted, all that remains is for the decision to be implemented and the problem is solved.

Let us examine these postulates. Religion—admittedly a broad term, but we are here dealing with it in its broadest sense—has in the past espoused the most

anti-human positions in the name of spirituality. We need only cite antisemitism as an example of evil causes espoused by religion. At the very least, this places in question the notion that religious bodies and religious leaders have an inside track to truth. And if in spite of religion's failures in the past we might nevertheless still care to give additional weight to their positions on political affairs, the following questions arise:

- Given the great complexity of international and even domestic politics today, are clergymen competent to evaluate all the implications of a particular approach in matters where they lack both competence and data—and,

- What is the man in the street to do when the clergy themselves disagree; for example: beyond which parallel in Viet-Nam it is immoral to bomb? Or when they disagree on the morality of the war itself. What is then moral?—what is then relevant?

- What are the limits of religious relevancy? Surely the question, for example, of hard or soft currency, has implications for overcoming poverty, for war and peace—should religion then enter these politico-socio-economic areas and declare that religion favors or opposes "a strong dollar"?

- What of the postulate that once a position is hammered out, all that remains is that it be implemented? The current turmoil in this nation resulting from the resolve of the Negro people to achieve equality, a resolve which apparently has the support of most religious bodies, would indicate that religion either does not have all the answers, or is powerless in bringing about harmony among Americans.

(The creation of the Soviet Union fifty years ago as a model state where all the evils of society stemming from social and economic inequality were to be filtered out by state planning and control was certainly not based on the religiously-oriented social gospel. But the two ideologies have shared the belief that human greed and hatred could be legislated out of existence. The failure of the Soviet experiment is testified to by the terror of Stalinism, more horrible than the evils of Czarism which it replaced, and the suppression of human freedom which is still prevalent under the same leadership that denounced Stalinism.)

Christian Disillusionment

Christian thinkers are already beginning to express their disillusionment with those who would—in the words of an essayist in *Time* magazine (April 12, 1968)—"substitute picket lines for prayer." The dean of the liberal University of Chicago Divinity School now argues that "churches should not necessarily be engaged in trying to hand down specific solutions to social and

political problems from the pulpit . . . [and] poking their noses into areas where they have no right to be" (*Time*). In the same essay, another clergyman "points out that in facing many problems of life the behaviour of the Christian and the humanist might well be identical. Bertrand Russell and the Archbishop of Canterbury, for example, could equally serve on the same committee to improve housing." In essence, it is now becoming evident to Christians that whatever merit the picket-line and social protest may have, it cannot become the totality of religion, nor is it an adequate substitute for religious faith.

Now how does all this relate to Judaism—to Torah and its relevance to modern man? Surely the teachings of our Torah, revealed to us by the Creator of man and the universe has much to say to man in our time, as it always has and forever will. But it makes no sense for Jews to simply join the band-wagon of the social gospel preachers, and to mouth the innocuous clichés that emerge from most every attempt to demonstrate that Judaism is "also relevant."

A major stumbling block in understanding Judaism, by Jews and non-Jews, is the lumping together of Judaism with the vague entity known as "religion." The cry for "relevance" is one more manifestation of this distorted view. Certainly Judaism shares with other religious faiths an abhorrence of human oppression, of violence and war. The concepts of the universality of man and the aspiration for a world society in which men will live in peace, stem from our Torah and the teachings of our Prophets. It matters little that others have at times claimed these concepts as their own; but it matters a great deal that they have rejected—or chosen to ignore—the Torah's emphasis on the centrality of mitzvot in the process of elevating the individual and society at the same time.

After Viet-Nam?

Certainly every Jew looks forward to the end of the war in Viet-Nam. But what then?—will we have solved the problem of war, or is there another "Viet-Nam" or another "Korea" (or a real Korea) lurking in the future? While "open-housing," to cite another example, is a worthwhile objective, it does not have the power to destroy hatred; there are indications that it will bring a good deal of latent hatred to the surface.

But our rejection of the social-gospel concept goes beyond its own inherent weakness. It has been said that the heathen known only of this world, and the Christian only of the other. Christian theologians have grappled with reconciling the two "worlds"—the sacred and the secular. The divine teachings of Torah makes it possible for the Jew to not only make peace between the worldly and the otherworldly, but to make of them one. Through the practice of chesed and tzedakah on the

individual and communal level, the Jew is enjoined and enabled to create a society which is the embodiment of these teachings. As Reb Yisroel Salanter put it: "*Yenems mili d'alma zenen meine mili d'Shmaya*"—"To meet the mundane needs of my fellow, is to meet my own spiritual needs." Torah offers no corporate solutions to the problems that plague the world; it does offer a divine program of mitzvah-action which creates the climate in which man and society can overcome human greed and lust.

The Real Enemy

The crisis which lies at the root of all the social, economic, and political problems of modern man is his alienation from G-d. The enemy is not discrimination or war; the enemy is the tidal wave of secularism and its twin-brother "sciencism" which have lead us to believe that we can solve all human problems alone, while in fact we have compounded them and accelerated their growth to monstrous proportions by means of an idolatrous technology.

Torah is relevant today, as it always has been, not alone for its "message of freedom"; not alone for its concern for peace and human understanding—these have been dragged to the level of the slogan- and cliché-mongers—but as a Divine instrument which can, through the mitzvot, nurture and elevate the human soul, and lift man from the utter despair of the reality of our times. To the young people who are angry with the world their parents have created for them, and to the parents who see no way out, Torah offers the realization that each man stands as he always has in a one-to-one relationship with his G-d, and it is the maintenance and the strengthening of this relationship through Torah and mitzvot which is the last hope for repairing the breakdown in all human relationships which threatens our society and the world.

IT IS ONE OF THE paradoxes of Jewish life in America today that one of the first Jewish voices to be raised publicly against the "nervous scurrying for relevance" by clergymen, should be that of a Conservative Jewish leader, himself a political activist, who in November of 1967 told his congregants, "I must forbid you from voting Republican in the municipal election in Englewood this year," (*The New York Times*, November 5, 1967) because the Republican candidate had been guilty of a racial slur in the course of the campaign. Addressing an audience at the New School in New York City on March 9 of this year, the same Arthur Hertzberg said, as reported by *The New York Times*, that the:

. . . nervous scurrying for relevance may represent the sickness, not the health, of American religion.

"A large part of what passes for liberal religion in America

is a rewriting of the Nation and the New Republic" he added. "That's not the job of religion. What people come to religion for is an ultimate metaphysical hunger, and when this hunger is not satisfied, religion declines."

He said that Christians who are currently trying to revitalize their religion by making it socially relevant should note the experience of Jews, who started doing the same thing a century ago.

"Having been there for a hundred years and played the game, I can tell you that it doesn't work," he added. "The very moment that clerics become more wordly, the world goes to hell all the faster" . . .

The role of religion, he warned, is not to gain acceptability in the secular world or to "lend the blessing of the church or synagogue in a popular front."

"Beneath their involvement, people are not very happy with any of our answers," he said. "They are worried about something more than Dow Chemical and napalm. They are worried about what's it all for. They are worried about—dare I say it?—immortality, what their lives are linked into."

"Liberal religion is faintly out of date," he continued. "We

are moving past the social question to questions of ultimate concern."

The problems of the world have become so complex that no one man or group of men can cope with more than a small part of a single problem. To speak of halachic positions on matters where the data necessary to making a judgement is either withheld, distorted, or simply non-existent, is an absurdity. But this only makes Torah more relevant as a guide to man in maintaining his will to live in a world gone mad, and retaining his singular identity in an increasingly impersonal world. The thought of nuclear destruction is horrendous, but the threat to man's soul is even more so. In this sense, nothing has changed; man stands, as he always has, as the master of his soul—falling as he removes himself from his G-d, rising as he comes closer. This is the relevancy of Torah to every Jew—to every man who would listen. □

David Kranzler

Needed: An Archive for Torah Jewry

What We Are Losing For Want of an Archive — The Positive Results an Archive Would Bring

A coupon for a Shabbos meal . . . a leaflet urging merchants to close their shops on Shabbos—these and other everyday bits of paper which most people would not think of saving, were invaluable to me in attempting to reconstruct and record what Torah life was like in one Jewish community. The coupon and the leaflet were issued by a branch of Agudath Israel in Shanghai—an unlikely place for Yiddishkeit to blossom, during World War II—an unlikely time for anything to blossom.

One day a historian will set out to record what Jewish life was like in our time, and even if he is properly

DAVID KRANZLER has just been appointed Assistant Professor in Library at the Queensboro Community College. He is writing his doctoral dissertation on the Jewish community in Shanghai, and has a growing collection of the kind of documents which could form the nucleus of the archive he proposes.

The Jewish Observer / April, 1968

objective, he will probably present a distorted picture of Orthodox Jewish life and its communal institutions. Should this happen—and there are signs that it has already begun—it will be because of the lack of primary resources to study what is undoubtedly the most dynamic sector of contemporary American Jewry.

In my own work on the Shaghai community, I would never have discovered the full scope of the heroic efforts and achievements of a small, but energetic Agudah branch, where if not for YIVO, a Yiddish-oriented archive, which gathered the many documents that present a picture of life at that time. It is a sad fact that nowhere in the world today is there a single library or archive that concerns itself primarily with gathering and preserving material bearing a direct relationship to Orthodox Jewish life.

There are of course a number of reasons for this void in Orthodoxy:

- Orthodox Jewry in the past few generations has

been preoccupied with the struggle for its physical and spiritual existence, and could not afford the 'luxury' of establishing historical archives.

- Until now, Orthodox Jews as a group, lacked the self-assurance and self-awareness of their own achievements, and suffered from a sense of inferiority that contributed to molding their self-image into the stereotype propagated by secular and non-Orthodox Jews.
- Orthodoxy has manifested almost a total lack of historical perspective. Our major concern has been to criticize* history written by Jews who lack the understanding of Jewish tradition which is requisite for comprehension of Jewish history.

An Overview of Orthodox Life

As a result of the above, the many letters, announcements, leaflets, proclamations, and even correspondence—the basic building blocks of history—are discarded once their immediate purpose has been fulfilled.

I therefore propose the creation of an Orthodox Jewish Archive and Institute for Oral History—a nucleus already exists—which would consist of four distinct, yet inter-related units. While the goal would be to preserve for the future historian the documents and materials which reflect what is happening in Orthodoxy today, such an archive would have immediate value in making possible an overview of Orthodox Jewish life which the average Jew is rarely able to observe. The four units of the proposed institute would be:

ARCHIVES—which would gather newspapers, magazines, correspondence, leaflets, brochures—all of the seeming trivia of daily life, which are of major importance to a historian. What a wealth of material lies, for example, in the correspondence of the late Rabbi Yoel Fink, who throughout his years as a rebbe in Yeshiva Torah Vodaath, exchanged letters with hundreds of his talmidim. This example could be multiplied many times over.

