Before the Storm:

MEMORIES OF A LOST WORLD

Rabbi Shlomo Wahrman

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By **Rabbi Shlomo Wahrman**

Before the Storm:

Memories of a lost world

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הסכמת

הרב הגאון מוהר"ר פנחס הירשפרונג

(שליט"א) [זצ"ל]

ראש הרבנים במונטריאל

ב"ה

הנני בזה להגיד לאדם ישרו ה"ה הרב הגאון המפורסם חו"ב בכל חדרי תורה מ' שלמה וואהרמן שליט"א חובר חבורים מחוכמים וכבר הדפיס חמשה חבורים אשר ראוהו גדולים ושבחוהו.

כעת חשקה נפשו להוציא לאור את זכרונותיו מימי המלחמה ולהדפיס מה שעשו הנאצים ימ"ש לאחב"י, ואע"פ שכבר נדפס קצת מה זה שעשה אותו העמלק ימ"ש. דבר זה מצוה מדאורייתא לקיים זכור את אשר עשה לך עמלק – ובעל יון מצולה הדפיס ג"כ אודות זה (על הגזירות הנוראות שנגזרו על היהודים בשנת ת"ח).

ולזאת חוב קדוש לספר למען ידעו הדורות הבאים את מעשה התעתועים של הנאצים ימ"ש והעולם כולו ידעו מזה ולא עשו שום מחאה.

הבה ונקוה כי הקב"ה ינקום את נקמתנו וישלם להנאצים שתהי' להם מפלה במהרה דידן – אמן.

פנחס הירשפרונג

עש"ק פ' חיי שרה תנש"א לפ"ק

מי יתן ראשי מים ועיני מקור דמעה ואבכה יומם ולילה את חללי בת עמי (ירמיה ח: כג).

RABBI MOSHE GOTTESMAN
Dean

בס"ד

May 2002

FOR RABBI WAHRMAN - INTRODUCTION

During the many years of our association, Rabbi Shlomo Wahrman, the Rosh Hayeshiva of HANC, and a dear personal friend, always enthralled me with stories and anecdotes about the Jewish community of Leipzig. He was a young boy when he was forced to endure the horror of Kristallnacht, but the experience made an indelible impression on him and affected the rest of his life. Each year, when he spoke at assemblies at school about that period of his life, our students reacted with compassion and deep emotion. I was, therefore, extremely pleased to hear that Rabbi Wahrman had written and is publishing the stories of his city, Leipzig, from 1232 to 2002.

I know this book will be a welcome addition to the libraries and reading lists in Jewish communities throughout the world. Our students and faculty at HANC, as well as students across the country, will be fascinated with the story of Rabbi Wahrman's life and his community. He has emerged victorious. As an outstanding educator he has succeeded in cheating death by bringing the light of Torah to generations of Jewish children. I wish him and his dear wife, Rebetzin Sarah Wahrman, many years of good health and much nachas from their family.

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May 24, 2002

Rabbi Wahrman
147-55 76th Road
Kew Gardens Hills, NY 11367

Dear Rabbi Wahrman:

I am most pleased to learn that you are about to publish an extremely important book dealing with the history and story of the Jewish community in Leipzig.

Leipzig was a city in which Jewish life was vibrant and thriving. There were Synagogues, Chassidic Shtiebels, as well as other communal institutions without which Jewish life anywhere cannot function.

All this vanished with the advent of the Nazi Regime in Germany.

To the best of my knowledge no one has hitherto attempted to record the rich history of what Leipzig meant to the Jewish people in pre-Hitler times.

You have undertaken an enormous task and deserve credit for rebuilding on paper that important period in Jewish Germany. Tehilim says לדור אחרון יספר לה' *"So that you narrate the story to later generations". By writing this volume you fulfilled the obligation alluded to in that verse.*

I have had the opportunity to read the introduction and found it inspiring and fascinating.

Above all I want to express my admiration not only for your scholarship and for the tremendous effort you have expended in the field of Chinuch and guidance for our young generation but also for the time that you have taken to write this very important book.

We all owe you a debt of gratitude and wish you success in this endeavor.

Most sincerely yours,

Rabbi Fabian Schonfeld

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Introduction

The city of Leipzig is situated in East Central Germany, in the northwestern corner of the province of Saxony. Jews have been known to reside there since the early 13th century, and a community-supported synagogue already existed at that time.

There is ample documentation available of the anti-Semitism that was rampant throughout the almost 800 years of Jewish life in the city. Hatred and prejudiced hostility were commonplace, as discrimination and enmity towards Jews was deeply ingrained within the very heart of the German population. During most periods of their life in Leipzig, the Jews were treated as second-class citizens, and equal rights were generally not extended to them.

Since my family resided in Leipzig during the 1930s, I can attest to the fact that, even during the Nazi era, when persecutions reached their peak and animosity towards the Jews was climbing steadily, Jewish religious life continued apparently unimpeded. As a youngster, I vividly remember Leipzig as a city where *Yiddishkeit* blossomed. Synagogues were generally filled to capacity and Torah study classes were readily available at all hours of the day.

I remember the Leipzig of my youth, where *Yiddishkeit** was felt in the very atmosphere. Anyone who observed the scene on the Nordstrasse on any given Friday and noticed all the hustle and bustle could readily conclude that it was *Erev Shabbat*. On Friday, all the food stores were filled with customers doing their last minute shopping for *Shabbat*. A pushcart peddler, selling fruits and vegetables, would appear each Friday on the corner of the Eberhardtstrasse and the Lomühlgasse and many housewives would come out hunting for bargains. People could be seen carrying baking pans with kneaded dough shaped into *challot*. Since many families did not possess their own baking ovens, these pans were taken either to the Schmeidler or the Scheinowitz bakeries for professional baking. All day Friday, one could see men with towels under their arms heading for the *mikvah*. Everyone seemed to be preparing for the *Shabbat*.

In the summer of 1980, I returned to my hometown. Even though World War II had ended 35 years earlier, the results of the Allied bombings were still clearly visible in this Communist stronghold. I recognized the narrow streets and alleys, many of which had been completely obliterated by the Allied air forces, and I recognized the now-dilapidated buildings that had comprised the old Jewish neighborhood in the vicinity of the Hauptbahnhof. Physically, at least, the city was still recognizable.

However, the city was now devoid of any Jewish content. Its Jewish inhabitants had been barbarously massacred; only 54 Jews remained. Jewish organizations and community facilities had vanished. Only the *Gemeinde* offices on the Löhrstrasse, the

*) see Glossary for definitions of italicized terms.

Brodyer Shul, the cemeteries, and several memorial plaques scattered around town remained. They served as lone reminders of a once-flourishing community.

Although I had expected to be confronted with such conditions, I was nevertheless heartbroken. I shed many tears during my two-day visit to my hometown as I compared the Leipzig that had existed in the 1930s to the Leipzig that greeted me in 1980. I realized that the Leipzig of my youth had been completely obliterated, and could no longer be located on the Jewish map. It has simply ceased to exist. A total spiritual *churban* had been made manifest throughout the city. Here in Leipzig, my sister sadly observed, Hitler—*yemach shemo*—had achieved complete success. For all practical purposes, Leipzig had indeed become *Judenrein*.

I have always felt that one of Leipzig's former residents would eventually record the history and the *churban* of Jewish Leipzig, so that its memory could be preserved for all future generations. Unfortunately, this did not come to pass. I perused the indices of many Holocaust publications, and only once did I find any reference to Leipzig. Attempting to portray the savagery of the Nazi secret police (the *Gestapo*), that author relates that, during the morning following *Kristallnacht*, several Nazi officers entered the third floor apartment of a wealthy Jewish family to search for valuable art treasures. When they were confronted by a small barking dog, they simply threw the dog out the window. Miraculously, the dog did not die on the spot, only sustaining many broken bones as it landed on the pavement. I found no other reference to Leipzig in any of the books at my disposal.

I was greatly disappointed. Is that all of any significance that transpired in Leipzig? Will Leipzig be remembered throughout

history solely because of this incident? Will Leipzig's positive role and contributions in the arena of Torah remain buried forever in the graveyard of history? In a frustrated and emotionally depressed frame of mind, I presented my conundrum to my esteemed *Rebbi*, my mentor, the renowned *Gaon Horav* Eliezer Silver of Cincinnati.



R. Eliezer Silver

R. Silver suggested that I follow the guidelines set forth by the great scholar Hillel, who taught, "In a place where there are no men, strive to be a man." (Avot Ch. 2).

Hillel was one of the most humble people of his time (Shabbat 30b-31a). Yet, when the hour called for it, he allowed the community of Jerusalem to appoint him, an immigrant from Babylon, as their *nasi*, their head, rather than any of their own leaders (Pesachim 66a). Can such actions be reconciled?

R. Silver explained that to be humble does not mean that you refuse to appraise yourself realistically; nor does it require you to reject responsibilities and rule out positions of leadership. Moshe was the most humble individual on the face of the earth (Bamidbar 12:3), yet he led his people and rebuked and exhorted them whenever it became necessary. As a humble person faces up to his weaknesses, he should also appraise his strengths and his capacities. A humble person is not one who disparages his abilities and deceives himself of his true talents, but one who accepts his

leadership qualifications and lives up to his responsibilities. Sometimes the situation calls for a man who will stand up to the group, for the strong and adamant person who will say no! Where there is no man, strive to be a man.

R. Silver suggested that since no one has, as yet, undertaken the holy task of recording the history and the *churban* of Jewish Leipzig, I should be the one to accept this assignment. Despite the fact that I was a mere youngster when we emigrated from Germany, he nevertheless assured me that I could assemble much information from an exhaustive research effort. He himself would be able to assist me, by revealing new insights into the lives of such prominent *Gedolim* as R. Shim'on Hurvitz, R. Moshe Rogosnitzky, and R. Dovid Feldman. In addition, R. Silver suggested that I add my own personal experiences as I glance back through my childhood years. This, he felt, would undoubtedly add color and flavor to my presentation. Such a contemplated work is indeed essential, if only for historic purposes. In addition, it would also serve as a fitting memorial for a Jewish community that has perished.

"Remember the days of old; consider the years of each generation." (Devarim 32:7). These two Biblical statements are closely linked with one another. The Torah bids us to remember the days of yore, with all their happenings, both happy and sad; with all their successes and failures. The education of our children and our own spiritual reinforcement make it imperative that we articulate and repeatedly retell the history of Jewry. Not only of the tragedies should we speak, but also of the glory and richness of that great authentic civilization, the beauty and vigor of a dynamic Jewish world. Thus we have a vital and educative duty to fulfill in our day. Only by learning from the past is it possible to evaluate all the

experiences of the present, to put today in its proper perspective and to live a life of *Kiddush Hashem*--a life that brings honor to the name of *Hashem* in the present-day world. This, R. Silver reiterated, was clearly my obligation.

As a result of the energetic and powerful endorsement by a *gadol* of such stature, I eventually proceeded to put my thoughts into writing. I concentrated mainly on the Holocaust years, 1933-1939, years during which I still resided in Leipzig and was able to observe the tragic events firsthand. As a live eyewitness, I reported in great detail about the dark clouds that slowly but surely began to gather upon the horizon, about the sudden deportation of the Polish Jews, and about *Kristallnacht*, the orgy of arson, property destruction, and murder of Jews at a rate yet unprecedented in Nazi Germany. My family was deeply affected by these atrocities, and suffered enormously throughout these ordeals.

When I approached my good friend R. Meir Zlotowitz, the editor of Mesorah Publications, during the planning stages of this book and outlined its purpose to him, he immediately recognized its merits and encouraged me to commence with this project. At all times, I could count on his total cooperation and his expert advice. The co-editor, R. Nosson Sherman, reviewed the entire manuscript and offered many valuable suggestions. The book, Lest We Forget—Growing up in Nazi Leipzig, was eventually published and promoted by Mesorah Publications in the spring of 1991.

It is a distinct honor to be associated with men of such noted stature, who, through their many literary publications, are constantly spreading the words of genuine Torah among the masses. They are perhaps the greatest disseminators of *Hashem's* words today. I hereby extend to them my most sincere thanks and gratitude for

permitting me to join the ranks of Artscroll/Mesorah contributors. May *Hashem* grant that they continue in their valiant efforts to promote authentic Torah and *Yiddishkeit* for many more years to come.

Throughout the years, the world-renowned *Gaon*, R. Pinchos Hirschprung, the Chief Rabbi of Montreal, constantly reminded me of my obligation to publish a volume relating my experiences during the dark days of the Holocaust. The *Gaon* himself had published such a book relating his own experiences under the Nazi regime. His ever-inspiring words certainly went a long way in motivating me to tell my story.

When I finally complied with his suggestion and Artscroll Publications published my book on this topic, R. Hirschprung kept reminding me that my responsibilities in this area are far from over. He urged me to work on a new volume, this time to relate the history of Jewish Leipzig. He fully agreed with R. Silver that such a work is indeed essential.



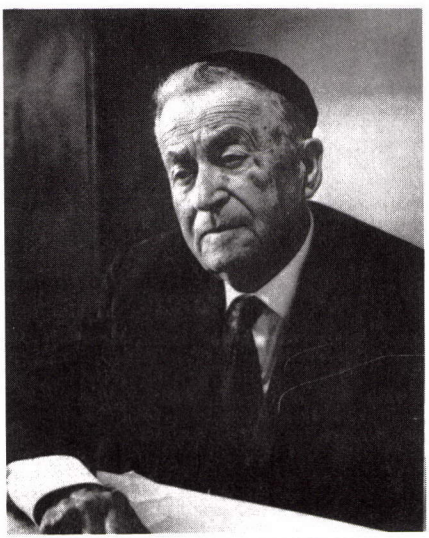
R. Dr. Yosef Burg

Rabbi Dr. Yosef Burg resided in Leipzig for many years. He had received his *smichah* (his Rabbinic ordination) from the eminent *Gaon*, R. Yechiel Yaakov Weinberg, the dean of the Hildesheimer *Bet Hamidrash L'Rabbanim* in Berlin, and he earned his Ph.D. at the University of Leipzig. For a number of years, he served as an instructor at R. Carlebach's *Höhere Israelitische*

Schule in Leipzig. He was a leader in the World Mizrachi Organization, and thus a prime mover among the Religious Zionists. For more than 40 years, he was a member of the Israeli Knesset. In addition, he headed several cabinet ministries in the government of Israel. He was a highly regarded and admired individual whose reputation was second to none.

Several years ago, I was privileged to meet Dr. Burg at the *Heichal Shlomo* Synagogue in Jerusalem. I introduced myself as a former Leipziger. When I presented him with my latest book, *Orot HaShabbat*, an analytical discussion of various topics of Talmudic law pertaining to the *Shabbat*, he graciously accepted it with thanks, and inquired about my family in Leipzig. I soon discovered that he actually knew my aunt, Hinde Kaufteil, personally. We spoke at great length that afternoon.

At one point, Dr. Burg stated emphatically that Leipzig was quite a city. "Unfortunately," he added, "not many are aware of that." Leipzig was blessed with numerous talented writers, many of whom survived the Holocaust, yet none had seen fit to record its Jewish history. He singled out former Leipzig resident Shmuel Yosef Czaczkes, better known under his pseudonym S.Y. Agnon, who in 1966 was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature. He even acknowledged his own shortcomings in this area.



Reb Schmuel Yosef Czaczkes, Shai Agnon

Despite his many other responsibilities, he avowed, he should have written something about Leipzig as it was then.

He then urged me to write such a book, for historic purposes rather than for monetary gain. The book, he felt, was essential and long overdue. He even offered to write an introduction—an approbation of my work. I should not shirk my responsibilities in this area, he reiterated.

It should be noted that several such books in the German language have been written of late. Leipzig's *Carlebach Stiftung*, an organization founded by gentiles for the purpose of recording the history of the Jews in Leipzig, and publicizing their many accomplishments in the growth and development of the city, has sponsored the publication of these books. They are beautifully written, extremely informative, and contain a wealth of information. However, these books generally stress the cultural, the economic, and the secular, rather than the religious aspects of the Jewish community. This work, on the other hand, will attempt to emphasize the spiritual character intrinsic to Leipzig. Its focus will be mainly on communal and religious life.

Mrs. Leah Levy's efforts for this publication should receive special mention. When, during a visit to our home, she noticed the manuscript for this work, she immediately volunteered to reproduce it on her computer for no charge. At first, I hesitated to accept her magnanimous offer, realizing that she is fully occupied raising three young children. When she insisted, however, I reluctantly turned the manuscript over to her.

Leah's talents have immensely enhanced the book; her invaluable suggestions were always on target. As a true friend, she worked

beyond the call of duty and her unbounded enthusiasm for this project greatly inspired me. For all of this, I am most grateful. May *Hashem* bless her and her husband Shlomo, a former student of mine, so that they will derive much *nachas* from their children and continue to enjoy happy and healthy lives of Torah for many more years to come.

I would like to take this opportunity to express my deep appreciation to my dear longtime friend, Horav Moshe Gottesman, the Dean of the Hebrew Academy of Nassau County. R. Gottesman's endeavors and achievements in the area of *chessed* are widely known and have been lauded by many *gedolim*. He personifies *chessed* with dedication and sincerity. On a personal level, he has voluntarily assumed the burden of helping with the publication of my *sefarim* by obtaining financial assistance from his many close friends. In addition, he has constantly encouraged and motivated me to continue my efforts in the world of Torah and *chessed*.

Once, R. Yochanan b. Zakkai was leaving Jerusalem, followed by R. Yehoshua. As they approached the site of the destroyed *Beit Hamikdash*, R. Yehoshua remarked, "Woe unto us, for we have lost the source from which emanates atonement for our sins." R. Yochanan responded, "My son, let this not be a cause for your anguish, since we have at our disposal yet another, 'equal,' source for atonement, the performance of *chessed*. As it is written in Hoshea (Ch.6), *Hashem* desires *chessed*, rather than sacrifices" (Avot D'Reb Nattan, Ch. 4). *Chessed* is one of the pillars upon which the world rests (Avot, Ch. 1).

May *Hashem* bring an abundance of blessings upon R. Gottesman and his family, so that they will be granted long life,

good health, and *nachas* from their many offspring. May he continue to spread the words of Torah and *chessed* among the masses of Israel.

I would like to express my most sincere thanks and appreciation to my dear friend and colleague, Horav Binyamin Schubert, the *menahel* of the high school at the Hebrew Academy of Nassau County. He has always motivated me in many ways, and has participated actively in the publication of my *sefarim*. May *Hashem* grant him and his wife many more long and healthy years, and continued nachas from all of their children and grandchildren.

I would like to express my most profound gratitude to a dear friend who chooses to remain anonymous. I can unequivocally state that my latest works would not have been published without his generous support. As a dedicated follower of the Rebbe of Gur, he has embraced the most cherished character traits of Chassidut. He is a man saturated with love and compassion for his fellow Jews, and many have been warmed by the luminous and radiant glow of his personality. He is surely a ba'al midot of the highest rank. May Hashem shower his blessings upon him and his wife, and provide them with much nachas from their children and grandchildren, so that he may continue in his holy mission on behalf of our people.

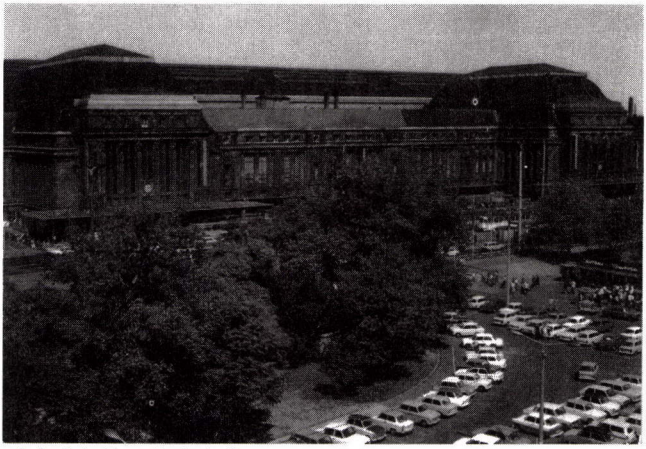
I would like, at this time, to express my most heartfelt thanks to my dear wife Sarah, without whose efforts and support this book would not have been written. Her constant encouragement greatly inspired me and went a long way in motivating me to produce this work.

May *Hashem* grant that we continue to derive much *nachas* from our children, Yaakov Elimelech and Faygie, Yisrael Shmuel and

Miryam, Chaim Dov and Breindy; from our grandchildren, Shavie Shaindel and Shlomo, Miriam Chanah and Avi, Sima Esther and Yehudah Z'ev, Yosef Yehudah Aryeh, Avigail Rivkah, Shoshana Nechama, Yaakov Avrohom Note, Fraida Rivkah; and from our great-grandchildren, Rivkie, Avigail, Allegria Yehudis, Devorah, Shim'on, Zvi, Shim'on, Yisroel, and Yitzchak Moshe. May we merit that Torah remain forever a way of life for our family, in fulfillment of the Navi's prophecy: "'My spirit which is upon you and My words that I have placed in your mouth will not be withdrawn from your mouth, nor from the mouth of your offspring, nor from the mouth of your offspring's offspring,' said *Hashem*, 'from this moment and forever.'" (Yeshayahu 59:21).