A REFERENCE LIBRARY—which would bring together in one place the available handbooks and brochures describing the structure, membership, and work of all Orthodox organizations and institutions. This library would preserve the files of valuable information which accumulate in so many offices, and are then callously discarded.

* See, for example, David Stein's critique in *Jewish Life* of "Jews of the Lower East Side 1870-1925," a book based on an exhibit at the Jewish Museum. Stein demonstrates that the writer's meager Jewish background accounted for his lack of empathy, and his failure to understand the joys and the pathos of religious Jews of the East Side of yesteryear.

AN AUDIO-VISUAL DEPARTMENT—which would have two sections.

A Picture Collection: There are several collections of pictures relating to Jewish life, scattered among libraries. If these could be brought together, and combined with several existing collections, such a collection would be of great value.*

Tape Collection of Shiurim and Classroom Lessons: This would be a central repository of tape-recordings of shiurim on all levels—ranging from the teaching of *Aleph-Beis* to the *pilpul-shiur* or *Mussar-shmuss* of the rosh yeshiva. Apart from providing a living portrait of contemporary educational techniques, it would be of immediate value to teachers and potential teachers, who could have easy access to the experience of veteran educators. A most desirable by-product of such a collection would be to make available on a lending or purchase basis, recorded lessons to Jews in isolated communities who might never have access to actual instruction in Torah studies. The actual value and impact of such recordings is manifest by the example of a talmid of the Telshe Yeshiva who set up a microphone in the Beis Medrash and recording equipment in the basement, and for five years taped the Rosh Yeshiva's shiurim. It was only after the passing of Rav E. M. Bloch, שליט"א, that the yeshiva's foresight in granting permission for the recordings was fully appreciated.

DEPARTMENT OF ORAL HISTORY—This is a field which in the past fifteen years has come to be accepted as a new source and vital adjunct to proper historical research. This technique involves carefully-prepared interviews with people in various walks of life, who are potential primary sources for events they have experienced, or people, movements or institutions they have been involved with. With the passing of Elimelech Tress, שליט"א, for example, it will be impossible ever to assemble a complete picture of the rescue work done by Agudath Israel during the years of the Holocaust. Volumes have been and will be written about the rescue work by the various secular Jewish groups, and by the sheer weight of the available material the work of Agudah and Vaad Hatzalah has, and will continue to be, covered over. Even the Orthodox Jew whose only resource is the available literature will succumb to the belief that Orthodoxy played a minor role, if any, in rescue operations. And yet, I have in my own collection microfilm copies of several hundred cable messages sent between Kobe (Japan), New York City, and Shanghai, from 1940 to 1941, which offer a graphic


* We can testify to the difficulty in finding suitable illustrative material in our own work—ed.

*A Shabbos-meal
contributors ticket
issued by
Agudath Israel
in Shanghai
during
World War II*

**HIERMIT WERDE ICH
HEREWITH I BECOME**

**GASTGEBER
HOST**

**am Sabbath - Tisch mit einem monatlichen'beitrag
of the Sabbath - Meals with a monthly share**

von  of _____

Name.....

Adress.....

picture of the plight of hundreds of yeshiva-leit, rabbanim and roshei yeshiva, and Orthodoxy's monumental efforts on their behalf. A number of these cables are signed by Reb Ahron Kotler, אהרן, requesting visas, affidavits and other assistance. Some of the startling results of this correspondence lie buried in issues of the Orthodox Tribune published by Agudath Israel in 1941, which are now unavailable!

Similarly, a great deal of information about every aspect of recent decades of Orthodox communal life rests within the memories of people who were themselves involved. A department of oral history is the only chance for retrieving this information.

Tape Collections

There are here and there individuals I know of who are collecting such materials: a young man who has more than eighty tapes of shiurim by Rav Moshe Feinstein; someone who collects letters by Torah personalities, and original manuscripts submitted to Orthodox periodicals. No doubt there are others I don't know of, who are probably unaware of each other. But unless there is a collective effort to collect these materials in a central archive, they will be of only limited value.

The establishment of a central Orthodox archive and library, to sum up, will make a major contribution to the growing self-awareness of Orthodoxy, and even accelerate its pace. It will be a valuable force for correcting the stereotypes about Orthodox Judaism and

Jewry which prevail in the general Jewish and non-Jewish communities. It will also serve to focus more closely and more intelligently on the weaknesses in Orthodox life which we often tend to brush under the carpet.

Such an archive will also be a valuable resource to government agencies which have manifested almost total ignorance of the Orthodox community. Witness the poverty program officials who set up as criteria for poverty incidence of venereal disease, number of illegitimate births, and juvenile delinquency—among others—and sprightly concluded that there are no poor Jews in Williamsburg.

Not an unimportant by-product of the creation of an Orthodox archive would be the closer cooperation of Orthodox groups stemming from their joint association in what would hopefully be a non-controversial endeavor. There could also emerge from this project a series of publications on Orthodox Judaism which is so sadly lacking today.

Funds No Problem

Of course, such an institute would require funds, but once the need for this effort is appreciated, and the will to create it is manifest, aid would be forthcoming from foundations and government agencies which are anxious to foster such projects. American Orthodoxy has reached the stage of development where it needs, and deserves, a repository of its past and present.

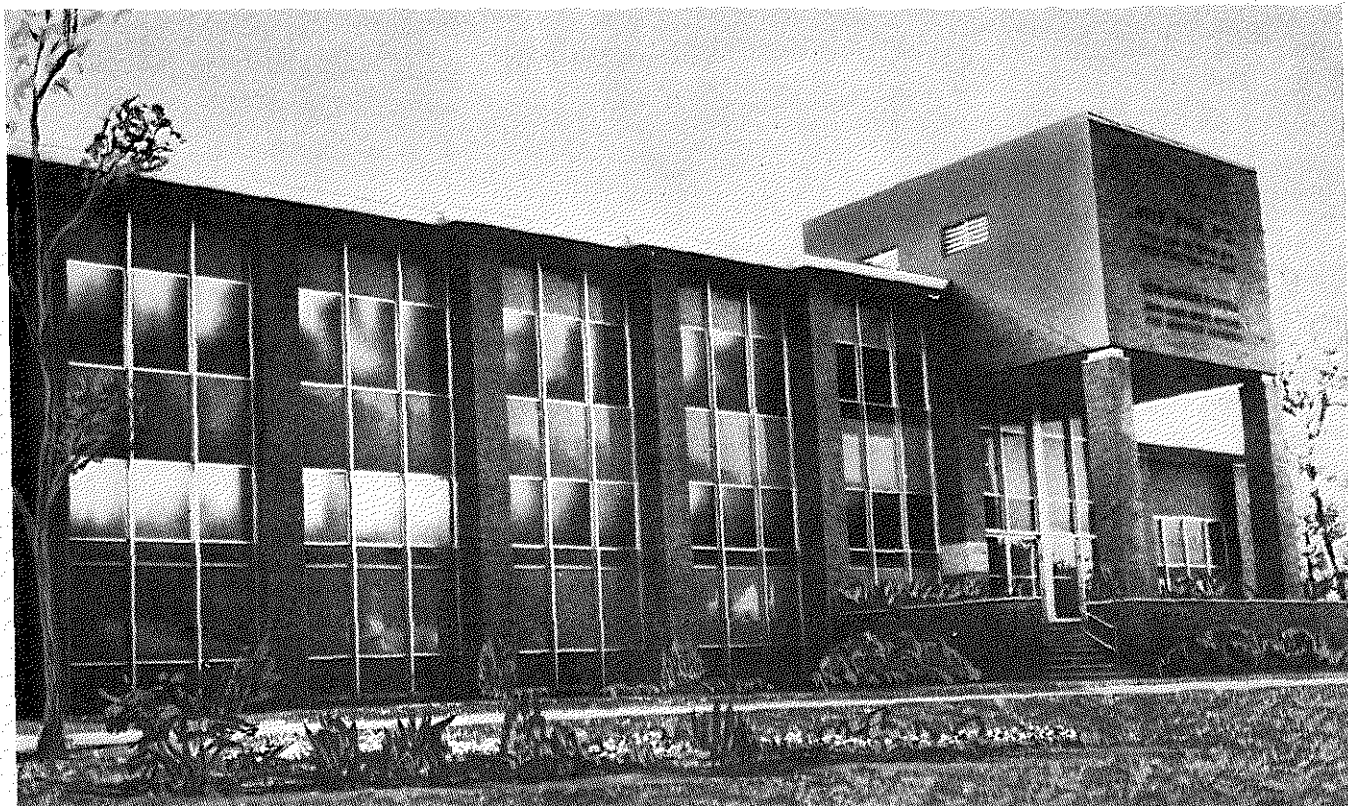
CITADELS OF TORAH IN AMERICA

One of the most dramatic manifestations of the renaissance of Torah in America, is the construction of new homes for the institutions of higher Torah learning. Since most Jews rarely see more than one — if any — of these magnificent buildings, we present a pictorial gallery of these new citadels of Torah.

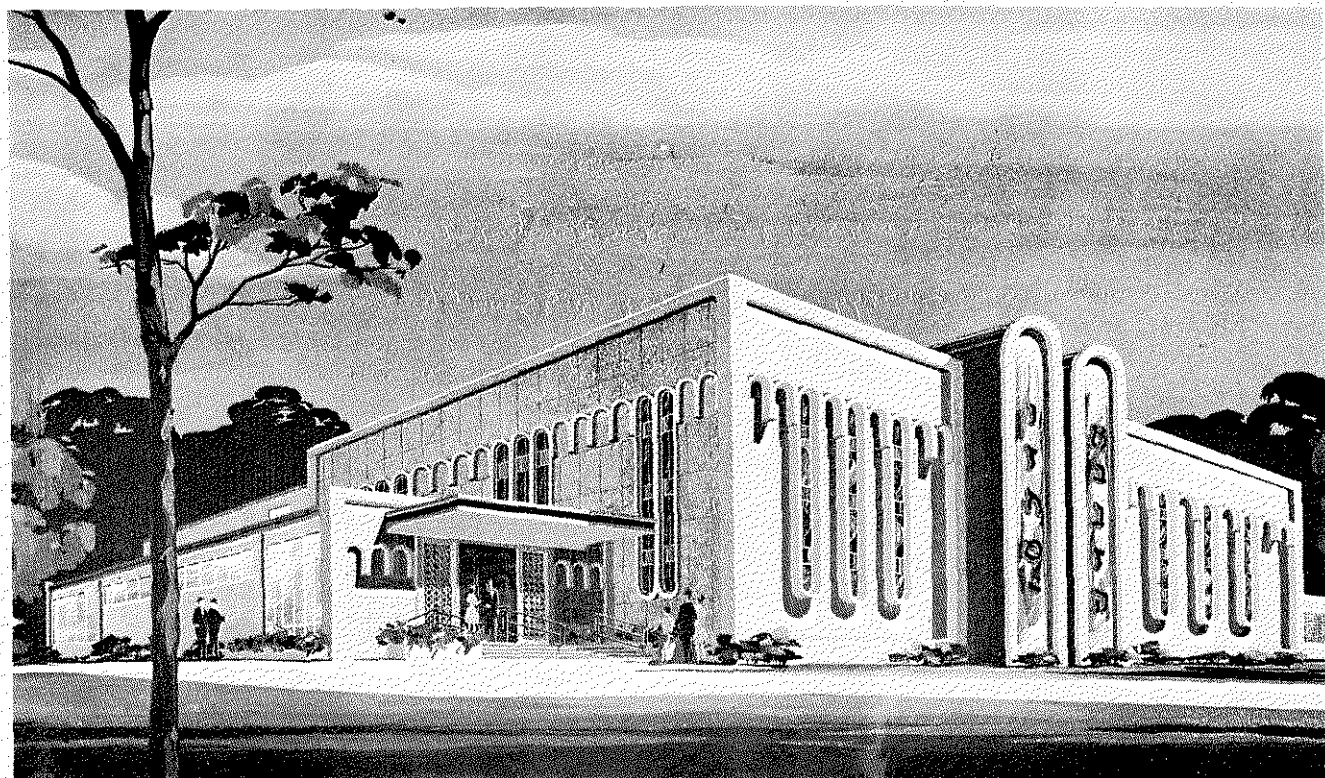
The new home of Yeshiva and Mesivta Torah V'Daath in the Flatbush section of Brooklyn, New York