Leipzig

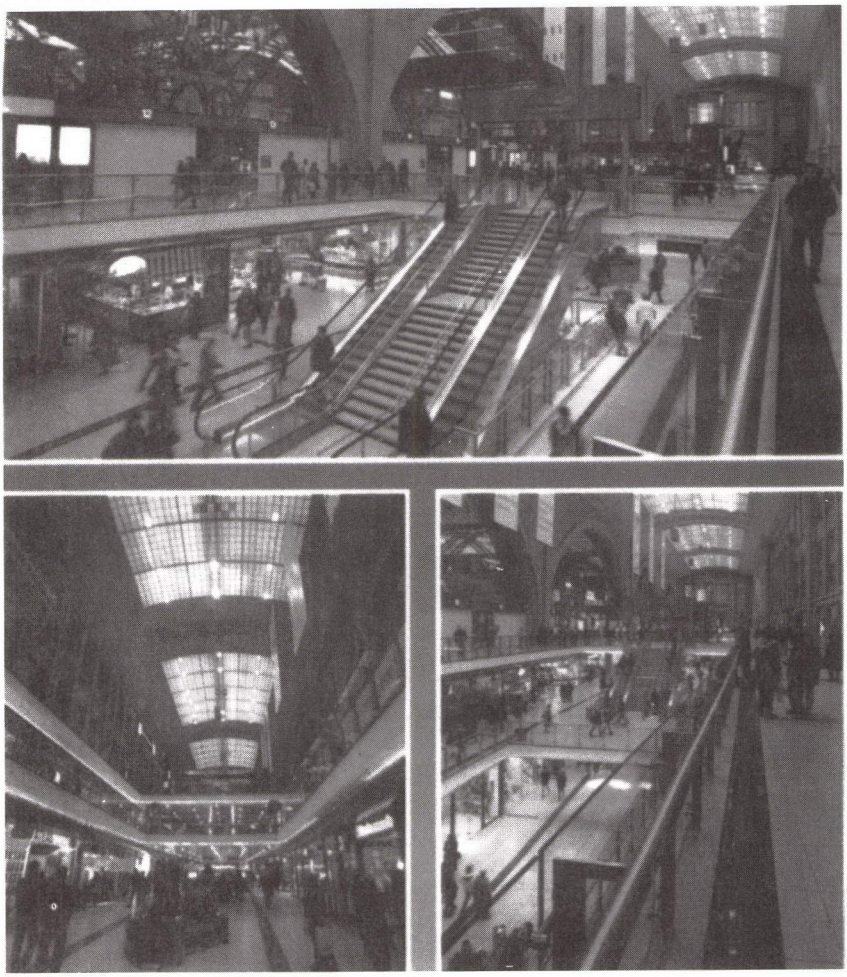
Leipzig lies in East-Central Germany, in the northwestern corner of the former Prussian province of Saxony. It lies approximately 111 miles southwest of Berlin. The inner part of the city has crowded, narrow streets and picturesque houses with steeply pitched roofs. Many of its buildings date from the Middle Ages.



Leipzig's Hauptbahnhof

Leipzig's location at the junction of the Elster, Pleisse, and Parthe rivers makes it a major port. A canal connects the city with the Elbe and Saale rivers. It is an important railroad and highway hub, and its *Hauptbahnhof* ranks among the largest in the world.

The city became a center of fur trading early in its history, and later it grew into a great manufacturing city. Before World War II, it was the center of German book and music publishing. At one time, more than 250 newspapers and magazines were published in the city. Less than 35 of the 400 publishing houses that thrived there before the war are still in operation.





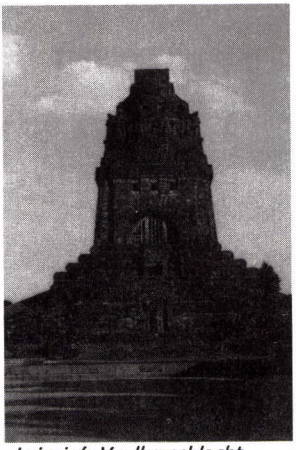
Map of Leipzig and Surroundings

There are many schools, art galleries, and museums in the city. The University of Leipzig was founded in 1409. One of its most

famous graduates was the great German poet, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe. Other Leipzig schools include a conservatory founded by the composer Felix Mendelssohn in 1843, an art college, and an academy of graphic and book arts.

Leipzig has played a prominent role in the history of German music. Johann Sebastian Bach, Robert Schumann, Mendelssohn, and other renowned musical figures resided in the city. The composer Richard Wagner and the philosopher and mathematician Gottfried Leibnitz were born there. The city enjoyed its greatest period as a center of music and literature in the 1800s.

The city was chartered in 1174. Because it lay at the intersection of several European trade routes, it grew rapidly into a trading center. It later became world famous for its biennial industrial trade fairs.



Leipzig's Voelkerschlacht Denkmal, A Monument commemorating the Battles for the city

Leipzig first became a battleground during the religious wars in the 1600s. The first battle of Leipzig was fought near the city in 1631. In this battle, Swedish forces, led by Gustavus Adolphus, won a great victory over the German army. The second battle of Leipzig, fought between the Germans and Swedes in 1642, also resulted in a victory for the Swedish forces; they continued to occupy the city for several years. In 1813, in the third battle of Leipzig, Napoleon was soundly defeated by the forces of Prussia, Russia, Austria, and Sweden. An impressive monument, the *Völkerschlacht Denkmal*, has been constructed to mark these battles.

During World War II, approximately one fourth of the city's buildings were destroyed by Allied bombers. The American army eventually conquered the city. As per mutual agreement by Allied leaders, when Germany was divided into four zones, the Soviets occupied the city. They then revived the *Leipziger Messe*, its two great industrial fairs that occurred every spring and fall. These fairs had been inaugurated as early as 1170.



Scene from Leipzig's Messe

Leipzig in the 1980s was a city admired by many as the leader of the rebellion against Communism in East Germany. It was the city that became the battering ram that smashed the Berlin wall.

Leipzigers still recall how thousands of demonstrators crammed the Karl-Marx-Platz, the epicenter of the upheaval that ended four decades of Marxist rule. They remember vividly that Kurt Mazur, the *Gewandhaus* conductor, dissuaded a rattled Communist regime from using force. Leipzigers will remind you that they are Saxons, still proudly resentful of their ancient rivals, the Prussians.

The Communists had been hopeful that the reborn, ancient *Messe* would spur East-West trade. Instead, it helped ignite the explosion that brought the Communists down. Twice each year, for a few precious weeks, Leipzigers were allowed informal contact with Western visitors. The hotels were packed, the shops in the city's many arcades were filled with goods. The intent was to impress Westerners with Communism's success. The result, however, confirmed the system's failure. Each spring and fall, Leipzigers were given a provoking glimpse of what Socialism could not ordinarily provide.

There was historical justice in this. In centuries past, trade fairs were indispensable to the spread of capitalism. The French historian, Fernand Braudel, called them "the essential tools" of long-distance trade, opening the way to contracts, credit, and stock markets.

"Fairs meant noise, tumult, music, popular rejoicing, the world turned upside down, disorder, and sometimes disturbances," Mr. Braudel writes. Few fairs were more famous than Leipzig's, which began in the 12th century and continued to flourish in the modern era.

The fair, and the taste of freedom it afforded, helped turn a Communist world upside down. The people, fed up with repression, shortages, and Leipzig's distinction as East Germany's most polluted city, finally rose up. A brand-new *Baedeker* guide to East Germany thus justly accords Leipzig a fresh honor. It is now a *Heldenstadt*, or hero city.

Unfortunately, Leipzig in the 1930s had a less distinguished history. It was just another Nazi city, where goose-stepping goons

and apathetic "good Germans" joined in sealing the fate of its Jewish community. Like its sister cities, Leipzig began by tightening the noose of persecution, went on to turn the daily life of the Jews into a constant ordeal, and climaxed its descent to degradation with the orgy of *Kristallnacht* and the Holocaust.



Jewish Leipzig

Jews are first mentioned in the history of Leipzig at the end of the 12th century. An organized community with a synagogue and a religious school existed as early as the second quarter of the 13th century. Its inhabitants came mainly from the neighboring towns of Halle and Merseburg.

R. Yitzchok ben Moshe was born in Bohemia. He journeyed to the great *yeshivot* in Germany and northern France, and authored the Or Zarua, a *halachic* guide popular among *Ashkenazic* Jewry. The compendium, arranged according to the Talmudic tractates, includes many responsa from his predecessors and contemporaries. The entire work is quite extensive. Two parts were published in Zhitomir in 1862, and two in Jerusalem in 1887. In the rabbinical world, he is referred to as the "wonder of the age."

He mentions the community of Leipzig and its synagogue in a responsum in his classic *sefer*. The responsum discusses the matter of a Jew who came to Leipzig for the purpose of collecting some business debts on behalf of his father, and turned to Leipzig's Religious Court for the rendering of a *halachic* decision on a dispute

that had ensued on the matter. On examining the text of his responsum, one can easily detect that, at the time, there already existed a *Gemeinde*-supported synagogue. It also appears that R. Yitzchok actually resided in the city briefly. Although neither the question nor R. Yitzchok's response were dated, there is some documentary evidence available that the dispute occurred sometime between 1225 and 1235. R. Yitzchok expired in the year 1241.

The Black Death epidemic that raged throughout Europe between 1348 and 1350 was the worst plague experienced since the 6th century. This precipitated the onset of awesome persecutions in 1349, when hundreds of Jewish communities were annihilated. The impact of this unprecedented catastrophe had a profound effect on the behavior of the Jewish population. People reacted by extremes, either seeking religious solace through repentance and supplication to G-d, or reverting to licentiousness, lawbreaking, and savagery. These two types of reactions often combined, in particular where they concerned the attitude of the non-Jewish population towards the Jews. In early 1349, countless numbers of Jews lost their lives in a wave of massacres that spread throughout Europe, as a result of the accusation that the Jews had caused the death of Christians by poisoning the wells and other water sources.

There was no logic in this preposterous accusation. The Jews had no immunity to the epidemic. They, too, had to drink the waters of those "poisoned" wells, and they, too, were dying in vast numbers. However, blind hatred is impervious to logic. The virulent virus of anti-Jewish hatred proved to be even deadlier than the Black Death microbe itself and even reached into cities that were relatively free of the plague. (It is now believed that infected rats that came by ship from the Orient carried the Black Death, the bubonic plague.)

Leipzig, like other European communities, suffered greatly from the epidemic. Popular imagination invested the already odious image of the Jew with even more horrible characteristics. It was this image that helped to shape the stereotype of the Jew represented by anti-Semitism and racism in modern times. In 1349, most of Leipzig's Jews were driven out of the city after being accused of poisoning the wells. As a result, in 1352, the *Markgraf* of Meissen disposed of the "*Schule der Juden*" in Leipzig. This building, which had served both as a synagogue and a religious school, was awarded to one of the *Markgraf's* feudal lords.

Although Leipzig's *Messe* regulations guaranteed equal protection to all merchants, and the market day was moved from Saturday to Friday to satisfy Orthodox Jews, who refrain from all business activities on the *Shabbat*, there is ample evidence that the remaining Jews suffered greatly even after the epidemic subsided, and their numbers continued to dwindle.

In 1359, we hear of a *Judengasse* near the city's wall; and in 1364, a *Schulmeister* named Elazar, and other Jews, are mentioned. These Jews resided in *Judenburg*, which had its own entrance gate. Several small synagogues existed at the time.

The Jews of Leipzig were probably not expelled in 1442 as the city's historians recorded, though their status surely deteriorated. They were banished from Leipzig only after the expulsion of the Jews from all of Saxony in 1540. However, their right to attend the fairs, which were then held three times a year, remained unaltered.

Between 1668 and 1764, more than 80,000 Jews attended the Leipziger *Messe*, and the Jewish participation decisively influenced the success of these fairs. Leipzig's growth as the center of the fur

trade was largely due to Jewish activity. The wealthiest Polish merchant once arrived at the *Messe* with forty wagons filled with furs, and many of Leipzig's merchants were his business partners. The steady stream of *Messe* visitors reached such huge proportions that it became imperative to operate special kitchens for them. In 1756, no less than 140 workers were employed to operate these kitchens in an orderly and effective fashion.

In 1769, the *Kurfuerst* appointed a Jew to prepare and supervise all activities of his fellow Jews visiting the *Messe*. By the end of the 18th century, six Jewish families had been appointed to perform these tasks. These Jews came to be known as *Shutzjuden*, and were permitted permanent residence in the city. It should be noted that, at the time, Saxony remained the sole German state where the Evangelic-Lutheran Church used its powerful influence to prevent permanent Jewish residence. All other German states had already approved such residence many years before, and many had already established *Israelitische Gemeinden*.



Stores facing the Hinterhaus, crowded alleys rather than streets

Resident Jews in Leipzig were prohibited from opening shops facing the street. Even as late as the 1930s, one could still see many places of business

facing the *hinterhaus*, yards and crowded alleys. This was especially true of the Brühl, the Reichstrasse, and other neighboring areas in the city center.

The Brühl was the temporary home of so many Jewish merchants visiting Leipzig for the *Messe* that it came to be known as the Leipziger *Judenstat*. In 1763, a *shtiebel* was organized by visiting Galician Jews. The *shtiebel* was called the Brodyer *Betstube*, since many of the visiting Jews originated in the city of Brody (at the time, Brody was the center of trade in northern Galicia). This *shtiebel* was the forerunner of the large Brodyer Synagogue that still stands today on the Keilstrasse.

In 1727, in his constant search for additional sources of funding, the *Kurfürst* August made it mandatory for Jewish fair visitors to obtain *Kammerpässe* to permit them the privilege of entering Leipzig. Wealthy Jewish merchants gladly paid the required fee for this passport, because presentation of it often spared them from troublesome and embarrassing inconveniences usually directed at Jews, and helped cut much of the red tape. Jews at that time were also required to pay *Schutzgeld* to the local authorities, which they paid without any intimations of discontent.

A permanent Jewish settlement was established in Leipzig during the 18th century, and by the end of that century, more than 50 Jewish merchants were already residing in the city. These merchants employed clerks, servants, agents, and *shochtim*.

By the year 1835, there were as many as seven *shtieblach* in Leipzig, all organized and directed by *Messe* visitors from Poland and Galicia. At the same time, the number of permanent Jewish residents increased rapidly.

On May 18th, 1837, Friedrich August, the King of Saxony, extended full citizenship rights to the Jews and officially permitted the establishment of an organized Jewish community. Although permission to build a synagogue was still withheld, a prayer house influenced by Reform tendencies was opened at that time. Eventually, permission was granted to construct a synagogue, and in 1855, the new synagogue in the centrally located Gottschedstrasse was dedicated.

It should be noted at this time that since the overwhelming majority of Leipzig's permanent Jewish residents were of the Reform persuasion, the synagogue certainly did not conduct its services in compliance with Orthodox standards. Therefore, those Jewish residents who conducted their lives strictly according to *halachah* found it virtually impossible to participate in religious services at the new synagogue.

Those Jews continued to worship in the then-existing *Betstuben*, such as the Brodyer, the Warschauer, the Dessauer, the Wollsteiner, the Breslauer, the Krakauer, the Halberstaedter, and several others, all organized and directed by *landsleit* from their own former communities. There were eventually as many as 17 such *Betstuben.*

With the abolition of all anti-Jewish restrictions, the number of Jews was greatly augmented by immigration from Poland and Galicia. These newcomers were generally referred to as *Ostjuden* by the Jews of German origin. There were 4,294 Jews living in Leipzig in 1890; 6,171 in 1900; 7,676 in 1905; and by 1925, the Jewish population had risen to 13,032, making it the largest Jewish community in Saxony. 1925 was also the year in which my own parents left eastern Galicia and settled in Leipzig.

Satisfying the religious requirements of such a vast multitude of immigrating *Ostjuden*, who were mainly Torah-observing Orthodox Jews, mandated the undertaking of new initiatives. As a result, the *Talmud Torah Verein* was organized in the year 1900, and its immediate task was to construct an Orthodox synagogue. The chairman of this new *Verein* was *Herr* Josef Binyamin Sacks.

Due mainly to the philanthropic endeavors of the Kroch family, who generously contributed most of the necessary funds, construction of the new sanctuary commenced the following year. Thus, in 1904, the *Brodyer Shul* was dedicated. This magnificent edifice, situated on the Keilstrasse in the heart of the Orthodox community, incorporated the many *shtieblach* that existed at that time. The *Brodyer Shul*, or as many referred to it, the *Kroch Shul*, soon became the center of Orthodox Jewish life in Leipzig. From within its walls emanated many new ideas and initiatives so vital to the continued growth of a vibrant Jewish community.



The Brodyer Shul



Interior of the Brodyer Synagogue

The *Brodyer Shul* complied fully with all regulations prescribed by *halachah*. Women prayed in an upstairs gallery that surrounded three sides of the sanctuary. The *bimah* was situated at the center of the *shul* as taught by rabbinic authorities. Its spiritual leader was the renowned scholar, Rabbi Ephraim Carlebach.

The year 1924 marked a dramatic change in the composition of Leipzig's *Gemeinde*. Following a long period of discussion in

which all opposing views were aired, the Orthodox community officially joined the *Gemeinde* and Rabbi Carlebach became *Gemeinde Rabbiner*. Israel Stein and J.B. Sacks became the Orthodox representatives to the *Gemeinde's* board of directors. Orthodox Jews would now actively participate in *Gemeinde* functions; they would share its burdens and reap the benefits accorded to its entire membership.

Although the Orthodox rabbinate was to retain total autonomy in all matters pertaining to religion, opposition to this union never faded away. According to my father, it continued well into the Hitler era. However, during my trip to Leipzig in July 1990, when the *Gemeinde's* membership books were at my disposal, I meticulously searched for names of residents who, in my estimation, would have opposed the union, and I found all their names recorded in the membership books. Perhaps by the late 1930s, all had come to recognize the importance of maintaining a united Jewish front to oppose Nazi persecution, and thus all opposition finally abated.

In 1925, the *Gemeindeblatt* began its weekly publication, and it soon became the mouthpiece of Leipzig's Jewry. It scrupulously supported all the community activities, and its editorials served to motivate Jews to constantly strive for progress and proficiency, and to encourage them when catastrophe appeared imminent. It often helped lighten the burden of impending tragedy in those troubled times by publishing a more optimistic scenario of upcoming events, one filled with hope and prospects for salvation.

Although the *Gemeindeblatt* adhered faithfully to the *halachic* rule of *deena d'malchuta deena*, which mandated the Jews to faithfully observe the government's monetary laws as free and patriotic German citizens, it often spoke out courageously and

steadfastly whenever it felt that Jewish rights had been violated. The paper thus became the champion of Jewish rights.

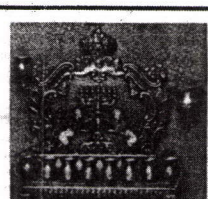
The *Gemeindeblatt* continued publishing until November 4, 1938, just a few days before *Kristallnacht*. On November 8, 1938, the government ominously forbade publication of Jewish newspapers. Thus, three major newspapers were outlawed: the *Central Vereins Zeitung*, with a circulation of 40,000 copies; the *Juedische Rundschau*, circulation 26,000; and the *Israelitisches Wochenblatt*, circulation 25,000. In addition, the government closed down four cultural periodicals, sports magazines, and twenty-five community bulletins, including Leipzig's *Gemeindeblatt*. The Berlin bulletin alone had a circulation of 40,000. In this way, the government eliminated a major source of information and communication available to the Jews, and increased their isolation.


Gemeindeblatt
Israelitische Religionsgemeinde zu Leipzig

Quartalzeitung Nr.4 Dezember 2001/ Kislev 5762

Ханука

Вечером 25 числа месяца кислев евреи сего мира зажигают светильники в честь праздника Ханука, который длится 8 дней. Его история такова. В 11 в. до нашей эры греческие правители Сирии приняли ряд жестоких законов , направленных против еврейской веры, т.наз. законы Антиоха-Эпифана из династии селевкидов. Казнью каралось обрезание, шабат, мезуза, хупа и т.д. Веротерпимая дотоле цивилизация греков увидела в иудаизме своего злейшего врага. Под руководством священника Матитьяу Хашмонея и его сыновей евреи восстали, одолели греко-сирийцев, освободили Иерусалим и, очистив Храм, зажгли храмовый светильник, в котором оставалось масла всего на один день. Но явленным чудом светильник горел восемь дней. В память о чуде мы и зажигаем свои светильники. Слово Ханука означает *Обновление* в честь обновления храмового



зажигания произносят *Аккрот Ахану* и исполняют хануальный гимн *Маоз Цур*. В праздники не постятся и не справляют траур, устраивают весёлые трапезы с песнями, подарками детям и домашним, с приглашением гостей. Подают блюда, изжаренные в масле в честь чуда в Храме. Оказывают денежную помощь бедным. Ханука имеет общие черты с Пуримом. Пурим посвящён освобождению от персов, пытавшихся физически уничтожить наш

Евреи в Лейпциге

(продолжение)

Постепенно , хотя и медленно увеличивается население Лейпцига. В 1811г. упоминаются главы 4 семей, вновь поселившихся в городе: это Элкан Херц дальний родственник Моисея Мендельсона философа и просветителя; Давид Хирш Херцлёб Леви и Лезер Филипп из Дессау. В последующие 2 десятилетия 19 в. число евреев достигает 140 (1832 г.), а к 1838 г. на 45516 жителей Лейпцига приходилось 162 еврея.

Однако, к эмансипации лейпцигских евреев вела дорога через тернии запретов и препон. Осложнило жизнь тяжелое налоговое бремя и ограничение профессиональной деятельности. Некоторому улучшению ситуации способствовали наполеоновские войны и французская революция 1830 г. Тем не менее, в 30- х годах 19. в. еврейские ремесленники, получившие звание мастера

With so many Russian Jews immigrating to Leipzig, part of the Gemeindeblatt is now printed in Russian.