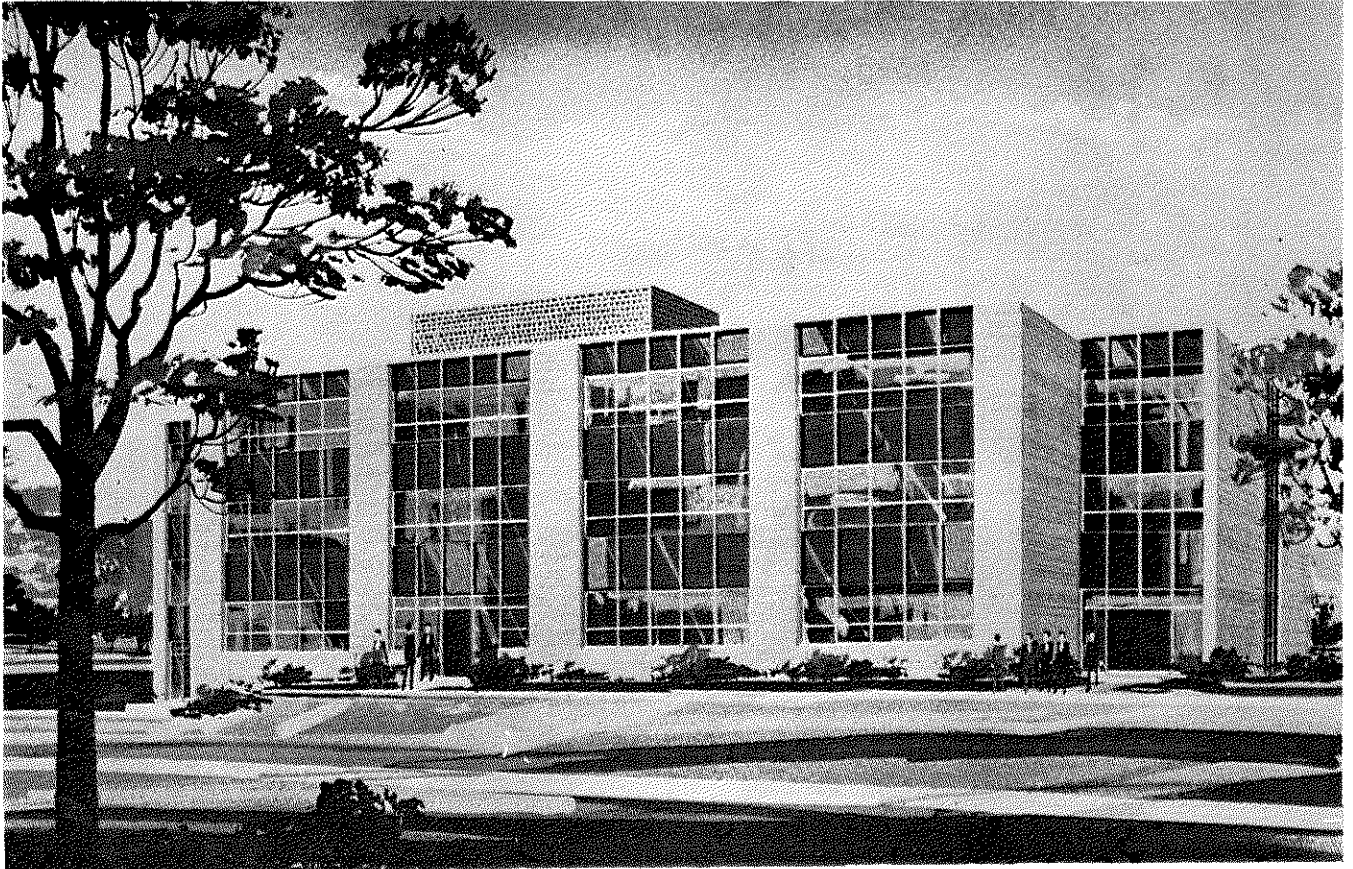
Beth Medrash Govoha, founded by the sainted Reb Ahron Kotler, in Lakewood, New Jersey



The new home of the Telshe Yeshiva in Wickliffe, Ohio

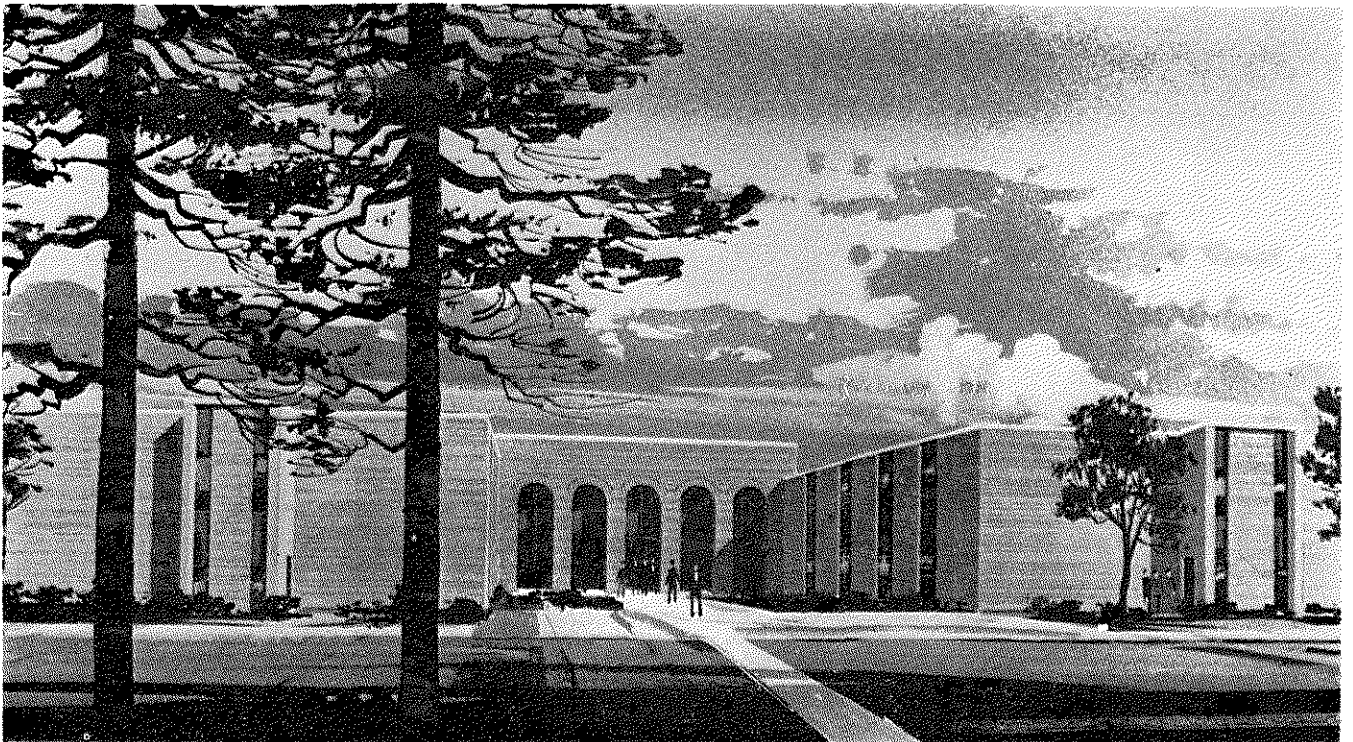


Two sections of the Ner Israel Rabbinical College in Baltimore, Maryland, now nearing completion



Classroom Building (above)

Dormitory Building (below)



The Halachic Status of the Swordfish

To Remove a Stumblingblock — A Teshuva With an Epilogue

In March of 1966 (5726), I issued a fact sheet to be distributed to the many people who called my office at Yeshiva University requesting information on the kashrus of swordfish (*xiphias gladius*). The essential paragraph reads as follows:

The adult forms sold commercially fail to evidence a single scale. A number of ichthyologists have reported that the swordfish does have scales when born and loses them during maturation. All evidence, however, points to the probability that these scales, if they ARE present, are not of the kosher variety.

RECENTLY, the Conservative Rabbinical Assembly declared swordfish to be a kosher fish, and disseminated this opinion widely, creating doubt and confusion even among Torah-observant Jews.

The following analysis of the halachic and scientific literature is presented to reaffirm the practice of centuries during which the swordfish was not eaten by Jews who believed in the Divine origin of Torah and the authority of our Sages.

*These you may eat of the fishes,
all that have fins and scales.*

—Leviticus: XI:9-12

Rashi defines the Biblical term "scale" (*kaskeses*), in accord with Nida 51b, and Chulin 59a and 61b, as an outer layer (shell or peel) set in the skin of the fish resembling the armor (coat of mail) worn by Goliath when he fought with David (viz., Targum—"Kal-fin"). The *Tosefos* commentary emphasizes that the exact definition of the term *kaskeses* was handed down in errorless transmission as it was given to Moses on Mount Sinai.