It is most interesting to note that although a total of 4,500 copies of the *Gemeindeblatt* were printed in November 1933, as clearly indicated at the top of the newspaper, by May 1936 this number had been cut down to 3,600. The reason is obvious. The Jewish population in Leipzig had reached its peak in the years 1933-35, when there were more than 15,000 Jews residing there. When the Nazi regime came into power and introduced its anti-Semitic decrees, Jewish emigration gradually commenced. With the introduction of the infamous *Nuremberg Laws* in 1935, emigration continued at a more rapid pace, and by 1936, it was in full swing. Thus, with the dwindling of the Jewish population, the circulation of the *Gemeindeblatt* was drastically cut.

Leipzig's Jewry was fortunate in one respect: whenever the need for a new project arose, kindhearted individuals stepped to the forefront to donate the necessary funds. When the community felt the vital need for a Jewish hospital, there was the ever-ready Eitingon family, most anxious to assume all financial responsibility for this costly undertaking. "Chaim and Alexandra Eitingon are Leipzig's very own Montefiore," was the appropriate comment of the *Gemeindeblatt*.



The Eitingon Jewish hospital

In 1928, *Das Juedische Krankenhaus* opened its doors, the first Jewish hospital in the province of Saxony. It was a magnificent

structure, with completely modern and up-to-date facilities. The Eitingon family had purchased the most expensive medical equipment available at the time, and medical authorities hailed it as one of the best and most fully equipped hospitals of its time.

The street upon which the hospital was built was named the Eitingon Strasse. This was a gesture of recognition to this family and to their philanthropic accomplishments. Their name will forever be enshrined within the city of Leipzig. It is a sad reminder of the Jewish Leipzig that once existed and prospered, in which the Eitingons played such a prominent role. Surely they never envisioned being honored in a city without Jews, whose inhabitants participated in the murder of six million of their compatriots.

In 1931, *Das Juedische Altersheim* was opened on the Auenstrasse. It was a most generous gift presented to Leipzig's elderly with love and affection by the noble *Frau* Louise Ariowitsch and dedicated to the memory of her late husband, Max. The home contained everything that a pious, devout Jew required. There was a beautiful synagogue situated on the ground floor. There were three separate kitchens—for dairy, for meat, and for *Pesach*—all furnished with the most modern appliances. All rules of hygiene were staunchly and resolutely adhered to. Everything possible was done to enhance the comfort and convenience of the elderly residents.



The Ariowitsch home for the elderly

Yes, Leipzig was surely a community with heart. It steadfastly concerned itself with the welfare of the poor and underprivileged. Many social action programs were available. There was a public kitchen to feed the hungry; there was a free loan association, which offered assistance to those temporarily in need; there was an organization whose function was to find work for the unemployed; and there were many other organizations to serve the needs of the helpless and downtrodden.

Since no Jewish cemetery had existed in Leipzig, Jewish *Messe* visitors who passed away were buried outside of Leipzig, usually in Dessau or in Prague. In 1813, the Jews' application for a permit to build their own cemetery received a positive reply, and the Johannistal became Leipzig's first Jewish cemetery. Until 1861, more than 300 Jews, many of them from Brody, made the Johannistal their final resting place. In 1936, the Nazi authorities decided to break the lease on the Johannistal, and the *Gemeinde* was forced to rebury those Jews in the newest Jewish cemetery. The Johannistal was then converted to a garbage dump.

In 1861, with the Johannistal nearing capacity, the community began to search for new burial grounds, and in 1864, a new cemetery on the Berliner Strasse—now referred to as the *Alter Israelitischer Friedhof*—was dedicated. In 1928, due to lack of space, the *Neuer Israelitischer Friedhof* on the Delitzscher Strasse was officially consecrated, and is still in use today. Tombstones have been erected to mark the graves of individuals who were originally buried in the Johannistal.

During the orgy of *Kristallnacht*, events that closely approached the ghoulish took place at the new Jewish cemetery, where the chapel was set afire, along with a building occupied by caretakers,

tombstones were uprooted, and graves violated. Eyewitnesses considered reliable reported that ten corpses were left unburied at this cemetery for a week's time because all gravediggers and cemetery attendants had been arrested.

All this, despite the fact that the Germans prided themselves on being the foremost representatives of enlightenment and progress. Theirs was a culture based on ethics. Their moral and religious standards demanded unlimited love of their fellow man. How deceitful!

The German nation took pride in its contribution to the development of art, music, and humanism. It viewed itself as a nation of superior culture, a nation that had given much to the world. And yet, this purportedly superior nation sank to a level of bestiality never before seen in the history of mankind. With all its love of humanity, this so-called German culture-ethic was translated into a virulent hatred of Jews and the cultivation of the torture and murder of entire communities. This same culture-ethic of love of humanity became the perfect satanic vehicle, encouraging its proponents to bring about the most comprehensive genocide in all of history.

The German people exhibited extreme dedication and frightful consistency in the practical execution of their abominable project through its bitter end. Their commitment to devastation was far more powerful than their commitment to culture.

Their systematic development of a sophisticated murder apparatus, employing all of the 20th century's advances in science and technology, proves that this was more than a mere moral lapse. It was a coldly calculated project, grounded in a philosophy expounded upon by a nation of savages who dedicated

all of their intellectual talents and technological prowess to its success.

When I returned to Leipzig in the summer of 1980, I found the city devoid of any Jewish content. Its Jewish inhabitants had been massacred. The overwhelming majority of Jewish organizations and community facilities had vanished. Only the *Gemeinde* offices of the Löhrstrasse, the *Brodyer Shul*, the cemeteries, and several memorial plaques scattered around town remained of what was once a flourishing community. Gone were the Jews and everything else I treasured in the city of my birth. The city had lost its warmth, its heart. The stones of the now-dilapidated and decayed former residences of Jews projected a frigid atmosphere.

I sat motionless near the hotel window and looked out on the street below. I remembered the thousands of Leipzig's Jews who, in the past, had created an atmosphere of warmth and friendship in the city. I remembered the comfort of my home in the heart of Jewish Leipzig. I remembered my classmates who, despite the Nazi terror, helped make my early childhood a happy one. I remembered the throngs of peace-loving Jews, leisurely strolling in the *Rosental* on *Shabbat* afternoon. I remembered the beautiful *Yomim Tovim* and the sense of friendship and togetherness we experienced on these joyous occasions. I even remembered the beauty and warmth of the old buildings that had served as homes for Leipzig's Jews. All of this had vanished; the city had become, to me, a city of strangers.

For more than two hours I sat by the open window absorbed in these thoughts, with tears rolling down my cheeks. It was truly a sad and disheartening experience for me. Could Jewish Leipzig ever rise again, I wondered?

In recent years, the situation has started to improve, and a

spiritual rebuilding process has been initiated. In the chapter After the Storm, I will attempt to elaborate on this positive development.

It should be noted at this time that even the world's most enlightened nations, democracies such as the United States and Great Britain, generally displayed total indifference to the plight of the suffering Jews. New York Congressman Emanuel Celler charged that President Roosevelt, instead of providing some spark of courageous leadership, had been silent, aloof, and insensitive to the predicament of the Jews during the Hitler years. In the end, the era's most prominent symbol of humanitarianism turned away from one of history's most compelling moral challenges.

David S. Wyman, in his book The Abandonment of the Jews, writes, "This book has been difficult to research and to write. Once does not wish to believe the facts revealed by the documents on which it is based. America, the land of refuge, offered little succor. American Christians forgot about the Good Samaritan. The Nazis were the murderers, we were the all-too-passive accomplices."

Wyman goes on to say that the U.S. State Department and the British Foreign Office had no intention of rescuing large numbers of European Jews. On the contrary, they constantly feared that Germany or their Axis nations might release tens of thousands of Jews into Allied hands. Any such exodus would have placed intense pressure on Britain to open the gates of Palestine, and on the United States to take in more Jewish refugees, a situation the two powers did not want to face. Consequently, their policies were aimed at obstructing rescue possibilities and dampening public pressures for action.

Because of the State Department's administrative policies, only

21,000 refugees were allowed to enter the United States during the three and a half years the nation was at war with Germany. That amounted to a mere ten percent of the number who could have been legally admitted under the immigration quotas during that period.

Arthur D. Morse, in his book A Chronicle of American Apathy, reached a similar conclusion, writing that, "The possibility of mass rescue threatened England's Palestine policies. The vision of Jews streaming to Palestine seemed to upset Whitehall more than the visions of Jews walking to their death in the gas chambers." One might add that not only was Whitehall more upset by such a vision, many other governments were also more upset by the vision of Jews finding even temporary refuge on their shores than by the vision of gas chambers and crematoria.

In his book While Six Million Died, Morse examined the inaction of the American government and concluded that the upright men in the administration of the "great humanitarian," President Roosevelt, knew of Hitler's order for the German government's "final solution," knew of the mass executions, but were overcautious about doing anything about it. Mr. Morse indicts the government's bureaucratic delay and its refusal to try ransom or to revise immigration quotas. Thus, through official procrastination, America and England maintained their barriers against any serious rescue attempt.

When it was suggested that the atrocities and persecution perpetrated by the Nazis ought to enlist U.S. humanitarian interest, since we could not be party to any arrangement that sanctions this kind of cruelty on an organized scale, one high-ranking U.S. government official responded that these persecutions were purely a domestic matter, completely within the jurisdiction of Germany.

What a display of utter indifference and lack of sensitivity or regard for others' needs!

The shameful forms of acquiescence of the American and British governments in the *St. Louis* episode erased all doubts about where these nations stood in those perilous times.

There is little doubt that the refusal of the Americans to provide even temporary sanctuary for the *St. Louis* refugees amounted to no less than a death sentence. As the *St. Louis* was approaching Germany on its return trip, Belgium, Holland, France, and Britain finally took pity on the doomed refugees and jointly found shelter for them in their respective territories. How many of them eventually perished when the German Army swept into Western Europe, no one knows. It is a fact, however, that many passengers ultimately perished.

When the U.S. Secretary of State was confronted with the question of why he refused to grant asylum to those whose forced return to Germany meant certain death, he replied, with deep patriotic conviction, "I took an oath to protect the flag and obey the laws of my country, and you are asking me to break those laws?" Is there any difference between this argument and that of the Nazi war criminals at the Nuremberg trials, who pleaded that they were innocent because they were committed to their oath to Hitler and their country?

In December 1942, President Roosevelt reluctantly agreed to talk with Jewish leaders about the recently confirmed news that European Jews were being exterminated. Thereafter, he refused requests to discuss the problem. He even left the White House to avoid a pilgrimage of more than 400 Orthodox rabbis representing

the Union of Orthodox Rabbis, headed by that unforgettable Torah giant, *Horav* Eliezer Silver of Cincinnati. He declined to discuss the State Department's shutdown of refugee immigration to the United States, even when pressed by the seven Jewish members of Congress.



Union of Orthodox Rabbis of the United States and Canada in their March to Washington to appeal in behalf of European Jewry who were at the mercy of the Nazis.
Front row: Right to left: Jewish War Veteran Commandant, Rabbi B.L. Leventhal, Vice-President of the Agudath Harabonim, Rabbi Israel Rosenberg, Co-President of the Agudath Harabonim, Rabbi Eliezer Silver, Co-President of the Agudath Harabonim, Rabbi Abraham Kalmanowitz, Jewish War Veteran Commandant, Rabbi Rubin Levovitz Rabbi P. Levovitz, representing Mesifta Tifereth Jerusalem Rabbinical Seminary, Rabbi Nathan Baruch, Representing the Mesifta Torah Vodaath Rabbinical Seminary

In November 1943, on the eve of his departure for Cairo and Tehran, stirrings in Congress briefly drew Roosevelt's attention to the rescue question. When he returned six weeks later, he faced the prospect of an explosive debate in Congress on the Administration's rescue policies, and the probable passage of legislation calling on him to form a rescue agency. Not long afterward, he established the War Refugee Board. His hand had been forced by the pressure on Capitol Hill, and by the danger that a major scandal would break out

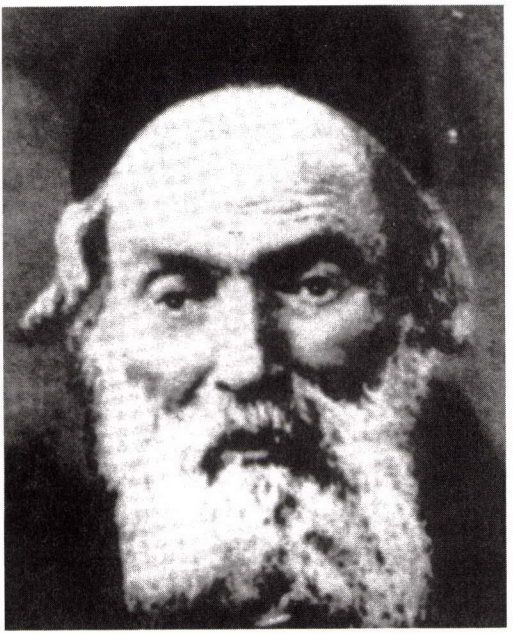
over the State Department's persistent opposition to rescue.

The President took little interest in the W.R.B. He never acted to strengthen it or provide it with adequate funding. He even impeded its initial momentum by delaying the selection of a director.

It appears that Roosevelt's overall response to the Holocaust was deeply affected by political expediency. Most Jews supported him unwaveringly, so an active rescue policy offered little political advantage. A pro-Jewish stance, however, could cost him votes in other sectors of the population. American Jewry's great loyalty to the President thus weakened the leverage it might have exerted upon him to save European Jews. Did Roosevelt really care? It is obvious that he was totally unconcerned about the plight of the suffering Jewish masses.

The fall of Germany, writes Dr. Eliezer Berkowitz in his book Faith After the Holocaust, is also the fall of the West. Not only six million Jews perished in the Holocaust. Because of the Holocaust, Western civilization lost every claim to dignity and respect. The soul had gone out of the majority of the Western nations. A Jew, familiar with the history of his nation within the context of Western civilization, might well wonder how much soul there ever was present in that civilization.

The history of Jewish Leipzig should impart a most powerful message to us. Any Jewish city, anywhere, could potentially suffer Leipzig's fate, *chas v'shalom*. There is no safety and security for us in the *galut*, even in a democracy. The German Weimar Republic was a democracy, yet it did not prevent the emergence of Hitler. When the anti-Semites so decreed, Leipzig, a city of more than 15,000 Jews, became *Judenrein*.



The Chofetz Chaim

In the year 1929, ten years before the beginning of World War II, someone commented to the sainted *Chofetz Chaim* on the tragedy of World War I, when 12 million people across the world had lost their lives. Hitler was still four years away from power, and the word "genocide" could only be found in dust-covered unabridged dictionaries. The *Chofetz Chaim* said, "Twelve million? That is child's play. The real thing will begin in ten years." His guest asked, "What can we do in ten years?" The *Chofetz Chaim* replied, "*Eretz Yisrael*—there it will be safe."

The *Chofetz Chaim* explained with a parable. Two villages shared in the cost of a fire engine. It was stationed in one of them, but if a fire broke out in the other village, the fire engine would come speeding to the rescue. Once a fire broke out, and the apparatus was called. The answer was, "We can't come now. Our village is burning. As soon as the fire has been put out here, we will come to help you." In the same way, the *Chofetz Chaim* said, in ten years, the fires will be burning everywhere. *Hashem* will see to it that it is safe in *Eretz Yisrael* because that is His village.

Military historians are indeed at a loss to explain why General Rommel, most brilliant of military leaders, conqueror of Egypt and Libya, did not swoop down on *Eretz Yisrael* as it lay helpless before him. The *Chofetz Chaim* foretold why: *Hashem* will see to it that is safe in *Eretz Yisrael* because that is His village. (Rabbi Nosson Scherman in A Path Through the Ashes.)

The *Talmud* taught us long ago: "Our only salvation is in the hands of our Father in Heaven" (Sotah 49a).

Houses of Worship

The construction of Leipzig's first *Gemeinde Synagogue*, at Gottschedstrasse 3, commenced in 1854. Its architect, the noted Otto Simonson, designed it to resemble an Arab edifice in Moslem Spain. It was the first permanent synagogue constructed in Leipzig, and it was built to accommodate 1,600 worshippers. It eventually became known as the *Tempel*. In 1855, it was dedicated in the presence of a multitude of Jews, and with the attendance of Saxony's king. Saxony, at the time, was a sovereign state. It did not join the German Empire until 1871, when Wilhelm the First was crowned the Kaiser and Otto von Bismarck became the Chancellor.

Services in the new synagogue were conducted on *Shabbat*, on Sunday, and on both the Jewish and the German national holidays. However, since the *Tempel* did not conduct its religious services in accordance with Orthodox standards, Leipzigers, whose lives were strictly guided by *halachah*, and who refused to budge even one iota from the laws recorded in the *Shulchan Aruch*, found it impossible to participate in religious services at the *Tempel*. They continued to *daven* in the several *shtieblach* scattered around the city.

On *Shabbat*, an organ was played during services. A choir, consisting of men, women, and even Gentiles, and ably directed by Barnet Licht, accompanied Cantor Samuel Lampel and his assistant Max Jaffe. It should be noted, however, that a gallery circumvented three sides of the *Tempel* and was frequented by women only. This constituted a valid *mechitzah*, and was *halachically* acceptable even by Orthodox standards.

Dr. Adolf Jellinek, born in 1820, became the Rabbi of the *Tempel*. In 1857, he continued in his chosen profession in Vienna, the city of his birth. His numerous scholarly works included the *Ma'arich*, a dictionary of foreign words used in traditional Jewish sources such as the *Talmud*, the *Midrash*, and the *Zohar*.

Unfortunately, his lackadaisical and languid attitude towards traditional Judaism cost him his oldest son. Ignoring the proven system of so many centuries, an uncompromising Torah education that has been the key to our survival as Jews, Dr. Jellinek chose an alternate route. He constantly preached of the irrelevance of many of our basics in a modern day society. This attitude apparently had a negative effect upon his son George, who was a professor of public law at the universities of Basel, Switzerland, and Heidelberg, Germany. He embraced Christianity and was eventually baptized after his father's death in 1893.

Dr. Abraham Meyer Goldschmidt, born in 1812, succeeded Dr. Jellinek in the Reform community from 1858 to 1887. During his term in the rabbinate, he initiated several innovations. During his early years at the helm, he introduced German songs into the religious services, an idea that had already been proposed by his predecessor. In 1865, he introduced German prayers to the congregation's liturgy, and in 1868, organ music began to

accompany the synagogue's choir during *Shabbat* and *Yom Tov* services. These novel and unprecedented introductions tended to further alienate traditional Jews, and attracted few newcomers to the *Tempel*.

It is noteworthy that Drs. Jellinek and Goldschmidt were both referred to as *Religionslehrer* and *Predigers* (teachers of religion and preachers) by their congregants, rather than rabbis. The reason was that Leipzig's Jewish community was then officially, legally part and parcel of the Rabbinate in Dresden, and was not authorized to appoint its own rabbis. Such appointments could only be processed by Dresden's Chief Rabbi, Dr. Zacharias Frankel. Thus, for all practical purposes, Dr. Frankel was Leipzig's rabbi and entitled to make all rabbinic decisions. He granted Leipzigers the right only to appoint teachers of religion and preachers. Dr. Jellinek fought valiantly, but unsuccessfully, to reverse Leipzig's status. Only in 1883, when Dr. Nathan Porges, who was born in 1848, was chosen to lead Leipzig's community did the *Gemeinde* elders finally resolved that henceforth, preachers should officially be titled *Rabbiner*.

R. Porges remained in Leipzig until 1917, when he was succeeded by the London-born Dr. Felix Goldman, born in 1882. He had concluded his rabbinical training in Berlin in 1907, and was the spiritual guide of the city of Oppeln, Germany, before assuming his duties in Leipzig. Eventually, in 1921, Dr. Gustav Cohn became Dr. Goldman's deputy and, upon the latter's death in 1934, functioned as *Gemeinde Rabbiner* until the days following the notorious *Kristallnacht*.

At the end of 1938, Dr. Cohn was arrested on trumped-up charges and imprisoned at the infamous Buchenwald concentration

camp, on the outskirts of the city of Weimar. He was released from Nazi captivity only when he received legal documents that enabled him to immigrate to the neighboring country of Holland. Unfortunately, however, his freedom was short-lived. He again became a concentration camp inmate in May 1940, when in a *Blitzkrieg*, Nazi troops conquered Holland. He eventually perished at their hands and became one of the six million martyrs.



R. Azriel Hildesheimer

R. Ephraim Carlebach once briefly outlined his relationship with the Reform movement. In accordance with the views of his mentor, R. Azriel Hildesheimer, he publicly declared, "*Ich will vereint mit ihm schlagen, aber in den Dingen in denen wir auseinander gehen, getrennt marschieren.*" ("United, I will fight with him, but in matters that we are asunder, we will march separately.") In a similar vein, Dr. Goldman once emphatically declared that in social matters, all Jews are brothers. He was greatly agitated when one of his adherents openly labeled *Ostjuden* (Orthodox Jews from Eastern Europe) as people of inferior quality.

Carlebach and Goldman made every effort to maintain total unity within the community. In the summer of 1932, when, due to budgetary considerations, the weekly Jewish newspaper, the *Gemeindeblatt*, ceased publication for a period of two months, they issued a joint statement that appeared in the first issue published

after the break. In their statement, they pleaded with all Leipzigers to preserve the mouthpiece of the *Gemeinde*, which was so vital to maintaining their unity in the areas of charity and welfare, so the needy could be assisted regardless of their identity or affiliation. In these areas, stressed the statement of the rabbis, there is no distinction between Jews born in Germany and those of foreign birth, between the Orthodox and those who lived under the Liberal persuasion. All were considered equal in the eyes of the *Gemeinde*. Any derogatory remarks against any group were completely ignored.