The Ramban's definition of the term *kaskeses* has served as the primary source for all the leading Torah

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scholars whose rulings have determined Torah law and custom. The following is a free translation of the halachic definition of that type of scale which serves to identify the fish as a kosher variety:

Do not think that the term 'scale' refers to those structures that are set into the skin and actually affixed to it. Rather it refers to a type of structure like the nail of man which can be removed from the skin of the fish by hand or with a knife. But if it be affixed to the skin and not separated therefrom at all [i.e., no free margins], then the bearer of these 'scales' may not be eaten. This is the intent of the Talmud in referring to the scales as an 'outer garment' that can be peeled off as one peels a fruit or removes bark from a tree. It resembles the overlapping scales of armor designed to guard the gaps in the armor plate lest a thin arrow get through.

The *Shulchan Aruch* (Rama) records this definition as halachically binding, and no halachic authority has ever disputed this definition. The biological term "scale" includes such skin structures as occur on the tail of the rat. Removeability is not a prerequisite.

With this definition in mind, it must be obvious that the biological term "scale" is not the same as the Torah's definition of *kaskeses*. Ichthyologists recognize four types of fish scale. The *ganoid* scale found on the sturgeon, or the *placoid* scale of the shark are specifically excluded from the Biblical term *kaskeses* since they are not "removable" scales. Indeed, the educated layman would not see any similarity between the heavy bony plates of the sturgeon or the needle-like projections on the shark skin and the classic kosher scale of the whitefish or carp.

During the last few decades, sturgeon was sporadically classified as a kosher fish by some who were ignorant of either the halachic or the scientific facts. Despite the absence of any "scales" that could be seen and removed; despite the confluence of so many auxiliary signs considered by Talmudic authorities to be typical of non-kosher fishes such as a ventral mouth, black roe, a heterocerclic tail (divided into unequal halves), many Jews had been misled into a violation of a Biblical ordinance. Contributing to the confusion was a Fisheries Leaflet (No. 531) of the United States Depart-

ment of the Interior, prepared by I. Ginsburg, Systematic Zoologist on the staff of the Fish and Wildlife Service. This leaflet was issued in response to many inquiries "whether certain fishes are kosher." Despite the author's lack of halachic qualifications, and despite many inclusions that clearly mark this leaflet as a biological treatise unrelated to the requirements of Torah law, this leaflet has once again appeared to mislead and misdirect Jews anxious to observe Torah law. It serves as the main proof cited by the Conservative clergy for the kashrus of swordfish. In their 1966 *Proceedings*, they cite:

1. the *Talmudical Encyclopedia*, which notes in the caption under the drawing of a swordfish that it has "scales as a juvenile but not when mature." No decision is rendered in that article on the halachic status of the swordfish. Instead the caption refers the reader to the text material in which the swordfish (*akaspatis*) is listed among those fishes who lose their scales upon capture. Any unbiased reader would have concluded that the "swordfish" of this article is not our *xiphias* species;

2. a citation from the *Darkai Teshuva* (quoting the Keneses Hagedola) that it is customary to eat the "fish with the sword" because although it appears to have no scales, it sheds its scales while battling to resist capture;

3. a reference to an article published in *Hapardes* that proposes swordfish to be a kosher fish;

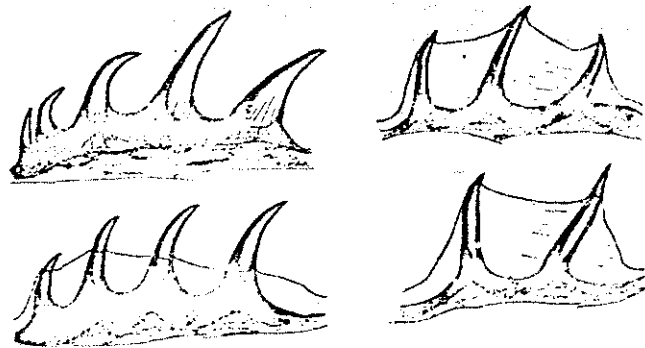
4. a statement by a Dr. Ganz that Dr. Bruce B. Collett of the United States Department of the Interior is a competent ichthyologist. This is preparatory to a statement that Dr. Collett confirms the competence of Isaac Ginsburg who issued the government leaflet. A literature citation from *Nakamura et al.* 1951 that swordfish have scales as juveniles completes the "halachic" treatise.

Now the facts—halachic and scientific:

1. not one of these references cited refers to the removability of the scales—an absolute requirement for a kosher scale;

2. the fishery leaflet lists *eels*, *catfish*, and *sharks* as fish that have scales and therefore are kosher—as "kosher" as swordfish. The *Talmudical Encyclopedia* lists these unequivocally as NOT kosher. Clearly the scale of Ginsburg is NOT the scale of Leviticus! The *Talmudical Encyclopedia* does NOT list the swordfish as kosher. The kosher fishes are so captioned and they include tuna, bonito, mackerel, sardines, hake, carp, and sunfish.

3. even Ginsburg clearly sounds a warning with re-



Various stages of scale development in the *xiphias gladius* as shown by G. F. ARATA.

gard to swordfish. "Swordfish during early juvenile stage of life have scales that are markedly specialized and rather unique. They are in the form of *bony tubercules* or expanded compressed platelike bodies. These scales are rough, having spinous projections at the surface and they do not overlap one another as scales in most other fishes do. With growth the scales disappear and the larger fish including those sold in the market have no scales." Yet they cite the *Darkai Teshuva* who clearly refers to a fish possessing scales as an adult. The citation, which they quote only in part, concludes (in free translation): "A government official questioned my teacher as to the kashrus of the 'fish-with-the-sword' since it has no scales. My teacher therefore took a black cloth, placed it in the net, and proved that the fish does shed its scales, confirming the truth and accuracy of our Torah laws." All ichthyologists deny that the swordfish has scales as an adult.

4. *Nakamura* (p. 269) claims that in the 454 mm. size (20 inches) scales are already degenerate. They appear clearly as "bony plates" only on specimens up to a size of 8 inches—hardly the ferocious fish of the *Darkai Teshuva* citation. Surely the swordfish of America is not the fish referred to in the *Keneses Hagedola*!

5. Rav Z. Waltner, Rosh Yeshiva of the Ets Haim Yeshiva in Tangiers, writes that the swordfish is commonly sold in his area. When he arrived in Tangiers 16 years ago, he determined that the great rabbinic authorities of the Sephardic world such as the author of *Vayomer Yitzchak*, as well as the famous Rav Itzel of Ponovitz, identified this fish as non-kosher. However, several families ate this fish claiming that they have been taught that the swordfish "sheds its scales during its anger." Rav Waltner asserts, "I investigated the matter with the fishermen who unanimously agreed that they never found any scales on the fish, net, or its immediate vicinity."

6. Dr. G. Testa of the Institute for Marine Science in Monaco—a world renowned marine biologist—writes:

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"L'Espadon . . . ne possède pas de'ecaille. La peau est lisse chez les adultes, mais chez les jeunes elle est couvrt de petites tubercules." (Translation:) "The swordfish does *not* have scales. The skin of the adult is smooth but the juvenile forms are covered with small tubercules." The term "tubercules" is used to indicate a variation in skin texture as contrasted with a true scale.

7. Dr. James W. Atz of the Museum of Natural History in New York clarified the literature reference for me in an interview on April 5, 1968. I quote from our conversation: "The scale of the swordfish is so atypical that it cannot be considered as the usual scale." . . . "It is not a true scale but a spiny process."

8. F. R. LaMonte,* curator emeritus, Department of Ichthyology of the American Museum of Natural History, reported in 1958 on the "keeled" scales of the swordfish to which *Arata* (1954) and *Nakamura* (1951) make reference, and which serves as the basis of Dr. Bruce Collette's statement that swordfish have scales. (*Bulletin, American Museum of Natural History*, Vol. 114, Article 5, page 391, 1958). I quote verbatim:

They resemble in general, the placoid scale originating in the dermis (under the skin not on top of it) with its spine eventually breaking through the epidermis.—[The placoid scale is found on the shark]—(see diagram from *Arata, G. F.*)

9. There is a teshuva from a recognized halachic authority (*Shemesh Tzedaka, Yoreh Deah*, 14) concerning spinous scales: "that which appears as scales are not true scales for they resemble nails and are but stiff dermal projections . . . the fish is therefore *not* kosher."

10. The reference to the *Hapardes* article ignored my own point-by-point rebuttal of this article in the following issue as well as other rebuttals that were subsequently published.

11. Since Dr. Collette's opinion is the mainstay of the responsum published by the Rabbiniacal Assembly, I wrote to Dr. Collette on April 1, 1968 to evoke from him a clear statement concerning the nature of this swordfish scale. The question I posed read as follows:

"Does the scale of the juvenile swordfish resemble the scale of the whitefish or carp with respect to its relatively loose attachment to the underlying integument?"

I received the following response dated April 15: "Specifically the scales of the juvenile swordfish *do not* resemble the scale of whitefish or carp in respect to

* Miss LaMonte also reports on a new type of scale, found on some specimens which she calls a "glassy scale." In a lengthy telephone conversation with Dr. LaMonte on April 9, 1968, I was unable to clarify the exact nature of this scale (unreported by any other investigator). Dr. LaMonte asserted that, "It does not resemble any other known scale and therefore cannot be classified as one of the four scale types."

their loose attachment to the skin. However they are certainly homologous to scales of other fishes." (The term homologous is defined as "showing a similarity of structure, embryonic development and relationship." For example, the hand of man and the wing of the bat are homologous structures.)

This recent clarification by Dr. Collette should be recognized even by the author of the spurious "heter" as a total refutation of the scientific basis for their conclusions.

THE TALMUD LISTS but two exceptions to the absolute requirements of having visible scales:

- a) fish that shed their scales when netted, like the mackerel;
- b) fish that have scales developing later in the life cycle; consequently the juvenile forms that lack scales may be eaten since they *do* have scales at maturity.

But no place in the Talmud or the responsa literature is there any reference to such a deviant: a fish that has scales as a juvenile but not as an adult. Yet the Conservative clergy must be aware of Talmudical references to some form of swordfish since it is mentioned in the *Talmudical Encyclopedia* article that they cite as a basis for their "heter." If the swordfish of the Talmud had "juvenile scales," the Talmud would have surely recorded this fact.

I discussed the above presented facts with my great teachers, Rav Moshe Feinstein, א"שליט, and Rav Yosef Dov Soloveitchik, א"שליט, and they concur with my decision that on the basis of the evidence presented, the swordfish (xiphias gladius) is a non-kosher fish.

May those who observe the laws of the forbidden and the permitted merit joining in the feast of the Leviathan. (An epilogue follows on page 16.)

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The Swordfish and the Sword of King Chezkiyahu

An Epilogue to a Teshuva

*When our love was great
we shared the edge of a sword,
now a bed of 60 cubits
does not suffice.*

— SANHEDRIN 7a

While in the library of the Museum of Natural History, studying the available source material for the foregoing *teshuva*, I felt a sense of foreboding.

Are we entering a new era of open aggression—of overt hostility—in our relationships with Conservative Judaism?

Is there to be a new battlefield, another “*mechitza*”-issue which will further divide the small remnant of Israel?

Must I accept it as tragic reality that the *mechitza*, the halachic wall that divides the Torah-observant Jew from the adherents to Conservative Judaism, has made of us two religions?

JUDAISM has been decimated during these last three decades by two destructive forces—physical destruction in Europe and spiritual destruction in Europe and America. Conservatism has legitimized desecration of our Shabbos, killed by neglect our marital laws, and destroyed the sanctity of family life and natural heritage by their failure to consistently enforce the divorce laws and the laws governing conversion to Judaism. Are they now intent on doing away with the dietary laws by planned confusion so as to salve the conscience of their adherents who don't observe these laws anyway?

What motivated them to issue a “*heter*” on swordfish? Do they believe that the Jewish lust for swordfish steak must be satiated so as to guarantee the progressive development of Jewish consciousness and Torah observances? Since they try to maintain a “Torah-true” posture why the “big-lie” technique? Why do they quote the Ramban's definition of a scale (*kaskeses*) and then cite a series of secular references *none of which* comment on the prime requisite of a kosher scale—its removeability? Why, if they accept the Ginsburg leaflet as adequate halachic precedent, did they not permit eel, shark and catfish? Did they decide on the basis of consumer surveys that a “*heter*” on swordfish and sturgeon is commercially more significant and therefore give it priority? Why the conscious premeditated attempt to pervert the truths of our Torah concerning Shabbos, Taharas Hamishpacha, divorce and marriage laws?—and now sturgeon and swordfish?

How clearly I hear the echo of our silence! Why have we been so diplomatically obtruse in our reaction to Conservatism? Why do I evoke shock and disbelief in the sixty-five year old stalwart of a Conservative Temple when I tell him that his spiritual leaders do not believe that G-d gave us our Torah; or when I tell him that his “rabbi” does not have *smicha*, or even familiarity with any of the texts that have tradi-

tionally been identified with rabbinic scholarship?

We should have demanded of the Conservative laity, during these many years, a defense of their observance of Simchas Torah. Why do you dance with our Torah? Since your "teacher and preacher in Israel" maintains that this Torah was "written by a group of wise men over several centuries and fraudulently presented as the actual word of Hashem," why do you embrace, kiss this symbol of deceit? Why not substitute your son's text in nuclear physics or molecular biology? Why not go way out and design the Torah crown in the shape of the double helix of the DNA molecule?

No! I am not prepared to "drum out" of our small army of survivors the millions of non-observant Jews. Amoral leaders who sold their Torah birthright for a bowl of lentil soup, cannot be permitted to lay claim to the blessing of Isaac and thus mislead and misdirect. They must be forced into a full disclosure of their ideology and theology. Let their adherents know where they are being lead. If you want to go about composing responsa in imitation of the rabbis of Israel, let me first see some statistics. How many of your congregants have kosher homes but trefa stomachs because of a double standard that exempts the Chinese restaurant from halachic disciplines? How many of the children of your members keep kosher homes? When did you exhort your women to go to mikveh? How many of your second- and third-generation Conservatives are liberal enough to have married outside the faith? What is your honest prognosis for your fourth and fifth and *fiftieth* generations? Will they be recognizable as sons of Abraham or will they be indistinguishable from the rest of humanity, or inhumanity? A moratorium on lies—a designation of several years as "years of integrity"—will give us the opportunity to win back the Torah allegiance of all Israel. Judaism can survive if we have masses of non-religious, non-observant Jews. Judaism cannot survive the hyphenation of "Conservative," "Reform," and "Reconstructionist."

* * *

What did King Chezkiyahu do? He plunged a sword into the entrance-way to the study-hall and announced: "He who refused to involve himself in the study of our Torah [la'asok Ba'Torah] let him be pierced with the sword." They searched from Don to Beersheva and could not find man, woman, or child who had not mastered the laws of the holy and the defiled, the permitted and the forbidden. (Sanhedrin 94b).

King Chezkiyahu did not demand *limud Ha'Torah* study alone, but *la'asok Ba'Torah*—personal involvement with Torah as a way of life, a fact of Jewish existence, not a transient phase of our national devel-

opment. The first Torah blessing recited by the Jew every morning reads:

Blessed are you Hashem who has sanctified us by commanding us la'asok Ba'Torah!

Torah study is not an exercise in medieval Jewish literature or ancient legal codes. Our Oral Torah is not "one man's opinion" to be disputed by every theology student with twelve credits in Old Testament literature. It is our way of life, our source of truth, our reason for existence as a unique entity among the nations of the world! You can't pervert Torah truths without incurring my resentment. You cannot deny this perversion without incurring my disdain. If but you would state your position with integrity, with candor, you would not threaten the spiritual well being of my children; we could then devote our energies to the task of returning the wayward, of convincing those who err of their error. Let us meet your laity if you dare! Let the truths of our Torah—without "apologetica," modification, and explanation—be spoken. Never after will they be able to accept the half-truths and whole lies of the clergy of Conservative Judaism. Don't threaten my right to my heritage, my Torah. Write your own Torah! Find your own prophets! Originate your own customs!—Don't plagiarize my ideas, my literature.

* * *

WHEN OUR LOVE WAS STRONG, when all Jews knew their obligation and were cognizant of their failings, we were governed by the laws of friendship and brotherhood: —chastise your friend; —do not hate your brother in your heart.

The strong helped the weak and then was helped in turn. No matter how tight the situation, even on the edge of a sword, our love for each other—*tzadik* and sinner—governed our daily lives.

But when the source of this love is rejected, when G-d and His Torah are equated with "G-d-concepts," "constructs," and "ethical theories," the sword must be turned into a scalpel to cut away the diseased tissues lest the whole body of Judaism grow weak and die. When our brethren substitute the Decalogue alone for the entire Dialogue of "*Peh el Peh adabair bo*"—the dialogue between Hashem and Moshe which gave to man his code of conduct, and to the Jew *his* code of conduct—they substitute partial "truth" for the absolute truth of our Torah. Even the vastness of the Universe is too small to contain truth and falsehood. Let those who sought strength for their failings by organizing a union of non-believers once again become the lonely in search of truth, in quest of that code of conduct that is "goodly in the eyes of G-d and man." □

Respectfully Submitted...

A Proposal for Agudath Israel to Build Outposts in the American Wasteland

In his preface to "A Concise History of Agudath Israel,"* Rabbi Moshe Sherer delineates the role of the Agudah in the "fight for the perpetuation of authentic Yiddishkeit and the preservation of Torah authority as the centrality of Jewish life." It is because of its historical achievements that the following proposal is respectfully submitted to Agudath Israel.

This proposal concerns the vast areas of America which have been dubbed "the Jewish spiritual wastelands." Though it deals primarily with the problem of the "wastelands," its implications and ramifications also reach into the *kovod horabbonus* and ben Torah problems variously discussed in these pages over a period of many months, and are directed to the solution of all three.

There are no easy ways to reclaim these "spiritual wastelands" in our country—the vast areas where Reform and Conservatism hold sway over the Jewish population—to some extent due to Orthodox default. But a beginning must be made now before the inroads of assimilation and intermarriage will, G-d forbid, accomplish under freedom what Russian communism is bent upon achieving through persecution—the annihilation of the Jewish soul.

It is a well-documented and well-publicized fact that the so-called religious revival in America in the years following World War II, spilled over to boost membership in Jewish congregations. Membership in a congregation is one of the prerequisites of social acceptance in suburbia. The newly-awakened desire of the American—especially the suburban—Jew for identifying with his people is expressed by joining a synagogue and taking part in synagogue, or at least synagogue-connected, activities.

Though these motives for joining a synagogue are far from ideal, there is no reason why the longing of the American Jew for Jewish identity cannot be channelled into the right direction and utilized to our ad-

vantage in the fight for the reclamation of the souls of out brothers. More often than is imagined, non-observant suburban Jewish couples, nostalgically remembering the traditional observances of their childhood, are eager to join an Orthodox shul so that their children can benefit from the same "real" Jewish experiences they fondly recall. Again, wrong motivation, but again a favorable circumstance.

The Nearest Shul is Too Far

All too often, however, the nearest Orthodox shul is no closer than the closest city. What the absence of Orthodox shuls in suburbia means in terms of these families and their children, as well as other suburban Jewish families and their children, as far as the survival of the young generation as Jews is concerned, is self-evident: the record of assimilation and intermarriage sadly speaks for itself.

Of primary importance, then, as a beginning in reclaiming the "spiritual wastelands," is the establishment of Orthodox shuls throughout the length and breadth of this country wherever Jews live. But how is this to be accomplished at a time when conditions are such—and this is an open secret—that our *roshei yeshiva* often feel compelled to discourage their *talmidim* from entering the rabbinate?

IT IS MY EARNEST conviction that the answer lies in Agudath Israel authorization and sponsorship of such shuls. With the well-deserved reputation of Agudath Israel for Torah steadfastness backing the young rabbis in these shuls—and I believe that these are rabbinical positions for vigorous young *bonei Torah* with initiative—these rabbinic positions would not constitute the *nesoyon* the rabbinate is now considered to be. The young rabbi would make it absolutely clear to his congregants what Agudah authorization means in terms of the religious conduct of the shul in order to forestall

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* In the *Yaakov Rosenheim Anthology* (Orthodox Library, New York, 1968).

any attempt to determine matters involving halocho by majority vote. Conversely, congregants as well as prospective congregants will know the kind of religious program they can expect from the shul.

The young rabbi would thus be spared the often horrendous pressures exerted by congregants for concessions, such as lowering or even removing the mechitza, etc., ad infinitum, and he would never have to fear that his livelihood would ever become dependent on such concessions.

FURTHERMORE, to bnei Torah who are entering the professions and looking for greater employment opportunities, the presence of an Agudah shul in an area would say that here is a community that has been opened for Torah living. It has a leader who is vitally concerned with the dissemination of Torah and besides already providing a proper shul, will in due course establish other religious institutions where none exist, such as a Day School (which Torah Umesorah would be happy to assist with, I'm sure).

It could also start the other way, with a group of bnei Torah moving en masse into a community, and bringing along one willing and qualified to be their rav and helping him to establish a shul.

Private Enterprise

What about the financial problems?—the shuls could be rabbi-owned in whole, or in partnership with Agudath Israel or financed entirely on the basis of an Agudath Israel loan from a fund specially established for that purpose. In Essex County, New Jersey, to cite a working precedent, those few Orthodox shuls which are rabbi-owned (they are literally private enterprises) are probably the only Orthodox shuls which have never been plagued by concession pressures. In matters of halocho, the rabbi's word has been final.