Having been raised in an Orthodox home, I, personally, never *davened* at the *Tempel*, nor did I ever meet Dr. Goldman face to face. Therefore, it should be pointed out that much that appears in this chapter is based on second-hand reports, rather than on personal observation. Only once did I actually enter the *Tempel's* premises. It was on *Yom Kippur* afternoon, during the post-*Mussaf* break, probably in 1936 or 1937, that my friend Reuven Bieder and I decided to go for a short walk; and as we passed the *Tempel*, Reuven suggested that we view the inside of the structure. Hesitatingly, we entered and were amazed at its size and aesthetic beauty. We marveled at the beautiful arched windows and the elegant ornamentation that adorned the facility. For the ensuing *Minchah* service, we returned to the *Brodyer Shul*.

Although the overwhelming majority of *Ostjuden* rarely crossed the threshold of the *Tempel*, many could often be seen at Dr. Goldman's residence on the König Johann Strasse (now Tschaikowsky Strasse). Some came to discuss problems they had encountered with *Gemeinde* representatives and others had personal problems with government authorities. Some had family members who were still famishing in their "old home" in the east and pleaded

for assistance to enable them to settle in Leipzig, while others suffered financial ruin. Some had recently lost their jobs and were unable to make ends meet, while others were suddenly confronted with sick family members.

It was generally felt that Dr. Goldman, who was blessed with many friends in the academic world—some even top flight government leaders—and one whose talents in the art of persuasion and inducement were firmly established, would be in the best position to bring these aforementioned problems to a successful solution. Dr. Goldman always worked enthusiastically with unlimited exuberance and zeal to attain satisfactory results, and thus alleviate the misery of all who approached him. His efforts were usually not in vain. *Ostjuden*, specifically, were delighted to no end. In social matters, many remarked, Dr. Goldman is a man of compassion, possessing sympathetic consciousness of other's distress. He is one of our own. There is no one like him.

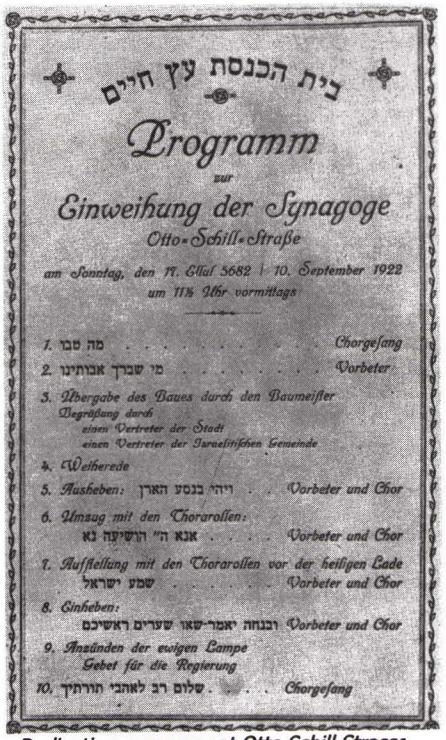


Exterior of Otto Schill Strasse Synagogue

Many Leipzigers, including *Ostjuden*, attended his funeral in 1934. It was a public expression of gratitude and appreciation. It was a gesture to a man who had displayed so much love, charity, and benevolence throughout his lifetime, to people of all affiliations and persuasions. He was a gentleman *par excellence*.

The second *Gemeinde Synagogue* was situated on the Otto Schill Strasse (Apels Garten)

and was known as the *Eitz Chaim Synagogue*. It was constructed with the help of a considerable donation by a most esteemed philanthropist, who had emigrated from Russia at the end of the 19th century. Chaim Eitingon was a wealthy merchant in Leipzig's fur market. Since the Brühl, a major thoroughfare in the Jewish part of town, was the center of Leipzig's fur industry, Eitingon became known as the *Koenig vom Brühl* (the king of the Brühl). Orthodox Jews, mainly *Ostjuden*, unanimously applauded Eitingon's overwhelming generosity. Due to the constant increase of the religious population, when existing *Shtieblach* were forced to operate in cramped quarters, this new sanctuary became a vital ingredient in the ever-growing Orthodox community.


בית הכנסת עץ חיים

Programm

zur

Einweihung der Synagoge

Otto-Schill-Straße

am Sonntag, den 11. Ellul 5682 / 10. September 1922

um 11½ Uhr vormittags

1. מה טבו . . . . . Chorgesang
2. מי שברך אבותינו . . . . . Vorbeter
3. Übergabe des Baues durch den Baumeister
   Begrüßung durch
   einen Vertreter der Stadt
   einen Vertreter der Israelitischen Gemeinde
4. Weiherede
5. Ausheben: ויהי בנסע הארן . . Vorbeter und Chor
6. Umzug mit den Thorarollen:
   אנא ה' הושיעה נא . . . . Vorbeter und Chor
7. Aufstellung mit den Thorarollen vor der heiligen Lade
   שמע ישראל . . . . . Vorbeter und Chor
8. Einheben:
   ובנוחה יאמר-שוו שערים ראשיכם Vorbeter und Chor
9. Anzünden der ewigen Lampe
   Gebet für die Regierung
10. שלום רב לאהבי תורתיך . . . Chorgesang

Dedication ceremony at Otto Schill Strasse Synagogue

The *Eitz Chaim Synagogue*, with a capacity of 1,300 worshippers, was officially dedicated in the year 1922. It became the largest Orthodox synagogue in all of Saxony.

It was a magnificent structure, lavishly outfitted, and beautifully decorated with luxurious-looking carvings on its furnishings. It complied fully with all regulations and traditions required by *halachah*. The ritual, as directed by R. Carlebach, was rigidly enforced. No organ existed,

nor did any ladies participate in the choir. Ladies were seated in a gallery, which circumvented three sides of the edifice. Services were conducted daily, and on *Shabbat* and the *Yomim Tovim* the synagogue was overflowing with humanity. Most worshippers donned square woolen prayer shawls that fully covered their backs. This was in sharp contrast with the *Tempel*, where small, silken scarf-like *taleisim* were the norm. The liturgy was performed entirely in the Hebrew language. Only the Rabbi's sermon and his Talmudic discourses were presented in German. The synagogue was indeed a model of authentic traditional Judaism as it had been observed throughout the ages.

One of the distinguishing characteristics of the synagogue's leadership was its meticulous care and systematic search methods for selecting a cantor. There was an *Oberkantor* and a deputy cantor. A tablet at the synagogue's entrance always indicated the name of the cantor performing at the time, and the one scheduled to perform the following week. This tablet was punctiliously studied by many, even by those who generally *davened* at other synagogues. Many would actually leave their own synagogues upon the completion of the *Shacharit* service and rush to the Otto Schill Strasse to enjoy the *Mussaf* service as conducted by the *Oberkantor*.

The *shul's* board of directors considered itself quite fortunate when they succeeded in engaging the services of the world-renowned cantor, Nachum Wilkomirsky. He possessed a most powerful, yet pleasant baritone-tenor voice, and many of the musical renditions he presented were actually his own compositions. In an era in which genuine *chazzanut* dominated, when such greats of liturgical music as Yossele Rosenblatt, Zanvil Kwartin, and Gershon Sirota were in the prime of their careers, Wilkomirsky was also

recognized by the experts as a giant in his field. He was a *chazzan* of world repute. What a *chazzan* he was!

Leipzigers were extremely grateful to the board of directors, who had labored so arduously in pursuit of Wilkomirsky. Jacob Badt, the chairman of the board, and Samuel Hodes, Paul Gelberg, and Leib Merkin, its members, received ample recognition for their successful accomplishment. Additional activities by these dedicated individuals on behalf of the *shul* proved to have a contagious effect upon others, and played a vital role in furthering a flourishing Orthodox community. The *Verein Chevro Schass*, chaired by P. Gelberg and N. Cohen, arranged daily classes in the study of Talmud, one each day following services. The *Jüdischer Gesetzestreuer Verband*, chaired by Josef Benjamin Sachs, arranged for the construction of a *mikvah* (ritual bath), and supervised its maintenance throughout the years.

Cantor E. Sivowicz, who served as one of Leipzig's *mohalim*, eventually became Wilkomirsky's deputy. In the middle 1930s, Isaak Prinz, a *shochet*, who taught in Rabbi D. Feldman's *Talmud Torah*, began officiating at *Eitz Chaim* services. The *ba'al kore* (Torah reader) was R. Löwi, who during weekdays was employed as a teacher of religion at the *Carlebach Schule*. Having been one of his students during one year, I remember him as a superior teacher, whose rapport with his students was second to none. He was extremely well liked by all.

In 1928, Fabian Gonski organized a choir, which consisted of young boys and adults, to assist Wilkomirsky during services. Gonski's musical talents had already spread far and wide due to his manifold musical activities. He had already trained and conducted a choir at Leipzig's *Ohel Yaakov Shul*, and his choir had participated

in a phonograph recording of the renowned cantor, Solomon Kupfer. The musical giant, Josef Rombaum, wrote many liturgical compositions for Wilkomirsky. Unfortunately, with Wilkomirsky's subsequent flight to the United States to escape Nazi persecution, and with Gonski's flight to Palestine, a flourishing era of brilliant vocal music—one which was lauded by musical experts both Jewish and non-Jewish—came to a tragic and abrupt end.

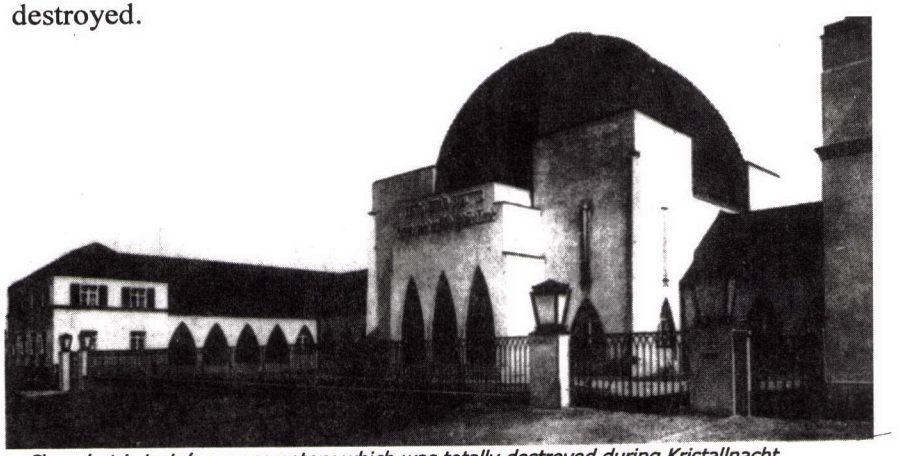
In the early morning following the orgy of arson, property destruction, murder, and incarceration of Jews now referred to as *Kristallnacht* (the night of broken glass), on November 10, 1938, both the *Tempel* and the *Eitz Chaim Shul* were totally destroyed at the hands of the "master race" barbarians. The fire department reported that on Thursday morning at 3:51 a.m., a fire alarm brought them to the *Gemeinde Synagogue*, where they discovered that the entire structure was already engulfed in flames. Since the fire was already too far advanced to save the synagogue, they concentrated all their efforts on preventing the fire from spreading to neighboring buildings. The department listed the cause of the fire as "undetermined."

So much debris now covered the corner of the Gottschedstrasse and the Zentralstrasse that not only did it create traffic congestion of major proportions; it also became a hazard to human life. Since Jews were considered to be ultimately responsible for the chaotic conditions that prevailed, Jews were now forcibly recruited for the arduous task of cleaning up the accumulated debris. Driven by the police and jeered by onlookers, they worked strenuously to fulfill the responsibilities suddenly cast upon them.

The fire department arrived too late to save the *Eitz Chaim Synagogue*. The fire was reported at 5:20 a.m., and only the

neighboring buildings were saved. All that we saw a short time later, as we proceeded through the area, was an empty lot filled with rubble. "What a shame," remarked Reuven Bieder. "Now we'll never see it again." This beautiful edifice, constructed in 1922, had lasted for only sixteen years. How sad! I, personally, suffered quite a painful experience and much emotional distress when I viewed first-hand what these thugs had wrought.

At 11:07 a.m., a fire was reported at the *Israelitische Friedhof* on the Delitzscher Landstrasse (now the D.S.F. Strasse in Eutritzsch). This was the newest of Leipzig's three Jewish cemeteries; its chapel had been dedicated only ten years before. Here again, the firefighters were successful in localizing the fire, preventing it from spreading to other areas. The chapel, however, was totally destroyed.



Chapel at Leipzig's new cemetery which was totally destroyed during Kristallnacht

The destruction of the two large synagogues and the cemetery chapel brought in some welcome funds to fill Nazi coffers. Several days after *Kristallnacht*, an item appeared in Leipzig's newspapers, offering 200,000 used but refurbished bricks for sale, bricks that had been salvaged from the wrecked sanctuaries. In November 1942,

the Nazis finally appropriated—in a perfectly legal manner, of course—the land on which these structures originally stood. They had now become the property of Hitler's *Third Reich.*



bricks for sale. These bricks were salvaged from Leipzig's destroyed Synagogues

A plaque has been erected on the corner of the Gottschedstrasse and the Zentralstrasse, the area where the *Tempel* stood. Leipzig's *Oberbürgermeister* (mayor), Dr. Lehmann-Grube, has personally acquainted me with this plaque and suggested that I view it. It reads, "*Hier wurde am 9. November 1938, die grosse Synagoge der Israelitischen Religionsgemeinde durch Brandstiftung Faschistischer horden zerstort. Vergesst es nicht!* Here on November 9, 1938, the large synagogue of the Religionsgemeinde was destroyed by fire at the hands of Fascist elements. Do not forget it!"



A Memorial plaque near the Gemeinde Synagogue

I must confess that this belated gesture of penitence and remorse expressed on the plaque did not placate or pacify me in any way. I shall never forget the horrors, the extreme depression and apprehension I experienced on *Kristallnacht* at the young age of twelve. The view of the two

empty synagogue lots will remain engraved in my mind forever.

The *Chevrah Mishnayot Synagogue*, located on the Humboldtstrasse 24, was founded in 1908. In the years 1924-25, the synagogue had as many as 300 members, and even during the weekday services, it was usually packed to capacity.

When the Czarist Russian Army marched into East Prussia in 1914, Kaiser Wilhelm the Second called Field Marshall Paul von Hindenburg out of retirement to join General Erich Ludendorff, the most prominent strategist in the German Army. After a brilliant victory over the Russians, Hindenburg became a national hero. Jews, especially, were delighted with the victory over the hated Czar. Their joy was based on a feeling of contempt and disdain for the Czar, because of his cruel treatment of the Jewish population.

Leipzig's *Chassidic* Galician Jews, who had founded the *shul* on the Humboldtstrasse, agreed to name it the Hindenburg *Shul* in honor of the leader who had vanquished that treacherous enemy of the Jews. How could anyone then have predicted that in the twilight of his life, when he had been elected German *Reichspräsident*, he would hand the reins of the Republic and its democratic systems to that vicious and nefarious Bohemian corporal, an ardent racist and anti-Semite, Adolf Hitler? At the time, nobody at the *shul* foresaw such a possibility.

However, the name "Hindenburg *Shul*" was soon abandoned, and was rarely ever used. The *shul* was usually referred to simply as the *Vierundzwanzig* (24), which was its house number on the Humboldtstrasse. Only occasionally, and then only in jest, was the name ever used again in discussion. The *shul's* official name remained, the *Chevrah Mishnayot*.

Paul Hindenburg took command of all German forces during the First World War in the year 1916. When the retreating German army reached its own borders, revolutionaries overthrew the Kaiser and sued for peace. Bewildered German citizens, until then fed wartime propaganda of the invincibility of their army, assured of ultimate victory, and knowing full well that the Allied armies had not yet entered German territory when the armistice agreement was signed on November 11, 1918, wondered who had betrayed them. Who was responsible for the defeat?

Their war hero, Paul Hindenburg, was called before a *Reichstag* committee to explain, and he had a ready answer. The great German Army was betrayed and stabbed in the back by Jews and Socialists. This dagger blow, *Dolchstoss*, would take its place in the vocabulary of anti-Semitism.

It is noteworthy that other German Army leaders also nurtured the legend of the "stab in the back," and utilized the Jews as an ever-present scapegoat. This, despite the fact that during the final month of the war, they themselves appealed for an armistice, fully cognizant of the fact that the war had been lost to superior military forces. Within a year, these same leaders denied their own responsibility for the defeat.

The emergence of Nazism was not an inevitable outcome of German history; neither was it accidental. The German interpretation of their defeat in the war, the disorientation of the post-war period, and the failure of Germany's experiment with democracy in 1918 made Hitler's appeal possible. Germans, who had prided themselves on being a "master race," constantly augmented by the *Deutschland über alles* slogan that had become their official national anthem, simply could not accept defeat.

They had endured the war, accepted progressive mobilization, and borne the hardships stoically. However, they were unable to grasp the reality of defeat. They could comprehend it only as the work of criminal conspirators. They desperately searched for a scapegoat. Hitler then defined the moral enemy—the Jews—a people already made vulnerable by the *Dolchstoss* accusation and similar, earlier anti-Semitic propaganda. The elimination of this enemy became the core of Hitler's agenda.



Poster urging Jews to vote for Hindenburg rather than for Hitler

Despite the cowardly *Dolchstoss* accusation, in which Hindenburg displayed his total disregard for the safety and welfare of the Jewish population, Jewish citizens were urged by their leaders to cast their vote for Hindenburg in an election against Hitler. Leipzig's *Gemeindeblatt* wrote, "*Wählt Hindenburg! Wenn Hitler gewählt wird, kommen Faschismus und Antisemitismus zur Herrschaft.*" Hitler, it was feared, would increase fascism and anti-Semitism to catastrophic proportions. Therefore, it was felt that Jews should live up to their civic responsibilities and vote for the lesser of two evils.

In the *Chevra Mishnayot Shul*, followers of various *Chassidic* dynasties could be found. Since many dynasties were too small in numbers to organize their own *shtiebel*, they merged and amalgamated into the *Vierundzwanzig*. Their customs often varied, although they were mostly of Galician descent. Several hundred learned *Chassidim*, many possessing genuine *Talmid Chacham*

credentials, would attend services even on weekdays. Learning sessions were in progress at all hours of the day, some commencing as early as several hours before sunrise. The study of the *Talmud* was, by far, the most popular subject taught. This was especially true after the *Agudat Yisroel Organization* officially adopted an innovation proposed by the renowned *Lubliner Rav*, R. Meir Schapiro, and Jews all over the world became participants in the *Daf Hayomi* program—whereby every day, all students study the very same page of the *Talmud*. This created a sense of unity among Torah-loving Jews.

Rabbi _____ was the spiritual leader of the congregation, and resided on an upper floor of Humboldtstrasse 24. I can still vividly remember when he informed his congregants that he had decided to emigrate, and settle permanently in the Holy Land. Many Leipzigers, even some who ordinarily worshipped in other synagogues, came to his home to bid him farewell. The house was filled with friends and well-wishers on the days prior to his leaving. Of course, checks, some quite large, were nonchalantly placed on the table in front of the Rabbi. Their purpose was to assist the Rabbi in his forthcoming emigration, and to enable him to arrange for a smoother transition. The Rabbi simply sat there passively and graciously accepted the gifts and the wishes bestowed upon him. It was quite obvious to all present that he greatly appreciated this mass outpouring of friendship and affection, and he expressed his feelings and emotions without reserve.

Upon the Rabbi's departure, R. David Feldman, spiritual leader of the *Ahavat Torah Synagogue* on the Färberstrasse 6, was officially invited to serve the *Vierundzwanzig* as their Rabbi, and he reluctantly accepted. His residence was equidistant from both

sanctuaries. Since both congregations were under his auspices, he divided his time accordingly. He not only officiated at services in both *shuls* on an alternate basis, he also coordinated regular *Talmud* classes in both locations. He faithfully rendered his *halachic* decisions to his suddenly increased number of congregants.

After a brief stay in *Eretz Yisrael*, Rabbi _____ returned to Leipzig, anxious to resume his position at the *Vierundzwanzig*. Leipzigers were grossly incensed and emotionally inflamed at this sudden turn of events. Had not the Rabbi explicitly informed them that he was emigrating from Leipzig on a permanent basis? Had not the Rabbi expressly stated that his journey was a fulfillment of a lifelong dream to settle in *Eretz Yisrael*, to bask in its beauty, to become saturated by its holiness? Had they all been misinformed as to his real intentions? Was the Rabbi's trip merely an exciting sightseeing venture funded by Leipzig's Jews?

R. Feldman, who was recognized by all as a champion of peace, lived up to his reputation and immediately resigned from his position at the *Vierundzwanzig*, to the dismay and disappointment of many. R. Feldman displayed absolutely no anger and no ill feelings; he simply refused to become personally involved in a rapidly spreading controversy. The furor and uproar that had erupted within the community did not quickly abate, and even R. Feldman was incapable of completely placating the conflicting sides.

Shmuel Yosef Czaczkes, better known under his pseudonym, S.Y. Agnon, the Nobel Prize laureate, resided in Leipzig at that time. In his Im Laden von Herrn Lublin, he listed and briefly summarized the lives of all of Leipzig's rabbis. Only the name of Rabbi _____ was omitted. People generally speculated that Agnon was highly critical of the deportment of Rabbi _____ and felt that

the omission of his name would be considered a form of silent criticism.