This doesn't mean that a large investment is necessary to establish a shul. At first, a comparatively inexpensive storefront furnished with wooden folding-chairs, a folding table, and a curtained partition for a mechitza could suffice. The oron ha'kodesh, sifrei Torah, siddurim and chumoshim, could perhaps be provided by Agudah on a rental basis. Once a sufficiently large membership is achieved, and that membership is sufficiently attached to their rabbi by virtue of his warmth and ahavas Yisroel, it will gladly help him to raise the funds for the purchase or construction of permanent quarters for the shul.

Another important financial problem is the rabbi's livelihood. Though the shul would very likely be an insufficient source of income at first—but probably not for too long a period—there are usually many opportunities for part-time employment in outlying areas, such as teaching in a Talmud Torah or Day School, or serving as a shochet or a mohel. Most im-

portant—the life of the rabbi in a small community usually affords ample opportunity for Torah study.

In the final analysis, the success of a shul of this type will depend mainly upon the calibre of its rabbi: his lomdus, his dedication to harbotzas ha'Torah, and, above all, his ahavas Yisroel. With Agudath Israel backing to give him confidence and the knowledge that he cannot lose his position, the rabbi would be free to use his capabilities to the fullest in his battle for Torah and Yiddishkeit. Can there be greater satisfaction or a more worthwhile ideal for any Orthodox Jew?

The very existence of these Agudah rabbis and shuls and their effect on our non-observant brethren, particularly the youth, would in a comparatively short time be profound enough to stimulate a drastic change in their sense of Jewish values. By presenting a living example, a true picture of authentic Torah living—more effective than the most strenuous polemical efforts—these Agudah rabbis and shuls would supply our uninitiated brethren with a new and authentic yardstick—and hopefully a critical outlook, this being the first step toward change—with which to evaluate the other "religious institutions" in the community and their leaders. Hopefully, this could counteract the distortion of Jewish teaching and create a demand for greater authenticity in Jewish life.

It could truly be the beginning of the road back to Yiddishkeit for the masses of our people. □



Avrohom Davis

The Pursuit of Mishna

A Fundamental Area of Torah Learning Goes Begging

Torah life has its clichés too—its myths that hang on. One of these myths has persisted through the centuries, and is still going strong: that learning Mishnayos is an occupation for little boys and old men. To many a Jew, “Mishnayos” conjures up a picture of a group of older men seated around a table with the rabbi up front, learning Mishnayos between Mincha and Ma’ariv. In the yeshiva it is just not the “thing” to learn: it lacks the challenge of Gemmorah to those who aspire to *lumdas*. As a result, so many who spend years in the finest yeshivos, are never introduced to the body of Mishna as an area of learning; the Mishna is something stumbled upon in the Gemmorah.

We don’t like to talk about it—most of all publicly—but most yeshiva-leit who are not in some area of work which requires daily learning, leave behind them in the Beis Medrash the routine of systematic daily learning on a serious level. They are caught up in the struggle of providing for growing families, and in some cases, participating in some form of communal work. They find it difficult or even impossible to maintain the spirited level of learning of their yeshiva years. The lively debates, the inquisitive and independent investigation of a *shevere Rambam* or a *K’tzos*—these have become only memories. The stimulation of a good *chavrusoh*, the heady atmosphere of a vibrant Beis Medrash—even the *kol Torah* that sounds to an outsider like “noise”—the challenge of a *pilpul shiur*, are fond but distant memories.

Having been trained in one “*derech*” of learning, the ben Torah finds himself unable to re-tool, to find a new way consonant with the practicalities of daily living. Rather than finding new techniques for keeping his hand in learning, many an ex-yeshiva bochur will

lapse into apathy, and lean on the rationales which in his younger years he would have violently rejected. It is in this context that it is well to take another look at the rich potential which lies in the study of Mishnayos as a systematic learning program.

A NEW EDITION of Mishnayos recently published in Israel is prefaced by a fascinating essay called לעולם לרוץ למשנה. *One Should Always Run to Mishna*, written by Rabbi Yeshiah Asher Zelig Margolies. The writer cites the preface to the classic Mishna commentary of Rabbenu Yom Tov Lipman of Prague, known as the *Tosfos Yom Tov*:

Rabbenu Ha’Kodosh, Reb Yehudah Ha’Nassi, who compiled and edited the Mishna taught: “Those who study only the Written Law have but little merit; those who study Mishna have merit and are rewarded; those who study Talmud—there is no greater merit. But . . . when he observed that everyone neglected Mishna for the study of Talmud he taught: Let one always pursue the study of Mishna more than Talmud.” (Baba Metzia, 33b)

Similarly, Rabbenu Ha’gadol, our master and teacher the Gaon Reb Yehuda of Prague (the Maharal), who spread Torah to the masses in such great measure through Talmud, nevertheless emphasized the teaching: “Yet always pursue the study of Mishna more than Talmud.” Scores of groups were formed—groups of great scholars who each day studied Mishnayos. This practice was divinely blessed, and it became an immutable procedure, not only in the community of Prague where it was instituted by the Maharal, but every community near and far practiced and accepted the institution of learning Mishnayos.

RABBI DAVIS is Director of Development of Agudath Israel of America.

Title-page of an edition of Mishna published in Venice in the 17th century.



The *Tosfos Yom Tov* points out that the words of the *Maharal* on this matter have even greater strength than those of *Rabenu Ha'Kodosh*, since many commentaries have since been published that explain the Mishna in the light of the Talmudic conclusions.

In his essay, Rabbi Margolies also quotes from the *Sheloh*:

Certainly today that we are privileged to have the commentaries of the Rambam and the Rav Bartenura, who expound the Mishnah according to the conclusions of the Talmud, in addition to stating the final halacha, the advantages of learning Mishna are great. The reason for the original preference of learning Talmud was because study

of the Mishna without Talmud could not achieve the purpose of teaching the statutes and laws . . . but now, because of the Rambam and Rav Bartenura, this has been remedied. Therefore, one's major occupation should be with Mishnayos, to learn and review it without limit or interruption. Fortunate is he who is privileged to be conversant with the six divisions of the Mishna and commits them to memory. He builds a ladder for his soul to rise ever higher since the letters of תשנה are those of נשמה.

THERE IS NOTHING one need add to the convincing arguments of these great masters, and they should impel everyone—even those who still manage to confront a Gemmorah each day—to set up a systematic program of learning Mishnayos. Nevertheless, there are some additional practical considerations that make the case for Mishnayos even stronger.

It is common to most human beings to derive joy from an endeavor carried through to a successful conclusion. Unfulfilled plans and aspirations are a source of pain and anguish. The learning of Mishnayos, apart from its intrinsic value, offers the soul-satisfying experience of completing a total unit of learning. (How painful it is to be engrossed in a complex *sugya* in Gemmorah and to be torn away from it, with the knowing question: "Will I ever get back to it—and if I do, can I pick up the threads where I left off?") Each Mishna is a self-contained unit. To explore a mishna with the help of the classic commentaries, is to have captured a complete section of Torah. The next mishna offers new challenges—a new unit of Torah that becomes part of the *neshomo*.

Systematic study of Mishna also opens up areas of Torah which normally only a chosen few manage to learn. How many yeshiva-leit are virtually unacquainted with *Z'raim*, *Kodshim* and *Taharos*?

The Sifri (Parshas Shoftim 161) declares:

THE STUDY OF MISHNA BRINGS ONE TO THE STUDY OF TALMUD; THE STUDY OF TALMUD BRINGS ONE TO THE FULFILLMENT [OF MITZVOS] WHICH IN TURN BRINGS ONE TO YIRAS SHOMAYIM.

What more can we ask for?

From the Pages of History

The Chofetz Chaim Reacts To a Letter to the Editor

IN THE WINTER OF 1929 THE CHOFETZ CHAIM ISSUED A PUBLIC STATEMENT CALLED *Elbonoh Shel Torah*, A DEGRADATION OF TORAH. THE FOLLOWING IS A FREE TRANSLATION OF HIS WORDS.

How everyone will shudder when they hear, as I just have, of the events in Vilna involving the Rabbinate. They have been arrogantly and shamelessly trampled under foot, and the foundations of Torah and Emunah have been breached.

It is commonly known that Vilna has for many years been the metropolis of Lita, with its Gedolei Torah and Torah leaders. Since the days of Ha'Gaon R' Shmuel—the last to serve as Av Beis Din—to this day, the Kehilah has been governed by a group of rabbis—Gedolei Torah—who have been the major source of guidance in the ways of Torah.

Now the Soton has brought about that the Kehilah has decided, by majority vote, to set aside the authority of the Rabbonim in matters of our Faith, and to subject them to the authority of one who is unworthy. How great is the misfortune that has befallen us, that the Torah is torn into factions by enemies from within and without, who subvert our people and seek to separate the People of G-d from His Torah and Mitzvoahs.

They have now declared open rebellion, undermining our sacred Faith, with the clear intent of profaning all that is Holy, and destroying the Rabbinate which is the fount of Torah.

We know too well what the Reformers did in Germany—we ourselves witnessed it—and the dire consequences: there is hardly a trace of Yiddishkeit left. This attack on the Rabbinate in Vilna is the beginning of the same process of Reform.

Therefore, brothers and friends, those who are concerned with the Word of G-d, and the survival of the Jewish people, we must strengthen ourselves and fight this terrible threat in every way possible. It is a sacred duty for everyone who still

nurtures *Yiras Ha'Shem* in his heart to publicly protest what has transpired in Vilna. This obligation is clearly stated in the *Sifri*:

"Do not be biased in judgment"—is an admonition to those who are responsible for selecting judges. Let them not say, here is a man who is strong or handsome, who has worldly knowledge, or other qualities unrelated to Torah and Yiras Shomayim, we will select him as a judge . . .

This is recorded by the Sefer Ha'mitzvoths and the Rambam as a violation of Torah law. It is also immoral and unjust to push aside a Beis Din of Geonei Yisroel who have served faithfully for so long.

Whoever has a hand in this abomination, will have to account for himself in this world and the next. . . .

Kislev, 5689 (1929)

IN TEVES OF THE SAME YEAR THE CHOFETZ CHAIM MADE PUBLIC
THE FOLLOWING LETTER.

I have been told that the newspaper Moment has published a letter to the editor, in which the writer expressed surprise that in my protest concerning the Vilna Rabbinate, I did not exercise care in the matter of loshon hora, machlokes, and publicly embarrassing a person—matters which I have, with the help of G-d, concerned myself all my life, and which must surely still be of concern to me. He therefore comes to the distorted conclusion that the protest was made against my own wishes, under the influence of others.

I therefore publicly declare that in matters involving the guarding of the Faith, it is a mitzvoh—a sacred duty, to do all that one can, and there is not the slightest fear of violation [of the laws of Loshon Horah] . . .

I should also like to make it clear, that any statement of whatever scope which appears over my signature is issued at my own initiative, and should be accepted as an authentic representation of my opinions. And I strongly resent that some choose to falsify the facts in order to confuse those who have confidence in me. I request that the press publish my original statement of protest together with this letter.

Grieving over the troubles of our people, and anxiously awaiting the Redemption, and the restoration of the glory of our holy Torah, I am,

—Yisroel Mair Ha'Kohen of Radin
Teves, 5689

BOOKS



The Jews of Austria, a collection of essays on the history of pre-1938 Austrian Jewry, edited by Joseph Fraenkel, was recently published by Vallentine-Mitchel in London. In the years since the end of World War II, numerous volumes have appeared dealing with the history of the great centers of Judaism in Europe that are no more. Unfortunately, most of these books in varying degrees, depending on the view of the author, lack the objectivity one might expect of works of this kind. The great majority of the authors are non-Orthodox, and even anti-Orthodox; as a result the image of Orthodox Jews and Orthodox Judaism presented to the reading public has been badly distorted, to say the least.

All this no longer comes as a surprise, and if this book were no better—and not worse—than others of its kind, we would have no reason to single it out for special attention. However, in *The Jews of Austria* the editor and the contributors have been guilty of glaring omissions that cannot be left uncorrected; their chutzpa in distorting historical facts cannot remain uncensured.

The various contributors to this anthology have taken up more than five hundred pages to recount the history of the Jews of Austria up to the time of the Anschluss in March 1938. They write of Austrian Jews in art, in music, in literature, in journalism, in medicine, in jurisprudence, and even of Austrian Jews in sports. There is very little, in fact, that seems to have been left out, except for the subjects we are about to discuss.

The authors have given us a detailed history of the marginal Jewish communities of Innsbruck and Klagenfurt, and of the Jewish population of Tyrol—which never numbered much more than two hundred souls, all told. Most of the Jews were completely, or almost completely, assimilated; I dare say that in all of Tyrol and Carinthia there was no more than one family that observed Shabbos. However, we vainly searched the book for facts about organized Orthodoxy in Vienna, for the story of the Shiffshul, of Agudath Israel. Inconceivable though this may be, it almost seems as if the handful of marginal Jews in Tyrol and Carinthia held more interest for the authors than the pious Jewish communities of the Burgenland, which numbered more than ten times as many men, women and children, and that the Maccabi teams of Graz and the Hakoah athletic club of Innsbruck loomed larger in their minds than the spiritual heritage of the Sheva Kehilos. For the sad truth is that while a goodly portion of the book is devoted to the indifferent Jews scattered through the

outlying Alpine provinces, there is hardly a word about the many thousands of their sincerely devout brothers in Vienna and nothing about the old Kehilos of Mattersdorf, Deutsch-Kreuz (Tzelem), Fraunkirchen and the other communities of the Burgenland—Kehilos which Jews today recall with pride and admiration.

IN ALL FAIRNESS, we must point out that the book accords a measure of justice to the sages of medieval Austria—the *Chachmei Vina*—like the *Or Zarua*, Rabbi Abraham Klausner, and the seventeenth-century luminaries such as the *Tosefos Yomtov* and Rabbi Gershom Ashkenasy. But it would appear that Orthodox Judaism in Austria ceased to exist with the beginning of the era of Reform and assimilation—at least as far as the authors of this volume indicate. For there is not one word about Rabbi Elozor Horowitz, no mention of Rabbi Zalman Spitzer's mighty struggle against Reform Judaism, his firm, uncompromising opposition to the liturgical changes made by the official *Kultusgemeinde* of Vienna, not to speak of the illustrious spiritual leaders just one generation removed from our own day—Rabbi Yeshaya Fuerst, Rabbi Joseph Baumgarten, and all the other Orthodox rabbis who were active in Vienna during the decades preceding the Anschluss.

THE BOOK DWELLS at considerable length on the Sephardic community which existed in Vienna from the eighteenth century. It was a dying community; its members were few, and they were largely alienated from traditional Judaism in their personal lives. Still, the authors seem to have found it sufficiently important to devote twenty pages to its customs and rituals, in such detail, that it appears a little ridiculous. On the other hand, there seems to have been no room at all in this history for an account of the Kehilla that rallied around the Shiffshul, its educational program, and many other Orthodox institutions like the orphanages of the Agudath Israel in Baden near Vienna, the hostel for transients maintained by Agudath Israel in Vienna, the Einheit Kosher Public Soup Kitchen, and, in general, the active communal life developed by the Orthodox Jews of Vienna.

It would appear as if the editor of *The Jews of Austria* made it a point to ignore Orthodoxy even where one would least expect him to do so. The book gives us a detailed report on the organization of the "illegal" transports of refugees from Austria to Eretz Yisroel, undertaken jointly by Agudath Israel in Vienna and the Revisionist party, soon after the Nazi annexation of Austria—a project which did not enjoy the support and sympathy of the general Zionists. But there again the author fails to drop so much as a hint of the role of the Agudah, without whose efforts the transports might well never have materialized.

What the book has to say of Nathan Birnbaum—and this includes the contribution by his son Shlomo—is nothing less than a gross distortion of history and, indeed, an insult to the memory of that illustrious baal teshuvah. The name of Nathan Birnbaum recurs in several places in the book, and the story of his life takes up some twenty pages. But the authors insist on referring to him by the appellation “Mathias Acher,” a pseudonym which Birnbaum completely discarded when he joined the ranks of Torah Jewry. There is a detailed report on Birnbaum’s “national autonomism,” and on various aspects of his early career such as his friendship and subsequent break with Theodore Herzl, but less than three lines were left to explain that, later on, Birnbaum was to write an article entitled “Gottes Volk” and to become a member—and eventually, secretary-general—of Agudath Israel. Reading those few words, added almost as an afterthought, one might think that this dramatic change in Birnbaum’s life had not been motivated by sincere conviction at all, but simply by the offer of a lucrative job. *The truth is that Birnbaum, father of the word “Zionism,” and second only to Herzl as the ideologist and leader of the Zionist movement, spurned the highest honors and the best-paid position the Zionist organization had to offer, because he had found his way back to Torah and had renounced secular nationalism for all time.* Shlomo Birnbaum would have better served his father’s memory had he not written his article about “Mathias Acher.”

confines himself to the dynasties of the Rebbes, saying not a word about Orthodoxy as a movement or about Agudath Israel in Galicia. There are just two lines about *Machzikei Hadas*, the organization of Orthodoxy during the nineteenth century.

After the Anschluss, all Jewish organizations in Austria were banned. Later on, three “official” Jewish organizations were to be permitted to function in Vienna—the *Kultusgemeinde*, the Zionist-sponsored Palestine Office, and Agudath Israel. But when the Jews of the Burgenland were expelled from their homes and streamed into Vienna, those organizations were still forbidden to carry on their work. And so a committee of Orthodox Jews from the Shiffshul stepped into the breach and did what they could for the refugees—most of them destitute and in urgent need for help. This last fact is ignored just as pointedly as was the extensive relief work subsequently carried on by Agudath Israel in Vienna until 1941, which enabled thousands of Jews to emigrate and supplied the emigrants with kosher food until they could leave.

The publication of the book has been made possible by the Claims Conference, which is no wonder. It is a sad fact that so little of the funds of the Claims Conference has been appropriated for traditional religious literature.

While *The Jews of Austria* contains much information of historical interest, it must strike the unbiased reader as a prime example of how petty partisan jealousies and hatreds can lead to distortions of historical fact. We would even go so far as to say that the editor’s tactic of arbitrarily ignoring the role of Orthodoxy in the history of Austrian Jewry betokens much more intolerance and hostility toward Orthodox

THE ONE CHAPTER IN *The Jews of Austria* to go into somewhat more detail on the subject of Orthodox Jews is Jacob Heschel’s essay on the history of the Chasidim and the Chasidic Rebbes of Galicia. However, Heschel



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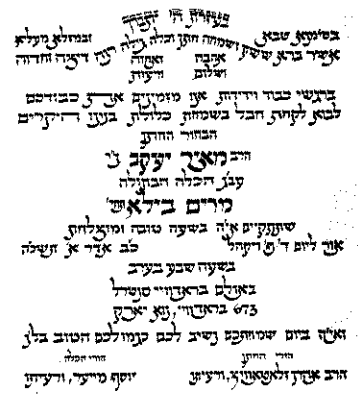
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CHARLES RICHTER

JEW'S OF HAMBURG

by William Aron

New York, 1967 / American Jewish Committee of
Hamburg Jews / distrib. by P. Feldheim / \$6.00

This book does not lay claim to being a history of Hamburg Jewry, but represents rather a personal memoir in which the author re-lives his early years in Hamburg, re-visits its institutions, and pays tribute to some of its Jewish personalities. Such a very personal volume might appear to be of little interest to the general Jewish reader—yet in reality it is a fascinating memorial to the incredible period in Jewish history through which we passed so recently and which has already paled in the minds of our younger generation. I do not only refer, say, to the account of Norbert Masur's legendary meeting with Himmler (pp. 24-29), or the lists of deportations, all the more heartrending because of their inhuman monotony (pp. 43-50), but

the constant refrain "died *al kidush Hashem*" which recurs throughout the book. While the author is rather indiscriminate in his evaluation of some of the personalities that he mentions, his work gains great value by the vignettes of such great men as Rabbi Yitzhak Eisik Halevi (author of *Doros Harishonim*) and others of the spiritual leaders of the community. More than half the volume is in Hebrew, the rest in English; a bibliography and some very interesting photographs are included. □

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second looks at the jewish scene

B'nai Brith and Tefilin

B'nai Brith is a secular Jewish organization with a huge membership based on its fraternal nature, and the attraction of its defense arm, ADL, the Anti-Defamation League. B'nai Brith also sponsors BBYO—the B'nai Brith Youth Organization. BBYO's program is based on the secular approach of its parent organization, with a sprinkling of "Jewish content" which varies from group to group. There is generally little contact between BBYO and the Orthodox community.

But at least for one day, at a regional convention in St. Paul, Minnesota, an arm was extended to



BBYO by Orthodoxy and two hundred teenage boys extended their arms to receive tefilin provided for them by the *Merkos L'Inyonei Chinuch*, the educational arm of the Lubavitcher movement. This reaching-out to B'nai Brith youth was

part of a campaign initiated by the Lubavitcher Rebbe to encourage the use of tefilin which "facilitates the unity of mind and heart, and signifies the submission of one's actions to the Almighty, as well as the rule of intellect over emotion."

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Looking For a Tent Man at The International Synagogue

In a rare example of real journalism in the Jewish press, Jean Herschaft in the *Jewish Post and Opinion* (3/29/68) has taken a second look at the International Synagogue at Kennedy Airport one year after its gala dedication. Readers may recall that the I.S. was built under the auspices of the New York Board of Rabbis, a group—as *The New York*

Times describes them—“representing Reform, Conservative and a significant number of the Orthodox Rabbinate in the city.” Funds for the I.S. were raised in an interfaith fund-raising drive.