After discussing this matter with several *gedolim*, I decided to reveal this matter in my book, without, of course, mentioning the Rabbi's name. The incident speaks volumes of R. Feldman's eminence and of his constant pursuit of peace, as he voluntarily resigned from his position without any grudge or ill feelings. It also reveals the unqualified loyalty and fidelity of the *Vierundzwanzig's* congregants. They stuck with R. Feldman all the way. This quarrel, however, was not a proud chapter in the historical record of Leipzig's Orthodox Jewry.

The most dominant and paramount figure at the *Vierundzwanzig* was its sexton, lovingly referred to as Moishe Shammes. Despite his well-advanced age, he was quite agile and buoyant. He displayed the spunk and exuberance of one forty years his junior. In addition, he brought warmth and a sense of unity and solidarity to the *shul*.

Whenever a newcomer entered the premises, there was Moishe Shammes to offer him a prayer shawl. When he noticed an adult, or even a youngster, who did not possess the four species on the *Yom Tov* of *Succot*, Moishe Shammes was immediately at his service. He would bring over the four species and lovingly suggest, "Now recite the *brachah*!" Children, in particular, were extremely fond of him, as he often surprised them with candy and other goodies. His very presence, his radiant smile, his ingenuous wit, and his enthusiastic greeting to all comers helped make the *Vierundzwanzig* a *shul* where all visitors felt welcome and right at home. He was a unique and special person.

Reb Shea Schiffman, who was the proprietor of a chain of

grocery stores, was another illustrious worshipper at the *Vierundzwanzig*, whose financial support went a long way in easing the *shul's* economic burden. He was known throughout the city for his animated and spirited dancing at festive occasions. Especially on *Simchat Torah* and on *Purim*, many guests visited the *shul* just to observe the vigorous and energetic maneuvers performed by a gentleman of his advanced age. I must add that his enthusiasm was contagious indeed, and many joined in the ongoing festivities.

The *Talmud Torah Synagogue*, usually referred to as the *Brodyer Shul*, was a most distinguished *shul* in Leipzig. With the rapid growth and development of the Orthodox community, the *shul* had to leave its original location at the Brühl. After several temporary stations, some in apartment houses and some in stores, they finally dedicated their new permanent home on Keilstrasse 4. Until the year 1900, their spiritual leader was the renowned scholar, Rabbi Shim'on Hurwitz, otherwise known as the "Sage of Leipzig." Upon his demise in 1900, R. Carlebach assumed the leadership of the *shul*.

These congregants were the descendants of Brodyer merchants, who for many years had attended Leipzig's biennial fair without being permitted to settle there permanently. Finally, near the middle of the 19th century, this right was granted, and they were thus able to conduct their business in the fur market all year long. With the commencement of the 20th century, they were proud to dedicate their beautiful new sanctuary. It was Leipzig's only house of worship to survive Hitler's perfidious plan to eradicate every visible sign of Judaism. It still stands today.

Hillel Schneider was the most venerated figure at the *Brodyer Shul*. Born in 1860, he served the *shul* as cantor since 1898. He was graced with a ringing, yet warm baritone voice, which retained

its freshness and vigor even when he reached his late seventies. His voice, which expressed dignity and grandeur, added to his aristocratic appearance, left a most powerful impression upon all with whom he came into contact. His face was adorned by a long, flowing white beard that added further dignity to his persona. He was highly revered even in other synagogues, and was recognized everywhere as an outstanding individual.


Cantor Hillel Schneider

In addition to his cantorial career, Schneider also served as one of the community's *mohalim*. Being childless himself, he was very fond of children; and whenever he met a group of youngsters that he had circumcised, he would affectionately refer to them as "my children."

He was recognized by all as a competent and most reliable *shochet*. He retired from this position when Nazi decrees outlawed the *shechitah* process. At the time, when he had already reached his middle seventies, his general health had started to decline, and his hands had lost some of their steadiness. Thus, it became difficult for him to perform the act of *shechitah* in accordance with Jewish law. In the late 1930s, when my father was one of a few remaining *shochtim* in Leipzig, Schneider graciously gave him the *chalafim* and sharpening stones he could no longer use. It was a friendly gesture that my father greatly appreciated. My father was always proud to own those utensils.

In 1935, when Schneider celebrated his 75th birthday, the pages of Leipzig's *Gemeindeblatt* were saturated with greetings and well-

wishes to the cantor. Several articles in the paper offered evaluations of his life's accomplishments. At the time, it was obvious to all that he had become one of Leipzig's most beloved and admired personalities.

I can still recall seeing him on the Fleischer Platz on *Shabbat* afternoons, walking slowly and taking exceptionally short steps on the way from his home on the Elsterstrasse to the *Brodyer Shul*. It is a distance that could ordinarily be covered in approximately 20 minutes. Yet, at his slackened pace, he probably walked for more than an hour. Youngsters often observed him, and began to realize the importance this pious man attached to public prayers. As a result, we were imbued with a valuable lesson. One should never abstain from performing one's religious duties simply because they require too much effort and exertion. Upon the conclusion of the *Shabbat*, the cantor did not repeat the arduous walk; he returned to his home on the *Strassenbahn*.

Each Shabbat evening, exactly five minutes prior to *Ma'ariv* service, Cantor Schneider initiated the congregational singing of *L'David Mizmor* (T'hillim, chapter 144), as is customary among German Jews. He would conclude exactly at the scheduled and announced time for *Ma'ariv*.

As a youngster, I was anxious to ascertain exactly what might occur should Schneider tarry, and fail to commence chanting at the proper time. I received two responses. First, I was informed that such a situation could not possibly come to pass; punctuality was deeply ingrained within the cantor's very physique, and was part and parcel of his being. Second, congregants were confident that were he actually to procrastinate, no one present would utter a word of complaint. All would remain seated and patiently await his

commencing of the chapter. He was so revered that nobody would ever dare to express any negative reaction concerning his conduct.

Cantor Alfred Eibenschutz became Schneider's deputy in 1903. In 1928, the 25th anniversary at his prestigious position, the *Gemeindeblatt* discussed the dignity with which he always performed his duties. His baritone-tenor voice really uplifted his congregants, especially during the High Holidays. The *Gemeindeblatt* particularly commended him for conscientiously and scrupulously discharging his obligations at all times, never missing a single public service. Eibenschutz also received high marks for his beautiful and flawless rendition of the weekly Torah reading. There was no better *ba'al kore* in all of Leipzig, was the general consensus.

In the early 1930s, Cantor Eibenschutz returned his soul to its Creator. Then, following an unwarranted dispute and controversy among leaders, Cantor Schwartzman emerged as the new deputy *chazzan*. He was a young man with a beautiful tenor voice.

Some were of the opinion that since Schwartzman earned his livelihood in the secular arena, as a traveling salesman (and a regular customer at our silverware store), he was automatically disqualified for the distinguished position he was seeking. Others, however, retorted that even a spiritual leader of Jews must be given an opportunity to support his family; this could not blemish his standing in the sacred and the divine. Were such eminent scholars of *Talmudic* fame as R. Yochanan the shoemaker and R. Yitzchak the blacksmith ever disbarred from leadership in the sacred because of their secular vocations? Why, then, require higher standards than those demanded of Torah giants of yore? After much positioning by the leadership, Schwartzman was eventually accepted.

R. Isaak Auerbach was yet another of the *Brodyer Shul's* illustrious members. He was a disciple of the world-renowned *Gaon*, R. Yaakov Ettlinger of Altona, who authored the classic series, *Aruch Laner*. People conjectured that R. Auerbach was born in 1840, which placed him at an age in the high nineties, but nobody was really certain. Although he resided on the Brühl, only a short distance from the *shul*, people would generally escort him and assist him with what must have been an arduous trip for the old sage. I never saw him walking alone.

Whenever R. Carlebach or his successor, R. Ochs, would enter the premises to officiate at services at the *Brodyer Shul*, their first order of business would be to approach R. Auerbach, who was many years their senior. Their warm greetings were always concluded with a friendly embrace. It was easy to detect a genuinely amicable relationship among the rabbis.

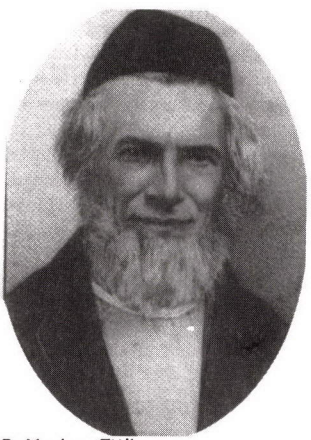
R. Auerbach served as the *shul's posek* in the absence of R. Carlebach or R. Ochs. Whenever Reb Avraham Stein, who had replaced Eibenschutz as the *ba'al kore*, discovered a possible error in the Torah script, R. Auerbach was immediately consulted, and he rendered the *halachic* decision concerning the Torah's *kashrut*. I can still picture him walking, ever so slowly, from his seat in front of the *shul* in the direction of the *bimah*, which was located in the center as prescribed by Jewish tradition. The *gabba'im* would then assist him to ascend the *bimah*. It was surely an impressive scene as the entire congregation rose in respect for the aged rabbi.

Once, during the *Mussaf* service on *Yom Kippur*, perhaps in 1936 or 1937, R. Auerbach felt extremely weary and fatigued, close to a physical breakdown and perhaps near total collapse. It was a situation of genuine *pikuach nefesh*, and he was urged to break the

fast and eat some substantial food immediately. R. Auerbach, however, insisted that abstinence from food on this *Yom Kippur* day was not the cause of his seemingly perilous condition. He had experienced similar situations of infirmity even on days when he had eaten regular meals, and thus did not believe that food would be an answer to his precarious circumstances.

The *shul's shammes*, N. Bieder, was dispatched to the *Ohel Ya'akov Shul*, which was in close proximity to the *Brodyer Shul*, and R. Rogosnitzky was alerted to R. Auerbach's hazardous condition. R. Rogosnitzky did not waste a second and rushed to the *Brodyer Shul*, still wearing his *kittel*. After a few moments of private discussion with his colleague, R. Rogosnitzky persuaded him that *halachically*, it was imperative to break his fast immediately. R. Auerbach complied with this *p'sak*, and as a result, he began to gain strength immediately and was tenacious enough to remain in *shul* until after the *Ne'ilah* service.

R. Auerbach constantly emphasized the importance of compromise and accommodation in one's personal life, even at the cost of monetary gain. There could, however, be no compromise when dealing with issues of divine imperative, he taught.


R. Yaakov Ettlinger

This approach echoed that of his mentor, R. Yaakov Ettlinger, who taught that the love of peace cannot overshadow love of truth, and the pursuit of harmony is not sufficient justification to countenance religious infractions. One should not refrain from fighting heresy

because of the false argument that "peace is great" (Chulin 141a), for although peace between fellow men is important, peace between Israel and their Father in Heaven is even more essential. He who asserts the role of *Hashem's* law is a bearer and multiplier of peace. Pinchos, the grandson of Aaron the High Priest, merited *Hashem's* "Covenant of Peace" despite his killing of a prince of Israel (Bamidbar 25:12). He opposed every mocking departure from the law of *Hashem*, and his aim was to assert for that law the sole rule over the acts and consciences of men. The individual who avenges the vengeance of *Hashem* to strengthen the Torah is really the one who desires peace. True peace is between heaven and earth.

"'You shall love truth and peace' (Zechariah 8:19). The concepts of truth and peace invariably occur in that order, truth first, and only afterwards peace, because peace is not a father of truth; peace is a child of truth. Win the people for truth, inalienable truth that can never be sold, not even for the price of peace, and then, true and everlasting peace will follow of itself" (R. Shamshon Raphael Hirsch in *Shemesh Marpeh*, p. 117).

A controversy that could easily have grown out of all proportion was averted only by R. Auerbach's calm intervention. He presented an amicable solution to a problem that was wholeheartedly endorsed by all factions of the dispute.

Since the holiday of *Pesach* consists of four days of *Yom Tov*, some felt that Cantor Schneider should officiate on all four days, with Cantor Schwartzman to officiate on *Shabbat Choi Hamoed*. However, others felt that both cantors should share the services on an equal basis, two days for Schneider and two for Schwartzman. Unfortunately, both factions expressed their opinions with utmost energy and vigor, often on the border

of maligning and abusing their adversaries. It was not a pretty picture.

R. Auerbach's solution was quite simple. He cited the *Gemarah* in the tractate *Berachot* (28b). R. Elazar ben Azariah had temporarily replaced R. Gamliel as the *Nasi*, and R. Gamliel was now returning to his lofty position. The question on the agenda was, who would present the weekly lecture on *Shabbat*? To completely remove R. Elazar from the picture, or to alternate weeks between the two rabbis, were ideas that had been rejected outright by the scholars. The solution they ultimately arrived at was to have R. Gamliel lecture on three successive weeks, and R. Elazar on the fourth week. A similar solution, reasoned R. Auerbach, should work in this situation. Schneider should officiate on the first two days and the final day of *Pesach*, and Schwartzman would officiate on the seventh day.

It turned out to be a most peaceful and tranquil holiday at the *Brodyer Shul*. On *Yom Tov*, the streets of the *Brodyer* neighborhood and the paths of the nearby *Rosental* were packed with Jews on leisurely strolls, all dressed in their *Yom Tov* finery. One could observe former adversaries in the already forgotten controversy warmly embracing in friendship and exchanging *Yom Tov* greetings. And why not? Did not the wise King Solomon teach us in the book of *Mishley* (Ch. 3) that the ways of Torah are ways of pleasantness, and all of its paths are paths of peace?

The chairman of the *shul's* board of directors was J.B. Sachs, and his assistant was A. Schumer. L. Bernstein, J. Wanderer, and M. Tager were the other members of the board. A. Goldwasser was the corresponding secretary and N. Bieder was the *shammes*. Mr. Bieder, whose son Reuven was my closest friend in Leipzig, conducted

classes in *Mishnayot* on weekdays, and occasionally, also on *Shabbat.*

I last saw Cantor Schneider on the Shabbat following *Kristallnacht.* Since the demolished *Brodyer Shul* had been locked and sealed by the Nazi authorities, he attended services at the *Vierundzwanzig*, where he was greatly honored by this *Chassidic* congregation. He graciously consented to lead the congregation for *Shacharit.* In 1939, he fled to Oslo, Norway, where he passed away in 1941. Since Norway was occupied by German forces in early 1940, he thus lived the final year of his life under the boot of the German occupying army.

When I visited the *Brodyer Shul* in 1980, I noticed that it had undergone many physical changes. The structure had been renovated, all of its old furnishings had been replaced, and the *bimah* was no longer situated in the center of the synagogue. I was greatly saddened and depressed when I realized that, due to the small number of Jews, religious services were rarely conducted. It was the only one of Leipzig's synagogues to survive the horrors of the Holocaust.


Sonntag, den 25. Dez. nachm. 16 Uhr
(Einlaß 15 Uhr)
Die Synagoge ist geheizt.
Synagogen-Chanuka-Feier
i. d. Synagoge „Ohel Jacob", Pfaffendorfer Str. 4
Oberkantor Salomon Kupfer
mit Musikbegleitung
Synagogale Gesänge, Chanukalicht-Anzünden
Aus dem Programm: L'aulom j'he odom; J'hi rozaun milifne owinu schebaschomajim; Hate elaukaj; Habet mischomajim usw.

Announcement for Cantor Kupfer's Concert

The *Ohel Yaakov Shul*, on the Pfaffendorfer Strasse 4, was a synagogue of large dimensions and a beautiful interior. Here, *Dayan* Rogosnitzky functioned as the spiritual leader. Samuel Kupfer was its cantor since 1928. He had gained worldwide fame as a giant in liturgical music. When, accompanied by a Gonski-directed choir, he produced a phonograph record in 1929, the "King of *Chazzanut*," Yossele

Rosenblatt of New York, lavishly praised his performance. Leipzig's music connoisseurs were exultant upon hearing such laudations.

Kupfer performed in many concerts of liturgical music in Leipzig's City *Kaufhaus*, and in the auditorium of Leipzig's Old *Rathaus*. He was even invited to Holland to perform in a concert, with the participation of a widely recognized choir, the *Amsterdam Hilversum Vara*. This particular concert was transmitted back to Germany, and Leipzigers, who owned short wave radios, were urged to tune in to the program for an enjoyable and spiritually uplifting hour they would never forget.



The Old Rathaus

Although *Ohel Yaakov* was organized as early as 1915, it did not possess its own edifice until 1922. In the intervening years, its services were conducted first in the *Kongresshalle* of Leipzig's Zoological Garden, and afterward at the auditorium of the *Höhere Israelitische Schule*, both locations only minutes away from the Pfaffendorfer Strasse. Only because of the philanthropic endeavors of Leo Lifschutz, Josef Unger, Abraham Mittelman and several others was the *Ohel Yaakov* at last financially capable of acquiring and maintaining its own property on the Pfaffendorfer Strasse. L. Unger eventually became

the chairman of the board, and A. Mittelman, J. Kugler, and E. Tanzer were its other members.

The *Ahavat Torah Synagogue*, on Färberstrasse 6, was situated in the same building as R. Feldman's *Talmud Torah*. It was a carbon copy of a *Beit Midrash* in a typical small, Galician *shtetl*—strictly Orthodox, without the slightest move contrary to tradition. Its worshippers were mainly *Ostjuden*, stemming from both the *Chassidic* and *Mitnagdic* background. Conversation was carried on mainly in Yiddish, rather than German.

The name of the *shul, Ahavat Torah* (love of Torah), gives a clear indication of the *shul's* major mission: study of Torah on all days of the week, and at all hours. Those who frequented the *shul* utilized every available hour at their disposal to engage in Torah studies there. In its fully equipped library of Jewish texts, members could find every book they might require to aid them in their studies. People were thus able to delve more deeply into the text, and research the material more thoroughly. Each evening, after *Ma'ariv*, many gathered at the entrance hall to participate in formal *Talmud* classes, sponsored by the synagogue. Rabbi Feldman's credentials as a *Talmud* instructor were unparalleled.

No renowned cantors officiated at the *shul*, yet the congregation was extremely proud of the *ba'alei tefillah* who did officiate. They were highly committed and pious individuals, who were completely familiar with the prayer modes of old and with the melodies sung for many generations by their ancestors in Galicia. Usually, beards adorned their faces, lending dignity to their personalities. It should be noted that these amateur cantors received no gratuities for their performance. To lead the congregation in the service of *Hashem* was their sole motivation, and that constituted their reward.

R. Feldman was the spiritual leader of the *shul*. When the Nobel Laureate, S.Y. Agnon, commented that Feldman *regierte* (ruled in Leipzig), he was not far off the mark. Feldman's congregants revered him for his great scholarship, for his ability to motivate and to inspire, and for his genius to influence. Yet, at the same time, he maintained his distance. He was the absolute king, who ruled in all matters pertaining to religion. No one dared challenge his *halachic* decisions—and there was no other.

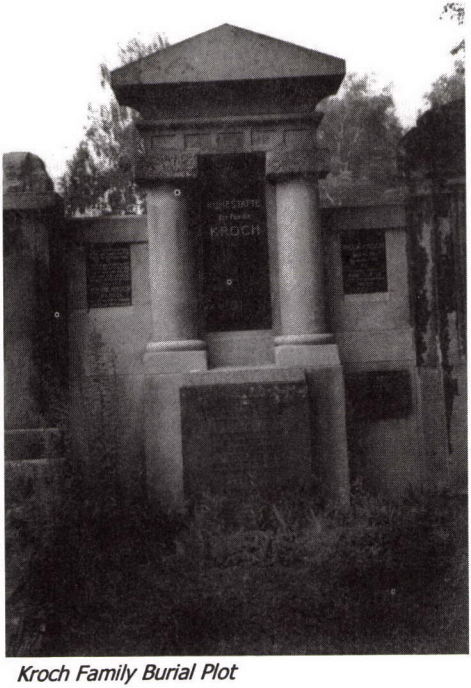
In the *Hinterhaus* of Eberhardstrasse 11 stood the *Tiferet Yehudah Shul*, otherwise known as the *Bernstein Shul*. It was a *Chassidic Shtiebel* founded by the wealthy fur merchant, Leib Bernstein, in the mid-1930s. Bernstein's unlimited financial support was vital to the very existence of the *shul*, and he fully lived up to his responsibilities in this area. On the first *Shabbat* that services were conducted there, he stated emphatically, with tears of joy rolling down his cheeks, that building this *shul* had been his life's dream, and he thanked *Hashem* for allowing him to fulfill this dream. His sincere and unfeigned words, which expressed his warmth and the depth of his earnest devotion, brought tears to many of the assembled. "This is a genuine *Tzaddik*," people commented.

One could find study groups at all hours of the day at the *Bernstein Shul*. It almost seemed that every one of its regular members considered the study of Torah as the zenith of his religious life, and took full advantage of the opportunities available. Since my family resided on the Nordstrasse, right around the corner, we often frequented the *Bernstein Shul*, although our main house of worship remained the *Brodyer Shul*.

During the ravages of *Kristallnacht*, the *shul* suffered the same fate as Leipzig's other synagogues. It was totally demolished, and

then officially locked by the Nazi authorities. It suffered more severe damage when U.S. aircraft attacked the area of the *Hauptbahnhof* during World War II; a bomb landed on the structure and reduced it to rubble. Eventually, the land was razed, and the Intercontinental Hotel now occupies the space. The *shul* had lasted only 3 or 4 years. How sad!

In the spring of 1939, Leib Bernstein managed to escape the *Gehenna* that was Germany. He was able to immigrate to England, where he resided for 11 years. He passed away in 1950. Unfortunately, his son, Josef, his daughters, Rosa, Fanny, and Paula, and their families did not survive. They were confined in concentration camps, where they perished.



Kroch Family Burial Plot

The Kroch family of Leipzig sponsored a private synagogue at their villa in Leipzig Gohlis on the Wilhelmhavener Strasse 2, where a number of close friends congregated for services every *Shabbat*, and on all Jewish holidays. Upon the conclusion of services, there would be a *kiddush*, followed by a buffet lunch. The Krochs were descendants of the eminent *Gaon*, R. Yaakov Leib Kroch, who authored the *Chazakah Rabba*, an 11 volume opus on

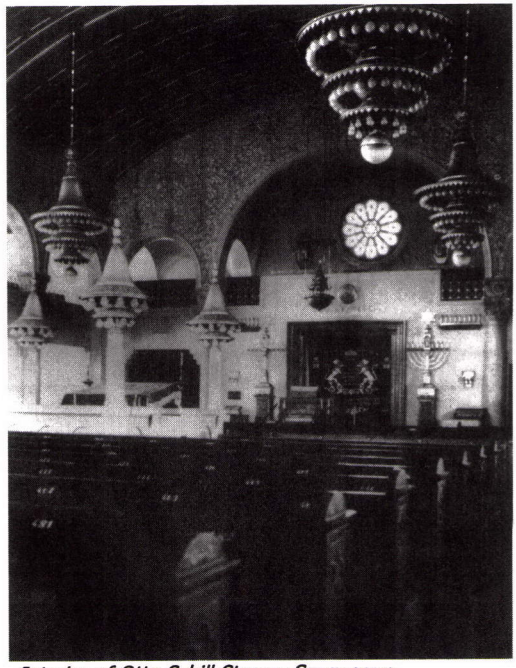
a halachic concept. The Kroch family distributed it free of charge to scholars worldwide, to libraries of Judaica, to rabbinical colleges, to yeshivot, and to many leading rabbis. The Krochs were a highly respected family who contributed immensely to all Jewish community needs.

The sons of Martin Samuel Kroch, the brothers Dr. Curt the attorney, Hans the banker, and Fritz the businessman, not only published the monumental works of their grandfather, R. Yaakov Leib, they continued to financially support the *Brodyer Shul*, which many Leipzigers chose to call Kroch's *Shul.*

Hans became a celebrated individual within Leipzig when he built the first high-rise building on the Augustus Platz in the center of the city, which even nowadays is still referred to as the *Kroch Haus*. It was in this building that the Kroch Bank was situated. On immigrating to Palestine in the 1930s, he generously bequeathed the building to the city. It still stands today, unaffected by the ravages of World War II. Hans eventually endured tragic economic losses inflicted via the pillages of the Holocaust. In Jerusalem, he implemented the building of the Holy Land Hotel, which houses a well-constructed model of the old city of Jerusalem, including the Holy Temple. The hotel was originally intended to be for charity, rather than a profit making enterprise.

In 1939, when my family spent our final *Pesach* in Leipzig, Rabbi M. Melamed remained the only rabbi in the city. He was the spiritual leader of the *Bet Yehudah Synagogue* on the Färberstrasse 1. During the First World War, Louise Ariowitsch acquired the property on the Färberstrasse in 1921, and she organized the first floor of the *Hinterhaus* into a synagogue in memory of her late husband, Max. Right alongside the *shul*, she constructed a modern

mikvah. Of course, after *Kristallnacht*, when the Nazi decree was issued ordering the closing of all of Leipzig's synagogues, it marked the end for *Bet Yehudah*. I clearly remember that R. Melamed then attended services regularly at the *Vierundzwanzig*, which was one of the two *shuls* the authorities permitted to reopen. In fact, he even taught a well-attended class in *Daf Hayomi* at that *shul*. I distinctly remember that Rabbi Melamed had authored and published a scholarly book on many *halachic* topics, which was lauded by many *Gedolim*. Unfortunately, I am unable to recall the name of the book.



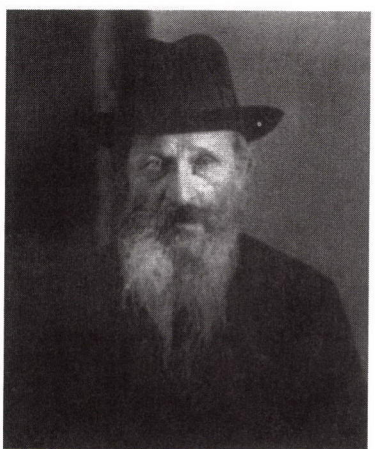
Interior of Otto Schill Strasse Synagogue

Several other *shuls* that were founded by immigrants from Eastern Europe existed in the city. When a sufficient number of Jews originating from the same city arrived in Leipzig, they banded together with their *landsleit* to organize a new *Shtiebel*, which they would name after their city of origin. The Kolomeaer *Shul*, the Yassyer, the Bochnier, the Krakauer, and the Lemberger *Shul* were prime examples of that procedure. (The Tiktiner *Shul* was named after its founder, rather than the city of Tiktin.)

These *shuls* generally did not employ the services of their own

rabbi, due mainly to financial considerations. The Yassyer *Shul* did employ its own rabbi, R. Shim'on Z'ev Waltuch, but only until 1916, when the rabbi expired. This, however, did not present a problem, as other Leipzig rabbis were graciously prepared to respond to their queries and to deal with their specific problems. These rabbis often visited the *shuls* and lectured, especially during festive occasions. Yes, Jewish Leipzig was indeed one united city.

Every one of Leipzig's houses of worship felt the wrath of Nazi hordes on *Kristallnacht*, and they all lay in ruins. Later, the synagogues were officially locked and sealed by the authorities, effectively ending public Jewish prayer sessions. Only two *shuls* were eventually permitted to reopen.



R. Shimon Waltuch

This was the tragic fate of Leipzig's houses of worship. A so-called "master race" had arrived upon the scene, and virtually wiped away the last breath of public prayer. The Jewish city was no more, and at the time, I felt that it would never again reach the glorious days of yesteryear. Only the *Brodyer Shul* remained, as a final reminder of what once was.

We hope and pray that *Hashem* will have mercy on His people, and finally redeem us from the dreadful ordeal of *Galut* with the coming of the *Moshiach*, speedily and in our days.

Horav Shim'on Hurvitz

Horav Shim'on Hurvitz, born in Skudy, Russia, served Leipzig's Jewish community during the latter part of the 19th century. He was descended from a long line of *talmudic* scholars reaching back to Horav Yeshaya Hurvitz (1565-1630), who is remembered for his classic book, *Shney Luchot Habrit*, otherwise known by the acronym *Sh'loh Hakodesh*.

At the age of 18, R. Hurvitz married Gitel Schapiro and the young couple settled in Zager, a town at the Lithuanian-Latvian border. There he founded a small *yeshivah*. In order to avoid exploiting the Torah to earn his livelihood, he established a clothing store, which was managed mainly by his wife. Occasionally, R. Hurvitz paid visits to various trade fairs in Leipzig, in Frankfurt, and in Paris, for the purpose of purchasing merchandise.

Gitel remained faithful to her task and ran the business enthusiastically. This enabled the Rabbi to devote the bulk of his time to the study of the *Talmud* and rabbinic literature. He usually studied on the upper floor of his home, where he had amassed a

huge library. Only daily prayer services interrupted his solitary studies.



R. Shimon Hurvitz

For R. Hurvitz, life and learning Torah were synonymous. Any time not spent learning Torah was time taken away from life's primary activity, for he felt that Torah was the very essence of life.

For there is no greater delight in life than arriving at a new level of understanding by dint of one's own intensive efforts. Each new discovery elevates man to a higher level and uplifts all of creation along with him. Torah was given to man, not angels (Berachot 25b), he would explain, precisely because of man's capacity to grow in Torah through the discoveries arrived at by virtue of his efforts. The angels, however, as purely spiritual beings, are incapable of growth. Their existence is a static one. Nothing gives *Hashem* greater pleasure than *chidushei Torah*—new insights resulting from one's unstinting efforts to delve even deeper into the wellsprings of Torah.

R. Hurvitz often quoted the verse, "praiseworthy is the man whose desire is in the Torah of *Hashem* and in the Torah he meditates day and night" (Tehillim 1:1-2). It occurs in that specific order, he explained, first toil and then love afterward. People generally believe that love of Torah leads to toil in Torah, but in actuality, it is the reverse: toil in Torah leads to love of Torah. The verse teaches that initially, it is called the Torah of *Hashem*. Only later does the student learn to love the Torah and make it truly his own (Avodah Zarah 19a).

On the lower floor, R. Hurvitz organized a *shtiebel*, where daily services were conducted. This tiny congregation of participating neighbors came to be known as "Reb Shim'on's *Minyan*."

Although R. Hurvitz's reputation as a Torah scholar was beginning to spread far beyond the boundaries of Zager, his economic condition was steadily deteriorating. Apparently, his wife had placed too much trust in her employees, and as a result, the business suffered heavy losses.

These economic troubles, coupled with much encouragement

from East European Jews who had settled in Germany and had met the Rabbi on his occasional business trips, convinced him to leave Zager. The year was 1870. He wrote to the world-renowned Anglo-Jewish philanthropist, Sir Moses Montefiore, to apply for a position in his newly established *Ohel Moshe* quarter in Jerusalem (now known as *Mishkenot Sha'ananim*). He included several approbations from leading rabbinic leaders in Europe. The content of Montefiore's reply, if there was one, is unknown, but the position was not offered to him.

Eventually, in the same year, R. Hurvitz accepted a call from the Leipzig community and became the spiritual leader of the *Brody-Tiktin Congregation*, more formally known as "*Khillat Y'reim*." His title was *Rabbinatsassessor*, or simply *Dayan*. His function was to act as a rabbinical judge on Jewish law.

The *Brody-Tiktin Congregation* had been founded by Jewish merchants from Galicia and Russia, who had obtained the right of legal residence in Leipzig. Among them were the first Jews to establish themselves in Leipzig as furriers, a trade in which Leipzig came to play a prominent role.

At first, they conducted their religious services in various locations on Leipzig's Brühl. However, with the arrival of additional Jews from Brody, the surroundings became cramped and overcrowded, and negotiations were inaugurated with the *Rat* of the city of Leipzig and the university, in an attempt to secure more spacious quarters. These negotiations proved fruitful, and in 1818, the Brodyers acquired a more expansive building on the Ritterstrasse. In 1859, they were once again forced to search for new and more permanent headquarters. They created several *Betstuben* on the Brühl, until the beautiful edifice on the Keilstrasse

was finally dedicated in 1904. It remains today, the only synagogue in Leipzig to survive the horrors of the Holocaust.

The members of the Brodyer Congregation had selected R. Hurvitz for his prestigious position because they were greatly impressed with his sharp wit and profound Talmudic erudition. He fully lived up to the expectations of his constituents, and it was in Leipzig that he produced the works that eventually brought him international recognition among scholars. It was in Leipzig, too, that he became known and respected as an arbiter on questions of practical Jewish observance. He had become a *Gaon* of world repute. By the time of his death, the little congregation had grown into a formidable union of Orthodox congregations, with five constituent synagogues and a total membership of 4,500.

R. Hurvitz never hesitated to speak out and condemn organizations and institutions (and their leaders) that, in his eyes, deliberately sought to alienate others from traditional Judaism. He severely criticized Reform groups for their ignorance of Jewish tradition and for seeking to break with the historic past of the Jewish people. He strongly urged the rabbis of Eastern Europe to combat the Reform movement with all the powers in their possession. His harshest assaults were reserved for Abraham Geiger, whom he referred to as "that rebel scholar from Berlin—how dare he advocate basic changes in such essentials as *Shabbat* and circumcision?!"

He issued a brief declaration affirming his solid objection to permitting anyone opposed to the statutes of the Torah to officiate at weddings, grant religious divorces, or perform *chalitzah* (the release of a childless widow and her deceased husband's brother from the obligation of levirate marriage).

This declaration was eventually approved and signed by the most influential Orthodox rabbis of Central and Eastern Europe, who also went on record to prohibit the appointment of rabbis and ritual slaughterers (*shochtim*) who lacked the proper qualifications.

Among the signatories, one finds some of the greatest *gedolim* of the time, luminaries whose Torah insights literally lit up the world. Who, nowadays, can compare with the likes of R. Ya'akov Ettlinger of Altona (author of the *Aruch Laner*), R. Yosef Shaul Nathanson of Lemberg (author of the *Shoel Umeshiv*), R. Avraham Binyamin Sofer (author of the *Ktav Sofer*), R. Ezriel Hildesheimer (founder of the Orthodox Rabbinical Seminary in Berlin), R. Shlomo Ganzfried (author of the *Kitzur Shulchan Aruch*), R. Shamshon Raphael Hirsch of Frankfurt am Main, and the others of this stature?

The crowning achievements of R. Hurvitz's career were in the field of writing and publishing. His first work, entitled *Sha'ar Shim'on*, glosses on a 16th century commentary on the tractate of *Berachot* of the Jerusalem *Talmud* by R. Shlomo Sirillo, a native of Spain, who eventually settled in Safed, Israel. The Sirillo commentary, edited and annotated by R. Hurvitz, was originally printed in Mayence in 1875. The publisher was R. Marcus Lehman, who was the editor of the *Israelit*, the leading organ of German-Jewish Orthodoxy.

R. Hurvitz's emphasis on his Torah studies was unique. The rabbis had always stressed the superiority of the Babylonian *Talmud* over its Jerusalem counterpart. The former was considered the more reliable source since it was redacted at a later date, and therefore its editors were also able to consult the Jerusalem version. Thus, any decision contrary to that of the Jerusalem *Talmud* meant that the latter was rejected (see *Rif* at the end of *Eruvin* and *Shittah*

Mekubetzet in *B. Meziah* 45b). As a result of this approach, a myriad of commentaries were composed on the Babylonian *Talmud*, while the Jerusalem text remained comparatively obscure. R. Hurvitz, however, devoted almost equal time to both versions, and mastered the two branches of the *Talmud* and cognate literature. It is therefore not surprising that his initial work was a commentary on the Jerusalem *Talmud*.

In 1879, the Goldman Publishing House in Warsaw printed the *Tanya Rabbati*, a collection of ritual laws and customs initially published in Mantua (1514) and in Cremona (1565). This Goldman edition was accompanied by R. Hurvitz's brilliant commentaries and emendations, and entitled *Beurei Maharshah*, the Hebrew acronym for *Morenu Harav* Shim'on Hurvitz.



נספח 10

ספר

תניא רבתי

קדש כל הזיינים וחכמתנים וחראים אל ושים וישראלי כלשון צח ונקי. ערך לפניהו שלחן לשכור את דרך עץ וזיתים, ואתר סבוהלי לזרות וראשונים נגן הלו של בעל שבולי הלקט, ומדרש משובבות לי, עי בסמוס, מסכך לחדים של רבתיהו בעלי ותוספות לי.

נדפס ראשונה בכמובזה בשנת רעיד לפ"ק, וכאן שנית בקריסטה שנת שכ"ח לפ"ק, עם תוספות באור סלות החכמות ומפתח לסימני הספר.

ועתה נדפס מחדש עם תוספת מרובה:

באורי מהרש"ה

הם וצרות וחידושים ובאורים, ומקורי ומלבות, משלים בבלי וירושלמי, ספרא, וספרי, תוספתא, מכילתא, ומדרשים, ותשובות וראשונים וחראשונים לי, מבבלי וירם וצעון המפורסם מוהר"י שטעזן ני בסוהר"י שאול הלוי ולי פוש זצוקללה"ה, ואב"ד דק"ק לימפערג יעיא. בעל ומחבר באורים וחצרות נקראים בשם שפוי שטעזן, על וירושלמי וצרפם בשת בק"ק מגענצא, וחוספות וקרות וחידושים לספר חפלוה שבערכין וברפום בוזן.

תנה בסוסב וחוברה, וכל ישר וחיזר, לשער שפי קיסום, וחתוקף בו ב"כ פיזוי וחמקפים בחב"ד.

וואַרשא

ברפום ר' יצחק גאלדמאן נ"י

שנת גחל גבע מקוזי חכבוה לפ"ק

notwithstanding the serious student to trace the many rulings set down in the *Tanya Rabbati* to their original rabbinic sources.

In this edition, R. Hurvitz accomplished what had seemed an almost impossible editorial feat. The version presented to him had been, literally, a closed book. The material was utterly disorganized. In many instances, it was rendered even more unintelligible by gross errors of printers and copyists that no previous publisher had taken the trouble to correct. R. Hurvitz divided the book into chapters and contributed cross-references to earlier rabbinic literature, thus

R. Hurvitz's meticulous comments and editing attest to his prodigious mastery of the *Talmudic* texts and commentaries, and to his phenomenal memory. It is difficult to conceive how this scholar, working without the benefit of encyclopedias and concordances, was able not only to remember a vast array of *Talmudic* passages verbatim, but also to compare these passages and their variants with later novellae and responsa, almost to the final days of his life.

However, his magnum opus was his critical edition of the classic *Machzor Vitri*, the work of *Rashi's* disciple *R. Simchah bar Shmuel* of Vitri, first printed from the Oxford manuscripts in 1889 in Berlin. It is an anthology of laws and customs as known and practiced by Jews in Germany and France during the Middle Ages. The material is interspersed with liturgical poetry intended as additions to the festival prayers, and variants of prayers recited throughout the Jewish year.

R. Hurvitz's work consists of two separate parts. The first is the actual edition from the manuscript preserved at the British Museum. The second is a supplementary, more detailed introduction and index to the work, with contributions by Professor Abraham Berliner. Both parts were published by the *Mekitzei Nirdamim Society* under Dr. Berliner's chairmanship.

In a letter sent to Prof. Berliner, R. Hurvitz invites Berliner's critical comments on the manuscript and hopes that it is not presumptuous to say that without editorial glosses and emendations, a manuscript like the *Machzor Vitri* would be like a basket without handles. Without annotations, referencing the primary sources on which the author bases his rulings, the *Machzor Vitri* would be a closed book to its readers.

Furthermore, R. Hurvitz points out that the original manuscript was filled with mistakes and omissions due to the errors of careless copyists and scribes. He notes that he eliminated all of these shortcomings from the text.

R. Hurvitz was revered and admired by his contemporaries, not only for his enormous knowledge and superior wisdom, but also for his extraordinary gentleness and kindness. He was a most pleasant and affable human being. This was apparent in all of his dealings with his fellow Jews in Leipzig and beyond, no matter what their attitude toward the unwavering Orthodoxy that he championed.

When he was asked to supervise the observance of the *kosher* laws among the city's ritual slaughterers and dealers in *kosher* foods, even the Reform-dominated establishment community—which at the time still officially adhered to the dietary laws—submitted to his authority. He was the recognized expert pertaining to all Jewish law.

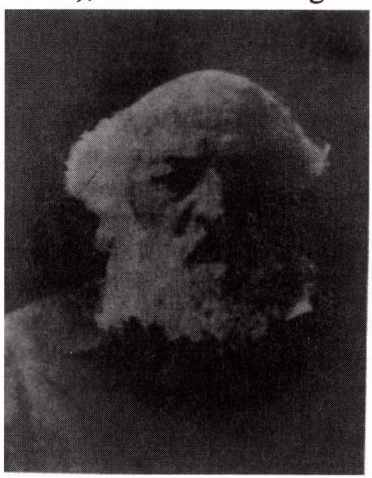
Inquiries from far-flung Jewish communities on matters of Jewish law often reached his desk. It was well-known that R. Hurvitz did not care for petty casuistry or scholarly pyrotechnics; in the case of each question addressed to him, he meticulously focused upon the obvious implications of the problem and provided a simple and straightforward answer.

One who attaches himself to Torah is linked to the Source of all wisdom. For this reason, the renowned visionary, the Gaon Reb Chaim of Volozhin explained, the decisions of those who completely immerse themselves in Torah, banishing any desire other than to live in accord with its dictates, can be fully relied upon. This is so even when they offer no reasons for their conclusions, and

perhaps cannot even articulate their reasoning. The mental processes of such scholars have been shaped by the Torah, and are therefore trustworthy. The wisdom of Torah has been incorporated as part of their very lives.

Once R. Hurvitz's reputation as an outstanding scholar of Torah had been well established, numerous authors of rabbinic writings turned to him for his official *haskamah* (approbation), which they felt would encourage scholars and students to acquire their books. Thus, we frequently find approbations written by R. Hurvitz printed together with endorsements from some of the most noted rabbinical scholars of his day.

Together with R. Yitzchok Elchanan Spektor of Kovno (1817-1896), the acknowledged spiritual leader of Lithuanian-Russian Orthodoxy in his day, R. Hurvitz addressed a letter of approbation and praise to R. Seckel Bamberger, for the publication of his *sefer* *Zichron Avraham* on a work of R. Avraham Bing (1752-1841), a well-known *talmudist* who was noted for his rigorous personal piety and his opposition to the Reform movement.



R. Yitzchak Elchanan Spektor, Chief Rabbi of Kovno

Instead of confining himself to the flowery but routine customary phrases employed by rabbis endorsing posthumous publications of this type, R. Hurvitz explained that, due to physical weakness, he had been unable to read the book in its entirety. However, he accepted R. Bamberger's immense knowledge, righteousness, and integrity as a

guarantee that he would not have published a book that was unworthy.

Despite ill health in his later years, R. Hurvitz spent all of his days and most of his nights in study. He would rise long before daybreak, moving into his study to begin his day with three hours of learning before the recitation of his morning prayers at the private *minyan* that met at his home.

On the day following *Yom Kippur*, approximately four years prior to his death, the Rabbi suffered a fall, resulting in a severe fracture of his arm and leaving him with a perceptible weakness in both arms and legs. He complained to his close pupil, R. Seckel Bamberger, that he longed to prepare his novellae for publication, but was unable to do so because of his inability to write, and the fact that he had no one able to assist him.