Critics of the International Synagogue—we number ourselves among them—were disturbed at the concept of a “three-wing Synagogue,” which might all too easily be imitated on a communal level. While it is impossible to be certain of what motivates any project in Jewish life, there is at least the strong feeling* that the major stimulus was the previous existence of Catholic and Protestant chapels; the theory being that whatever “they” have “we” must have too, whether we need it or not.

It now appears, from the *Post's*

report, that very little is happening at I.S.—there are “daily” services once a week; on Sundays members of the New York Board “take turns as hosts to the many groups of visitors who come to view as well as to pray”; occasional groups “conduct their own minyons”; and last Chanukah, airport employees held a party for their children. The executive director of the Board, who supplied this information to the *Post* reporter, also noted wistfully that many travelers have used the meditation room. The part-time rabbi of I.S., according to the *Post*, refused to discuss I.S. at all, except to say that he thought that an article on I.S. “was premature” at this time. What the report adds up to is that huge sums of money have been spent on a project which was apparently not needed, and experience has born out what was previously conjecture.

IN GOVERNMENT or private industry, such a project would be quietly abandoned, and chalked up as a loss due to poor judgement—but not in Jewish life. Watch for a new I.S. fund-raising campaign to collect money to drum up a need for a project which was not needed to begin with, and which flaunts the beliefs of many Orthodox Jews to boot. □

* We have just learned that Orthodox participation in I.S. was justified by the claim that the absence of a Jewish chapel would be a “Chilul Hashem.”

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The Wearing of the Green

"Ground-breaking ceremonies for Park Synagogue's million-dollar, 2000-seat Kangasser Memorial Auditorium will start at 11:45 a.m. on Sunday. Children from the synagogue's classes carrying green banners in recognition of St. Patrick's

Day will add a festive note. The 2500-member congregation, largest in Conservative Judaism in the country, begins its Centennial Year in June. . . ."

—THE CLEVELAND PRESS
Friday, March 15, 1968

"The Most Sanitary Method"

AN ARTICLE in the April, 1968, issue of *Dun's Review*, a business magazine, describes the recent successes of Charles Call, president of Ward Foods. A perceptive reader called to our attention the following sentence, which needs no comment:

In California, where its American Sheep Co. is the major producer of lamb, veal and beef products, virtually the

entire kill is processed under rabbinical supervision because, Call contends, it is "the most sanitary method we can employ."



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Letters to the Editor



Believing and Doing

To the Editor:

I was distressed by the three-way controversy that took place recently in the pages of *The Jewish Observer* between Rabbis Weinberg, Spero, and Eisemann. While I fully recognize and respect the basic . . . and deep concern of each of these learned rabbis, may I be forgiven if I feel that, in a sense, a good deal of the differences of opinion may amount to a tempest in a teapot. The elevated discussions seem to lose sight of the underlying realities of everyday life—in any age.

May I suggest the two basic ingredients, the sine qua non for maintaining a vigorous, even aggressive, Jewish life anywhere, especially in America. They are:

1. An organized Jewish community practicing *Yiddishkeit*, by which we mean one containing all the necessary Jewish institutions, functions, and homes for observing the mitzvos.

2. Mature adults and parents, practicing *Menschlichkeit*, who can serve as examples of faith, warmth, and understanding for their offspring and the younger generation, in general.

Without these two primary elements, no efforts toward enhancing Jewish life will be long-lasting.

IT IS TRUE that wealth may affect individuals. Of course, it is not the wealth as such but rather the need, in order to obtain and maintain such riches, to have commerce and

communication with non-Jews, which, in turn, makes it difficult to continue one's religious practices. Secondly, the rich person, whether self-made or heir, tends to look on himself as unique and different, entitled to special privileges and allowed certain dispensations. (In fact, even yeshivos recognize this unspoken principle, since they are quite willing—as are most religious institutions—to accept funds from whatever sources.) Unfortunately, these individuals, from their positions of wealth, wield a power within the Jewish community and thereby become poor examples for our youth to follow.

In addition, we must realize that in every age and in all lands there do arise persons, so peculiarly equipped (in the positive sense of the word) and so driven, that they focus on this single facet of culture or of life—be it art, science, music writing, etc.—that they sacrifice all else of worth in existence, including their religious faith. These individuals are to be pitied rather than condemned; but, they are few.

IN SUM, and this is a prime principle too often not considered in Jewish life, a person does NOT do what he believes; he “believes” what he does. It is his way of life, his daily practices, his physical and social contacts, the ways and places he spends his time—all these will declare what his faith and belief are and what direction he will continue.

Intellectual knowledge, in and of itself, never changed anyone; it only plucked those that were ripe to be

plucked — through parental and communal mishandling.

DR. BENJAMIN GOODNICK
Philadelphia, Pa.

Agudah and Israel

To the Editor:

After receiving the Jacob Rosenheim Memorial Anthology, I think it is no more than right to publicly applaud its editor Joseph Friedenson, editor of *Dos Yiddishe Vort* for the great service he has rendered to Torah Jewry by its publication.

Of special interest is the clear, positive stand of Agudath Israel towards the State of Israel in a declaration of Agudath Israel World Organization headed by Jacob Rosenheim in Kislev 5707, on page 47 of the Anthology. It reads, in part: . . . *The World Agudath Israel sees as a historic event, the decision of the nations of the world to return to us after 2,000 years a portion of the Holy Land, there to establish a Jewish State and to encompass within its borders the banished and scattered members of our people . . .*

. . . *This historic event must bring home to every Jew the realization that “The Almighty has brought this about” in an act of Divine Providence which presents us with a great task and a grave test. . . .*

. . . *While we are sorely grieved that the Land has been divided and sections of the Holy Land have been torn asunder—especially Yerushalayim, the Holy City; while we still yearn for the aid of Moshiach Tzidkeinu, who will bring us total redemption; we nevertheless see the Hand of Providence offering us the opportunity to prepare for the Geulah Sh’leimah, if we will walk into the future as G-d’s People. . . .*

It is this document and many other writings which makes the anthology a great book and a most important contribution to the history of Torah Jewry.

TOVIYA LASDUN
New York, New York

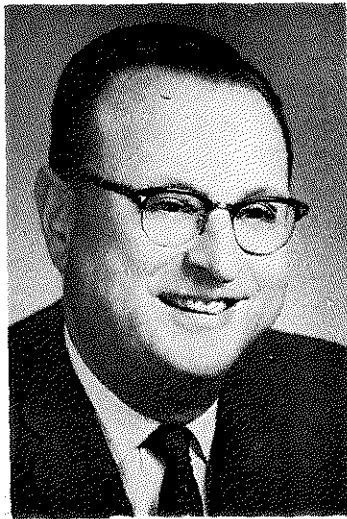
The Jewish Observer / April, 1968

News of Agudath Israel

ORTHODOX ELITE TO MARK 46TH ANNIVERSARY OF AGUDATH ISRAEL

One thousand persons, including the elite of American Orthodoxy, will mark the 46th anniversary of Agudath Israel of America with a dinner in the Grand Ballroom of the Hotel Commodore in New York City on Sunday evening, May 12th. Participants from every part of the United States and Canada will make this event a huge demonstration for the ideals of authentic Judaism which stimulated the creation of the world movement of Agudath Israel over a half century ago.

For the first time, awards bearing the names of famous Torah leaders will be



Irving Stone

given at the dinner. Three recipients have been chosen for their distinctive service.

The *Hagoan Reb Aharon Kotler Memorial Award* for distinguished service to Torah will be presented to Mr. IRVING I. STONE of Cleveland for his benefactions to Torah institutions, and particularly for making possible the establishment of Kiryat Telshe-Stone in Israel, the first Torah educational complex in the Holy Land linked with an American yeshiva.

The *Moreinu Yaakov Rosenheim Memorial Award* for distinguished service to Agudath Israel will be presented to Mr.

JULIUS KLUGMANN, a vice-president of the organization and a youthful veteran of many years of devoted work for the movement.

Mr. MOSHE BRAUNSTEIN, a prominent Torah activist in the Bronx, will receive

the *Reb Elimelech Tress Memorial Award*, which is being presented to one of the *Shearis Hapleitah* who has performed exemplary service for Torah.

A beautifully illustrated journal is being published in conjunction with the dinner. Mr. FRANK H. KLEIN, distinguished member of the Finance Cabinet of Agudath Israel is serving as journal chairman.

REPORT MATZOH PARCELS ARRIVE BEFORE PESACH

The national headquarters of Agudath Israel of America received certified reports from the Agudah office in Zurich that all the matzoh parcels shipped to areas where this service was most needed were distributed before Pesach. This completed another phase of the annual activity of the American Agudah organization to provide Mo'os-Chitim help in a discreet fashion to communities which are in dire need of such assistance.

HUGE BUILDING PROGRAM UNDER WAY AT CAMP BNOS

A huge construction program is in full swing at Camp Bnos, and when the season opens on June 27th a number of new buildings will have been completed. The largest of these buildings will be a new fully-equipped Social Hall, which will make possible an expanded program of day and evening activities for the campers.

Camp Bnos for girls, in Liberty, New York, is sponsored as a non-profit educational project by Agudath Israel of America. The boys camp, Camp Agudah in Ferndale, is also undergoing a complete refurbishing process during the Spring months.

Registration for Camp Agudah and Camp Bnos at the city office at 5 Beckman Street, is expected to close shortly, due to the huge demand from applicants throughout the country.

SIYUM MISHNAYOS WINNER MEMORIZED 1,850 MISHNOS

The winner of the national *Mishnayos B'al Peh* (from memory) contest, who had memorized 1,850 Mishnayos, young KALMEN ROSENGARTEN, received his award at the Siyum Mishnayos dinner sponsored by Pirchei Agudath Israel of America on March 23rd at the Bais Yaakov of Boro Park. Over one thousand boys from seven states assembled

at this unusual gathering, where admission was only by demonstrating that a section of Mishnayos had been committed to memory.

This year's study of Mishnayos was in memory of ELIMELECH TRESS, of blessed memory, the unforgettable leader of Agudath Israel, who was eulogized by Rabbi JOSHUA SILBERMINTZ. Rabbi GEDALIA SCHORR, Rosh Yeshiva of Torah Vodaas and Bais Medrosh Elyon, was the guest speaker of the evening, which was chaired by Rabbi YEHUDAH OELBAUM. The *hadran* on the completion of the annual Mishnayos Torah program was said by YITZCHOK MANDELCORN of Pittsburgh.

The famed Pirchei choir, led by Rabbi ELI TEITELBAUM, rendered a selection of melodies from the Third Pirchei Record, which will be released this month. The national Mishnayos contest and Siyum Mishnayos is sponsored by Pirchei Agudath Israel as an educational medium to encourage youngsters to intensify their knowledge of Torah, and to encourage them to reach out for higher goals of Torah learning. □

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