After several years of increasingly frail health, R. Shim'on ben Shaul Halevi Hurvitz died at his home in Leipzig on the fifth day of *Adar Sheini*, 5660 (March 6, 1900). His funeral took place two days later, on the afternoon of the seventh of *Adar Sheini* (March 8). It was attended by mourners representing every shade of Jewish religious ideology.

In his eulogy at R. Hurvitz's funeral, R. Josef Nobel of Halberstadt, himself strictly Orthodox, characterized R. Hurvitz as a man of exemplary personal humility and tolerance, who clearly understood the circumstances and temptations that had led many young students and intellectuals of his day to leave the fold of traditional Judaism. Only through his patience and tolerance—yet far removed from unprincipled spinelessness—was this man of peace able to return these youngsters to their roots.

As a youngster residing in Leipzig, having been born more than thirty years after R. Hurvitz's demise, I knew very little about this venerated rabbi and his accomplishments. I simply knew that a rabbi bearing that name had once resided there; nothing else.

I do recall one specific occasion when I did actually become aware of the Rabbi's greatness. My own *Talmud Torah rebbe, Horav Yehudah Potok*, who possessed a most fascinating and entertaining way of relating a story, once informed us of this great *Gaon* who once walked our streets. He had been a giant among men. This great scholar, R. Potok apprised us, actually laid the groundwork and the foundation of our own Orthodox community. He constantly battled his adversaries. He blasted those leaders who minimized Torah and failed to recognize it as the most vital ingredient in the life of a Jew. Leipzig's sturdy and tenacious fort of Orthodoxy, which we all took for granted, had been erected by this *Gaon*. Nowadays, he concluded, we were merely walking on the trail that he had blazed for us.

In 1993, I was informed of a newly published book, entitled The Sage of Leipzig, which drew my immediate attention. It was authored by Dr. Esra Shereshevsky of Philadelphia. Who was this sage, I wondered? Who is Dr. Shereshevsky?

I soon discovered that Dr. Shereshevsky is the great grandson of R. Hurvitz. He had spent years in researching and preparing his classic presentation. I was personally acquainted with his brother, R. Jacob, who taught Jewish studies at the *Carlebach Schule* in Leipzig. He had previously studied at the *Telshe Yeshivah* an was ultimately ordained at the Hildesheimer Rabbinical Seminar in Berlin. Although I was too young to attend R Shereshevsky's classes, it was well known that he was a fabulous teacher, respected and admired by all.

The book is an extremely well-documented account of R. Hurvitz's life and achievements. I perused the book from cover to cover on numerous occasions, and gained many new insights and acumen on the Rabbi's greatness. In fact, much of the information I have attempted to convey in the chapter you are now reading has been derived from the writings of Dr. Shereshevsky. The Sage of Leipzig is a book I highly recommend.

When I became cognizant of the fact that R. Hurvitz and Rebetzin Gitel had found their final resting place in the old Jewish cemetery on the Berliner Strasse, I made it my business to visit their graves during my latest trip to Leipzig in the spring of 1998. I stood in front of the graves, motionless, with great awe and with a spirit of reverence. What a *z'chut*, standing at the graves of such greatness! I lost my composure completely after I attempted to recite appropriate chapters from *Sefer T'hillim*. It remains one of the highlights of the entire trip.

Horav Hurvitz made history in Leipzig. He is certainly deserving of the title, "The Father of Leipzig's Orthodoxy." Unfortunately, the fort he toiled so feverishly to construct is no more. It has collapsed under the heels of Nazi oppression.

"Do not rejoice, enemies of Israel! Indeed I have fallen, but I have arisen again. I did dwell in the darkness, but *Hashem* is my ultimate light," (Michah 7:8). He will bring us back to life, and lead us on to *geulah*, our ultimate redemption.

The Boyaner Rebbe

The *tzaddik* R. Yisrael of Rizhin (1797-1850) was a pious and devout leader in the *Chassidic* world. He is remembered for his royal lifestyle, which he bequeathed to his sons. He wore garments of splendor and his head was adorned with a golden skullcap. His residence resembled a palace and when he left his home, he usually traveled in a magnificent coach drawn by four horses.

He descended from distinguished stock and he could trace his family tree all the way back to King David. His ambition in life was to establish a dynasty, which would eventually culminate with the coming of the *Mashiach*. Deep in his innermost heart, he hoped that the mantle of leadership would fall upon his shoulders, or on one of his six sons, to enable him to liberate Jews from exile and lead them to the land of their fathers.

The oppressed Jews of Russia found comfort and invigoration in the lifestyle of the Rizhiner. At a time when government authorities hindered them from earning a satisfactory livelihood, when they were driven from areas which had been their homes for many years, when their young sons were forcibly recruited to serve in the Czar's

army for tens of years, the Rizhiner's lifestyle appeared to offer them a glimmer of hope. His majestic appearance imbued them with the feeling of an actual existence of a king of Israel. They visualized in him a sprout of the House of David, whose arrival had been foretold by our ancient Prophets.

When the authorities became aware of the Rizhiner's immense popularity among the Jewish masses, and in his increased promotion of their dream to reestablish the Kingdom of Israel, he was immediately arrested by the General-Gouverneur of the Ukraine, and held in custody for almost two years. In order to avoid a newly planned arrest only a short time after his release, the Rizhiner and his family fled to neighboring Austro-Galicia and settled in the tiny township of Sadagora.

As his sons matured and grew in matters of Torah and *Chassidut*, he traveled with his firstborn son, R. Sholom Yosef, to visit the renowned Rebbe of Apto. The Aptoer spoke to R. Sholom Yosef at great length and tested his knowledge in those two areas. After several hours, the Aptoer offered his praise and commendation to the youngster. "You are 'Leipziger *Ware*,'" he concluded. Leipzig, with its biennial trade fairs, had gained the reputation as a city of high class, where only first-rate merchandise (first-rate *Ware*) was available.

When R. Sholom Yosef ascended the throne upon the Rizhiner's demise, he was already suffering from a chronic disease. He traveled to Germany to seek medical aid for his ailment and expired in Leipzig during the first year of his ascendancy.

Chassidim were now commenting that perhaps the Aptoer's remark that R. Sholom Yosef was "Leipziger *Ware*" was not really

intended to confer praise and commendation upon him, but was rather a prophecy as to his final resting place.

R. Sholom Yosef was buried in 1850 in the *Johannistal*, the first Jewish cemetery in Leipzig. At the time, these burial grounds contained more than 300 graves, mostly of Jewish merchants from Brody (*Ostjuden*) who had come to Leipzig to trade in the city's biennial fairs (the Leipziger *Messe*) and died there.

In 1936, the treacherous Nazi regime, without any display of compassion, officially notified the *Israelitische Religionsgemeinde* that the entire area of the cemetery would be turned into a garbage dump (*Schuttplatz*). Therefore, all of the graves would be uprooted. Immediately, and at great expense, the *Gemeinde* transported the 300 graves to the new Jewish cemetery in Eutritsch, where the remains were reburied. The *Gemeinde* kept accurate records as to the names of the individuals in each grave, although no tombstones were placed upon them at the time. The entire effort of reburial was performed under the strict supervision of Leipzig's *Dayan*, the renowned *Gaon* R. Eliyahu Moshe Rogosnitzky.

During my last trip to Leipzig in June 1998, I noticed that a brand new tombstone had been placed upon R. Sholom Yosef's grave, a tombstone that included the many names of the dynasty up to the present day.

With R. Sholom Yosef's burial in Leipzig, inadvertently a bond had now been established between *Chassidim* of Rizhin and the city of Leipzig. Henceforth, the brothers and sons of the departed *Tzaddik* would be visiting Leipzig on a regular basis; to light candles in his memory, to pray at his graveside, and to place *kvitlach* on his tombstone. Leipzig had been placed on the map of Rizhiner *Chassidut*.

The second son of the Rizhiner *Tzaddik*, R. Avraham Ya'akov, now established his Chassidic court in Sadagora. Upon his demise in 1883, his oldest son R. Shlomo remained in Sadagora and expanded his father's court, whereas his younger son, R. Yitzchak, otherwise known as the *Pachad Yitzchak*, moved to Boyan, only a short distance from Czernowitz, the capital of Bukowina. There he established a *Chassidic* court, which marked the inauguration of the Boyaner dynasty, which exists to this day.

The *Pachad Yitzchak* was the father of four sons, all of whom became *Rebbe'im* of the Boyaner dynasty. The oldest was R. Menachem Nachum who established his court in Czernowitz. R. Yisroel was the Boyaner Rebbe in Leipzig, R. Avraham Ya'akov became the Rebbe in Lwow (formerly Galicia and now part of the Ukraine) and the youngest was R. Mordechai Shlomo of New York.


The Boyaner Rebbe of Leipzig

R. Yisroel (Friedman) was born in 1878. He married his cousin Miriam from Sadagora. Upon the demise of his father in 1917, he acceded to the wishes of the *Chassidic* members of the Leipzig community, and established his court within their city. *Chassidim*, even those who adhered to the courts of other *tzaddikim*, considered this to be the opportune time to strengthen and reinforce the existing bond between Rizhin and Leipzig. They promised R. Yisroel a majestic

home and economic support worthy of a descendant of the *Tzaddik* of Rizhin. He would be able to live in absolute splendor, guide his supporters, and elevate his followers to higher spiritual levels.

Shmuel Yosef Czaczkes, better known under his pseudonym, S.Y. Agnon, the Nobel Prize laureate, resided in Leipzig for many years. He was well acquainted with the Jewish scene. In his Im Laden von Herrn Lublin, he revealed that, even two or three generations ago, certain arrivals in Leipzig from *Chassidic* areas of Poland and Galicia conducted themselves in their usual *Chassidic* tradition only within the confines of their homes, whereas in public they exerted every effort to present the image of a modern Westernized Jew. After the outbreak of World War I, when large multitudes of Galician Jews were uprooted and driven from their homes, many who sought refuge in Leipzig conducted themselves in a similar manner.

However, there were some who did not relinquish their *Chassidic* way of life, even in the public arena. Agnon, of course, was referring to Leipzig's Boyaner *Chassidim*, who did not alter even one iota of their *Chassidic* conduct. They were *Chassidim* at home and *Chassidim* in public, so recognized by all.

The Boyaner's court was established on the Leibnitzstrasse 24 in a two-story villa, just several feet from the entrance of Leipzig's beautiful *Rosental*. The house contained both stables and granaries. A beautiful garden in the back of the house, tended by professional gardeners, added a majestic charm and aroma to the entire surroundings. The dimensions of the house surpassed those of all other villas on the street. It was truly a luxurious home for the *Rebbe*, one befitting a descendant of the house of Rizhin.

Even when one adds the Sadagoraer and Czortkover *Chassidim* residing in Leipzig, the Boyaner could not count on more than 40 heads of families who frequented his premises on a regular basis and actively participated in its services. (Both the Sadagoraer and the Czortkover were part of the Rizhiner dynasty. The Rizhiner himself resided in Sadagora in his later years and his son, R. Avraham Ya'akov, established his court there. R. Dovid Moshe, one of the Rizhiner's sons, resided in Czortkov, and his descendants R. Yisroel and R. Nachum Mordechai continued to enhance the Czortkover dynasty.)

Some of the Boyaner's congregants were men of affluence who were blessed with abundant wealth. Those, and other merchants and manufacturers who had distanced themselves from the traditions of their fathers, still remembered their attachment to the court of Rizhin in the "old home" and maintained a steady contact with the Rebbe. They contributed the financial means to help support the royal lifestyle of the Rebbe.

It was indeed a royal court in every detail. The residence compared favorably with the most affluent and opulent in the city. The Rebetzin employed cooks and maids, and house porters and gardeners serviced the house and grounds.

Part of the ground floor served as the prayer area, with a special prayer room set aside for the exclusive use of the Rebbe. The *Tzaddikim* of the House of Rizhin were not accustomed to worship in full sight of the *Chassidim* lest they decrease their power of concentration. They sanctioned nothing that could possibly become a source of distraction from the holy mission in which they were engaged.

Nevertheless, the door to the Rebbe's prayer room was never totally closed. The Rebbe could usually be seen leaning against the door before the repetition of the "*Sh'moneh Esreh.*" Utilizing the door handle, we would signal the cantor exactly when to commence with his recital.

Despite the small number of regular active worshippers at the *shtiebel*, a cantor of world repute graced and embellished the services. Reb Pinyeh Spektor was a humble and unpretentious individual. His face, adorned with the beard and sidelocks worn by many Eastern European Jews, added dignity to his personality. People lovingly referred to him simply as "Reb Pinyeh." He had already established his credentials prior to his arrival in Leipzig. He was recognized by all due to his reputation as a first-rate cantor and as a composer of original melodies in the *Chassidic* courts of Bukowina.

In 1926, he officiated at High Holiday services at the *Ahavot Torah* Synagogue on the Färberstrasse, where R. David Feldman served as the spiritual leader. His musical genius became the talk of the town. Thereafter, he became the official cantor of the Boyaner *shtiebel.* His relationship with the Rebbe was so close that he eventually became a resident of the upper floor in the Rebbe's home.

Reb Pinyeh always enchanted and charmed his audiences with his sweet and melodic presentations, and he thus ingratiated himself with all Leipzigers. Many of his compositions were sung with great delight in numerous homes throughout the city. Experts on liturgical and *Chassidic* music—and Leipzig had many—considered him to be second to none. He compared favorably to the likes of such giants as Rosenblatt and Kwartin. What a *chazzan* he was!


Krystallpalast Theatersaal

Sonntag, den 7. März 1926 abends 8 Uhr

Liturgischer Musik-Abend

des beliebten und bekannten Oberkantors

Pinie Spektor

mit Chor und Orchester, bei dem eigene Kompositionen unter persönlicher Leitung zur Uraufführung gelangen.

שיר המעלות Psalm 126 הללו עבדי ד' Psalm 113

לך ד' הגדולה Marsch בצאת ישראל Psalm 114

Karten sind im Vorverkauf bei C. A. Klemm, Neumarkt 26, Buchhandlung M. W. Kaufmann, Brühl 8, Buchhandlung Geschwister Becker, Nordstraße, Ecke Humboldtstraße 26 und an der Abendkasse ab 6 Uhr erhältlich.

Preise der Plätze: Mk. 1.–, 2.–, 3.50, 4.–, 5.–

Announcement for Reb Pinie Spektor's Concert

Early in March of 1926, Reb Pinyeh delighted a capacity crowd at the *Krystallpalast Theatersaal*, where he and his choir performed some of his own cantorial compositions. His fame had spread far and wide. Even the gentiles who attended were treated to a most fascinating and entertaining evening.

At a Chanukah concert held in the same year, when the world-renowned cantor, Nachum Wilkomirsky of the Otto Schill Strasse Synagogue, was billed as the star of the program, Reb Pinyeh ably conducted the choir with his elegant motions as Wilkomirsky performed cantorial renditions. Leipzigers were delighted and the press raved about this performance for a long time. Leipzig had always been the city of musical giants; Bach, Schumann, Mendelssohn, and many other figures possessing musical genius resided here. . So this is merely a continuation of Leipzig's achievements in the musical field. "Leipzig is the music city of the world," a local newspaper proudly proclaimed.

The Rebbe entered the main prayer room only when called to the Torah, for the *Shalosh Se'udot* meals on *Shabbat* at dusk, for special social gatherings that were usually scheduled on the holidays, and at memorial events, remembering the *Tzaddikim* of the House of Rizhin.

During the High Holidays, attendance at Boyaner services was substantially increased. This was due mainly to the many visiting

Chassidim from other parts of Germany, and also to the numerous Leipzigers who longed to spend these sacred days in an atmosphere of *Chassidut*, in the inspiring environment of the Rebbe. Especially on the evening of *Simchat Torah*, the Rebbe's villa was overflowing with humanity. Many arrived only upon the completion of services in their own synagogues, and some even came from Leipzig's Reform temple. All were most anxious to participate in the Rebbe's Torah processions (*hakafot*), which were known to be both joyous and festive experiences. None were disappointed.

The storerooms, which were generally not utilized throughout the year, were filled beyond their capacity on *Simchat Torah*, and glowed in the brightness of the multi-colored bulbs suspended from the ceiling. For *Simchat Torah*, the storerooms were adorned with beautiful greenery and flowers, and the floor was covered with majestic carpets.

Spirited singing and dancing was the rule of the evening. The Rebbe usually occupied the center of a circle of dancing *Chassidim*, holding on to a neatly decorated Torah scroll. All eyes were focused in his direction. It was truly a scene of magnificence and splendor. The royalty of Rizhin was present, there for everyone to see.

An elderly *Chassid*, with tears in his eyes, once commented to my father that this scene was certainly reminiscent of the *Simchat Torah* celebrations of the Rebbe's father, the *Pachad Yitzchok* of Boyan, where huge multitudes actively participated in lively and vigorous dancing. He had been there in his youth, he said, and was now delighted and overjoyed to see that the light of Boyan had not been extinguished. It continued to convey the message of joy and delectation to so many in the non-*Chassidic* world.

Who actually supported the Rebbe financially? What was the source of his income? Basically, his supporters represented those who were seriously committed to the Orthodox way of life. Others, who had become modernized to a certain extent, were nevertheless most anxious to preserve the traditional lifestyle they remembered from the "old home." So they contributed, and on a large scale.

Morris Zwick, a friend of mine, could still recall how his grandfather rode through town in a horse-drawn carriage in order to solicit funds from wealthy Jews. Mr. Herman Merkin remembers that his father, Reb Leib, who was not a Boyaner *Chassid*, would send him to the Rebbe with large sums of money prior to each holiday. "Boyan represents Torah and *Yiddishkeit* in Leipzig," he would explain. "It therefore becomes incumbent upon all community members to assist the Rebbe in carrying the financial burden."

Even liberal Jews contributed generously. The feeling pervaded throughout, that assisting the Rebbe financially would instill within one a sense of pride in rabbinic leadership. "I may merely be a simple Jew," people would say. "However, my Rabbi is a man of G-d, a truly holy individual, and I'm proud to assist him in living the life of a prince of G-d." So they contributed.

The Boyaner Rebbe contributed immensely in strengthening *Yiddishkeit* in Leipzig. The fact that he refused to participate in any event of a political nature, and that he recoiled from any internecine squabbling, increased his prestige and his influence among the people. His outright repudiation of any type of publicity on his behalf gained him additional esteem and admiration. His humility simply knew no bounds.

I can recall, quite clearly, that once on *Tu Bishvat*, probably in 1935 or 1936, the Rebbe visited the *Talmud Torah* for a holiday celebration, escorted by his *gabbai*, Reb Levi Pick. R. Rogosnitzky's presence also graced the proceedings.

The Rebbe spoke to us at great length and discussed the prominence of *Eretz Yisrael* in our religion. He suggested that it ought to be the ultimate goal of each and every *Ben Torah* to eventually immigrate to the Holy Land. Jews have no future in Germany, he declared emphatically. He created quite a furor among the parents when he added that if we did not emigrate of our own volition, others would surely drive us out, accompanied with suffering and persecution. His unexpected prognostication turned out to be prophetic indeed. Unfortunately, not many heeded his alarm.

In the year 1934 (5635), when Nazism was already in complete control of the country, a most unusual episode occurred. Despite the abominable hatred and the prejudicial hostility that had struck every corner of the Jewish community, untold numbers arrived at the Boyaner *Shtiebel* for the joyous holiday of *Simchat Torah*. They had come to celebrate amidst the spiritual environment of the great *Tzaddik* in order to strengthen their faith in G-d, even in such dire times. They never abandoned their steadfast belief that *Hashem* had not forsaken his people.

During the *Hakafot*, when the *Rebbe* appeared in all of his magnificence and radiance embracing a holy Torah, the enthusiasm of the worshippers reached its zenith. Singing and dancing now continued with unbounded spiritual joy and enthusiasm. The zeal and fervor poured forth without restraint. "The Holy One, the Torah, and Israel are one," they exuberantly declared. These

incessant celebrations continued into the wee hours of the morning.

Two blocks away was the residence of a notorious anti-Semite. He was a wealthy individual, who owned a large carpentry shop in Leipzig. His usual animosity and rancor towards every Jew was widely known. His rage, his loss of self-control from violence of emotion, targeted specifically at his archenemies the Jews, required no explanation. Jews knew all about him; they were familiar with his intense verbal confrontations and occasional threats, and generally kept their distance.

He was especially incensed at Jews who had the audacity and temerity to assemble for joyous public celebrations of their holidays. "How dare they!" he often roared. The *Simchat Torah* celebration gave him no rest. It robbed him of his peace of mind and spirit. "How long will they remain as a thorn in my eyes and contaminate and pollute the very atmosphere?!"

He decided to act and thus terminate the effrontery and the insolent gall of the Jewish people. They must be taught to recognize their lowly stature among the German "master race." On the following morning, he filed a legal complaint in Leipzig's courts against the Boyaner Rebbe, one intended to attack the Rebbe financially, and one that would ultimately compel him to close his facilities. The Rebbe's noisy midnight celebrations were disturbing the peace, he claimed in his citation, and peaceful German citizens should not be required to tolerate such appalling behavior.

It should be noted that the allegations against the Rebbe were totally inaccurate and mere exaggerations. Even Christians residing two houses away or diagonally across the street agreed that they were pure fabrications.

Although ordinarily the German courts would instantly dismiss such charges, this was not to be the case in this process. Under the influence of the Nazi rulers, the prosecuting authority wholeheartedly accepted the allegations, and with typical German efficiency dispatched a summons to the Rebbe. It was imperative for the Rebbe to appear in court to personally respond to the charges of the carpenter.

When the Rebbe's *gabbai* read the court's communication and realized with shock what was in store for the Rebbe, he became greatly distressed by this sudden development. Being fully aware of the treacherous regime that now ruled the country, he felt both agony and mental pain too intense to be borne. Would the Rebbe be incarcerated? Would the *Shtiebel* be forced to close its doors? His face turned pale as he entered the Rebbe's chamber to inform him of his pending court appearance. He strongly suggested that the Rebbe engage an attorney to represent him during the court proceedings.

The Rebbe simply inquired as to who the plaintiff was, and then calmly and resolutely declared that he had no intention of participating in a court case with the *tischler* (carpenter). The *gabbai's* respectful pleas to the contrary were to no avail. The Rebbe remained adamant in his stated position.

Several days later, another communication arrived from the court, setting the trial date on October 12, 1934, at 8 a.m. This date, coincidentally, corresponded with the 3rd of Marcheshvan, the 84th *Yohrzeit* of the Rizhiner *Tzaddik*. The wicked German authorities rarely finalized an actual trial date in their original missives to the defendants. Their intended purpose was to increase their anxiety and uncertainty, and to place them in a state of suspense and apprehension. It bore a connotation of malice and malevolence towards ordinary citizens.

During the *Yohrzeit Hillula*, the Rebbe appeared calm and serene, not perturbed or flustered at all. Apparently, the trial scheduled for the following morning was far removed from his mind. He conducted the proceedings with his usual fervor and passion. He inspired the participants with his glowing personality, with his warmth and radiance. He discussed at length the eminence of the Rizhiner *Tzaddik* and how he succeeded in motivating thousands to accept a holy way of life. It was inconceivable to anyone present that in a few short hours, the Rebbe was scheduled to stand trial against a vicious anti-Semite.

Upon the conclusion of the *Birkat Hamazon*, the *gabbai* inquired as to which time to announce for the commencement of tomorrow's *Shacharit* service. At the usual time, at 8 a.m., was the Rebbe's swift reply. "But how can we begin services at that time? You are scheduled to appear in court in the morning." The Rebbe's reply was consistent with his previously stated position that he had no intention of participating in a trial with the *tischler*.

The *gabbai* made yet another valiant, yet respectful attempt to caution the Rebbe that his failure to appear in court would not only ensure a guilty verdict in his trial with the *tischler*, which could result in the Rebbe's imprisonment, but it would also be instrumental in the filing of an additional charge, that the Rebbe ignored the summons and refused to comply with a legal court order. With an anti-Semitic regime in full control of the country, this could perhaps have a disastrous effect on the entire Jewish community in Germany.

When the *gabbai* realized that the Rebbe's position remained inflexible, he left his chamber and prayed to *Hashem* to help, even if by supernatural means.

In the wee hours of the following morning, there was quite a commotion emanating from the carpenter's residence. A large crowd had gathered there. There were cries of grief, sounds of mourning, wailing, and lamentations that could be heard several blocks away.

As this anti-Semite prepared to go to court, he suddenly collapsed and died instantly. He had been a strong individual, and was not known to be sick previously. The trial never took place, as without a plaintiff, there could no longer be a defendant. The court authorities thus officially closed the case.

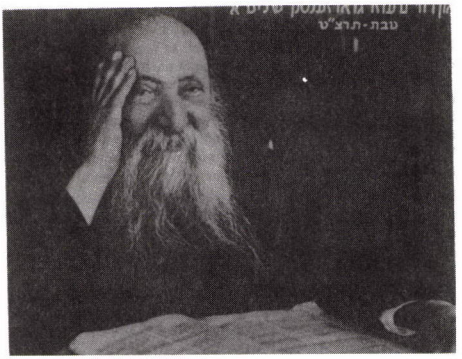
For reasons unbeknownst to me, the Nazi authorities eventually decided to evict the Rebbe from his villa on the Leibnitzstrasse. He then moved to new quarters on the traffic-congested Frankfurter Strasse, a residence not nearly as luxurious as his former dwelling. Early in 1939, he and his family entered Switzerland, from where he finally made *aliyah* to *Eretz Yisrael.*

He reestablished his Chassidic court in Tel Aviv, and despite his weakened health, he participated actively in all functions arranged by the Rizhin dynasty. He became the most revered and venerated spokesman of the group. In 1951, he succumbed to his ailments, and his soul was returned to its Maker on the 30th of the month of Av, in the year 5111. He was laid to rest in the holy city of Tzefat in the cemetery of the *Arizal.*

Upon his demise, the *Zichron Yisroel*, the charity and welfare organization bearing his name, was established; initially in Jerusalem and Tel Aviv, but later broadened to include the city of Tiberias. In 1991, the *Nachlat Yisroel Kloiz*, again bearing his name, was organized by his followers in the Ramot Shlomo

neighborhood in Jerusalem. The *Kloiz* has become the source from which Torah and devotion to *Hashem* constantly emanates.

What were the Rebbe's achievements in Leipzig? How can one summarize his accomplishments? In what way is he still remembered by former Leipzigers, more than sixty years after his departure from the city?



R. Chaim Ozer Grodzensky

The renowned *Gaon*, R. Chaim Ozer Grodzensky of Vilna, once participated in a rabbinic conference in Warsaw, Poland. On his return trip to Vilna, when he was to change trains in a tiny Polish townlet, a throng numbering in the hundreds crowded the railroad station to welcome and to get a glimpse of their distinguished guest. The revered *Gaon*, the Koziglover Rov, R. Aryeh Zvi Frommer, who had recently been chosen to serve as the successor to the late *Gaon*, R. Meyer Schapira, at *Yeshivat Chachmey Lublin* and was recognized as one of Poland's greatest *gedolim*, led the assemblage. He was escorted by his devoted disciple, R. Yitzchok Piekarsky.



Koziglover Rov

After initial greetings, the Koziglover inquired as to whether R. Chaim Ozer had witnessed some new innovative customs or conduct in *Chassidic* Warsaw. R. Chaim Ozer responded that it would be wonderful, indeed, if we were able to transport some of the profuse warmth and exuberance of Warsaw's *Chassidut* to his own city of Vilna. R. Piekarski later related to me that the Koziglover appeared extremely delighted to hear such lofty praise of the warmth and fire of *Chassidut* from a world *Gaon* of the caliber of R. Chaim Ozer.

This is exactly what the Boyaner Rebbe accomplished in Leipzig. He brought warmth, fervor, and enthusiasm into Leipzig's religious life. By emulating the Rebbe's lifestyle, many became more passionate in the performance of *mitzvot*. Fervor and zeal became contagious, and affected even those who had distanced themselves from the glowing incandescent source that was the Rebbe.

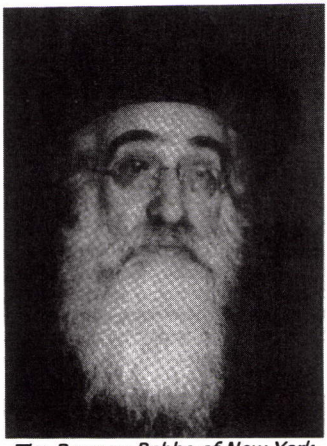
We are enjoined to serve *Hashem* with joy. (See T'hillim, Ch. 100). Despite persecution and oppression emanating from the outside world, the Rebbe, by his own conduct, projected a feeling of *simchah* and infected others with this feeling. No wonder that so many portrayed the Rebbe as the heart of Jewish Leipzig.

Why are zeal and enthusiasm such vital ingredients in the service of *Hashem*? The answer is obvious. The manner in which one performs a *mitzvah* reflects one's attitude toward it. A prosaic and nonchalant performance indicates that the individual is merely going through the motions. A person praying to *Hashem* without zeal and devotion may, in actuality, merely be rattling off the words mechanically. His mouth may be in gear, but his brain is disengaged. However, one who prays with vigor and zeal invests each word with meaning and thought. He is praying with the proper attitude, and his prayer is a genuine prayer,

one that can be accurately labeled as "the service of the heart." (See Ta'anit 2b.)

How appropriate are the words of R. Pinchas ben Ya'ir, who taught that zeal leads to purity, righteousness, and ultimately to holiness. (See Avodah Zarah 20a.) It is a rung in the ladder, and only by ascending it, step by step, can we ever hope to reach the lofty peaks where purity, righteousness, and eventually holiness can be attained.

I personally had a close relationship with the Rebbe's youngest brother, R. Mordechai Shlomo, the Boyaner Rebbe of New York. I would usually greet him on his annual visits to Detroit. He would often publicly voice his high regard of his brother, the Boyaner Rebbe of Leipzig. "Once an individual had been warmed by his glowing fire," he often related, "a spark of holiness would penetrate his very being. Many Leipzigers have, undoubtedly, been imbued with such a spark." Former Leipzigers agree whole-heartedly. He was one of a kind.

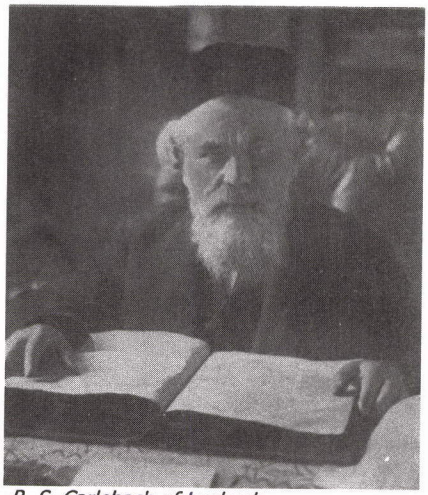

The Boyaner Rebbe of New York

R. Yisroel Friedman, Leipzig's Boyaner Rebbe, was known to his followers as the "*Ohr Yisrael*," the Light of Israel. It is a most befitting title for one who has shed the light of Torah and *Chassidut* to so many individuals.

Horav Ephraim Carlebach

R. Ephraim Carlebach was born in 1879 in the city of Lübeck, Germany. He was the fifth child of R. Solomon Carlebach, the Chief Rabbi of Lübeck.

Lübeck was blessed with some outstanding *balebatim*, unique in their goodness, piety, and honesty. All of the council members were so devoted to their rabbi and his entire household, so imbued with respect for tradition, that not even the slightest discord disturbed the inner harmony of the community. Thus, the Rabbi was spared the bickering that embittered the lives of spiritual leaders of so many communities at the time.



R. S. Carlebach of Luebeck

R. Solomon Carlebach treated his children as friends. It is,

therefore, hardly surprising that his children always sought to emulate him. He was the ideal companion of their intellectual formation. His son Josef, the future rabbi of Cologne, once declared, "I shall always be grateful for the calm and sureness with which he discussed with me all the problems that troubled me, how he set forth for me the reasons why the ideology of traditional Judaism is second to no other in its veracity."



The Synagogue of Luebeck

As a disciple of R. Shamshon Raphael Hirsch and R. Ezriel Hildesheimer, he taught to fight only certain ideas, never personalities. Had not Hirsch written in his Nineteen Letters, "Be

angry with none, and respect all. Mourn the opponent, lament his defection, fight his erroneous opinion with all the spiritual weapons of our exalted literature, but keep away from personal animosity. Mostly it is not the opponent alone, but his entire past that is at fault."



R. Shamshon Raphael Hirsch

Ya'akov Avinu, in his farewell to his sons, made every effort not to assail and downgrade the personalities of his sons Shim'on and Levi, although their deportment clearly displeased him. "Cursed be their anger and cursed be their wrath, but never shall the persons of Shim'on and Levi be cursed," (Rashi, B'reshit 49:7). "One can but pray that wickedness and evil be eliminated and removed from the earth," (B'rachot 10a).

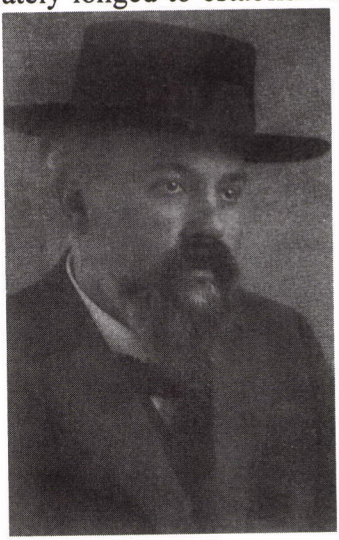
When the renowned scholar Abba Chilkiyah was asked why Heaven would not consider his own deeds as meritorious as those of his wife, he related that once, when bandits rampaged his neighborhood, he prayed for their death, whereas she prayed that they repent and change for the better (Ta'anit 23a).

To hate a specific individual and pray for his destruction is to assume that this person is forever evil incarnate, and beyond change. Once such an image of a person has been created, teaching him becomes an impossible task. One cannot antagonize and hope to influence at the same time.

Young Ephraim studied diligently under his father's guidance. Then, upon leaving the Gymnasium in Lübeck, he continued his studies at the University in Zurich. At the same time, he continued his *Talmudic* studies with the revered R. Ehrman in the nearby town of Baden.

Finally, in 1898, he entered the *Hildesheimer Rabbinical Seminary* in Berlin, where he became the favorite pupil of R. David Hoffman, author of the classic *sefer* M'lamed L'ho'il. R. Hoffman had succeeded R. Ezriel Hildesheimer, who by then had already reached a ripe old age. R. Ephraim was so fond of R. Hildesheimer that he eventually named his first son after this *Gaon*.

R. Ephraim devoted the morning and evening hours to his Talmudic studies, and the afternoons to teaching in the religious school founded by R. Hildesheimer. R. Hildesheimer, who was a respected *Talmid Chacham*, and revered as such by even the greatest scholars of Poland and Lithuania, desperately longed to establish a *yeshivah* for the youngsters of his community. However, due to compulsory secular education in Germany, this was not feasible. So he founded a religious school, and assigned the teaching duties to his star pupils.



R. Ephraim Carlebach

When R. Ephraim Carlebach was assigned to teach *Mishnah* and *Talmud* in the upper classes, he was an immediate success. A class with R. Carlebach at the helm was never tiresome or dull. He soon became the favorite of the entire *Adas Yisrael*

community in Berlin, and many parents clamored to have their child enrolled in his class.

Early in 1900, R. Ephraim's sister Sarah moved to Berlin, and for one year he resided in her apartment. The apartment was conveniently located near the school and the seminary. Then, shortly before the *Yamim Hanora'im* of that year, a delegation from Leipzig arrived in Berlin in search of a rabbi who was not only a scholar par excellence, but able to take charge of educational activities. R. Carlebach, though only 20 years old at the time, was highly recommended for the position.

Jews from all corners of Europe flocked to the great biennial Leipzig fairs, the *Leipziger Messe*. However, it was only in the latter part of the 19th century that they began to settle there in large numbers. From then on, the Jewish community's growth was rapid. Soon, many congregations existed, each serving Jews who had immigrated to Leipzig from different locations, such as Brody, Yassy, Bochnia, Krakow, and Lemberg. People generally preferred to worship with their own *landsleit*, where they retained the customs of their "old home."

However, the Reform movement had made substantial gains, and Orthodoxy was in a sad state. Although Eastern European Jews desperately sought to raise their children in a strict religious fashion, they were equally determined not to decline and repudiate opportunities leading to rewarding careers. Was not Leipzig reputed to be the city where wealth and affluence dominated, and prosperity was always just around the corner? Often, these two goals clashed.

The public gymnasium, the gateway to higher education, prohibited Jewish students from absenting themselves from classes

on the *Shabbat*. They were required to participate in all class activities, including writing, drawing, and needlework. So much for those who maintain that religious freedom in Germany in the pre-Hitler years was fully enforced, and ranked with the religious freedom practiced in the United States!

Moreover, religious instruction for Jewish students in the gymnasium was entrusted to a Reform rabbi, who took full advantage of the rights granted him by the government and attempted to influence youngsters from strictly Orthodox homes with his own views. Of course, parents of foreign origin could always enroll their children in private schools where, at their request, such obstacles could be overcome. Unfortunately, these institutions, profiting from the deplorable situation, charged these foreigners exorbitant sums, much higher than the ordinary and accepted tuition fee.

Although a large percentage of Jewish Leipzig was Orthodox, they seemed helpless. It took a long time for them to realize that they could not stand idly by while their young were being guided in another direction. Finally, a number of concerned individuals banded together with the aim of establishing a new synagogue.

This new synagogue would be guided by a rabbi who, besides a thorough knowledge of Torah, also possessed a worldly education; someone amply qualified to present the Orthodox point of view to the authorities. He would have to be an inspiring and effective leader, capable of motivating the young. It was then that the council, otherwise known as the *Talmud Torah Verein*, under the dynamic leadership of the venerated Josef Binyamin Sachs, turned to Berlin and selected the 20-year-old scholar, R. Ephraim Carlebach.

With a youthful zest and boundless optimism, R. Carlebach threw himself into his task, one that would have daunted many a spiritual leader with decades of rabbinic experience behind him. Jewish youth quickly rallied around him. Under his dynamic leadership, no sacrifice seemed unendurable, and the youngsters brought a new and refreshing spirit into their homes. Young and old admired this fascinating teacher. Among his first pupils was Hans Kroch, who, even when he became a genuine merchant prince, retained an almost filial loyalty to the teacher of his youth. Kroch eventually became a pillar of German Orthodoxy.

Due mainly to Kroch's philanthropic endeavors, whereby he contributed generously, the new *Brodyer Shul* on the Keilstrasse was dedicated in 1904. This magnificent edifice incorporated the many East European *shtieblach* that existed at the time. The synagogue still stands today. It remains the only one of Leipzig's synagogues to survive the flames of *Kristallnacht*, and serves as a constant reminder of the glorious years that preceded Hitler's new order.

Another of R. Carlebach's devoted students was Hans Lehman, who was to immigrate to Stockholm, Sweden, where his home served as a center of Jewish life in a community remote from the influence of Torah. Lehman sent all of his four sons to study at the renowned *Mir Yeshivah* in Poland.

His son, the late Dr. Manfred Lehman of New York, was an eminent scholar in his own right. He continued to follow in his illustrious father's footsteps to become a leading spokesman for Orthodoxy. Many a *yeshivah* was rescued from the straits of total financial collapse due to his personal commitment and endeavor. His was an eloquent voice in the Jewish world.

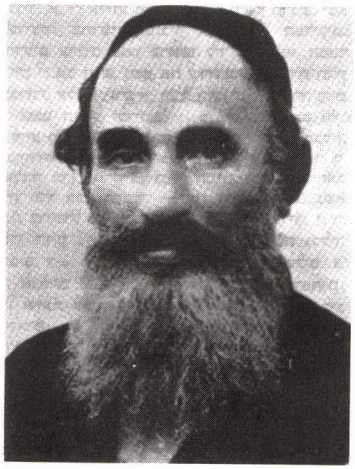
Others taught by Carlebach include the Goldman brothers, revered figures in the Washington Heights Congregation guided by R. J. Breuer. There was also Herman Merkin who, along with his wife Hannah, conducted a delightful Jewish home in New York, and was personally involved in many philanthropic undertakings.

During R. Carlebach's first years in Leipzig, he boarded at the home of R. Shim'on Hurvitz's widow on the Berliner Strasse. The 95-year-old *Rebetzin* was a woman of exceptional wisdom and kindness. Until the day of his death, her husband had risen from his bed at 3 a.m. to study the Talmud undisturbed until it was time to recite the morning prayers. The *Rebetzin*, true to her Lithuanian ancestry that placed Torah above everything else, also rose at that early hour to prepare tea and cake to fortify her husband physically.

When R. Carlebach moved into the house, she inquired as to whether she should awaken him in the wee hours of the morning. She had assumed that he, too, was accustomed to study at an early hour, and was totally surprised to discover that R. Carlebach's day would commence with the *Shacharit* service.

Unfortunately, the youthful optimist's path was not always covered with roses. Eastern European Jews were rather suspicious of an Orthodox rabbi who was secularly cultivated and well groomed. They were also unaccustomed to having the disciplined services and polished sermons so dear to Western Europeans. Confronted with a *yecke* (a German-born Jew) who sought to introduce German punctuality, decorum, and customs, many opposed him. These people sincerely felt that in opposing him, they were striking a blow for the old, unadulterated form of Judaism; and they founded an opposition community, *Machzikey Hadat*.

The *Kehillah Machzikey Hadat* had been successfully organized by Rav Shmuel Halpern, a Galician-born scholar who received his rabbinic ordination from the renowned Torah giant, the *Maharsham* (Rav Sholom Mordechai of Berezhany), and who became one of the early leaders of Leipzig's Orthodox community. He settled in Leipzig right after the conclusion of World War I. Due to his outstanding scholarship and majestic personality, his influence was felt far and wide. His valiant efforts on behalf of Orthodoxy bore fruit. They certainly went a long way in making Leipzig the Torah community that it was.


R. Shmuel Halpern

However, Rav Halpern only remained in Leipzig for a few years. Eventually, he settled in Israel and became the spiritual leader of *Agudat Yisrael* in Tel Aviv. When his younger brother, Rav Yaakov, later founded the new *shechunah* of Zichron Meir in B'nei Brak, he was installed as the neighborhood's first rabbi.

Although R. Carlebach's *shochet*, Hillel Schneider, was a man of learning and steadfast piety, revered and respected by all members of Leipzig's splintered community, some impetuous members of the newly formed *Machzikey Hadat* nevertheless cast aspersions upon the *shechitah* performed by Schneider under R. Carlebach's supervision. They appointed an Eastern European rabbi as their authority on all religious questions. On the other hand, there were some undiluted German Jews who felt that R. Carlebach had become too "easternized."

But R. Carlebach did not abandon his optimism. Moreover, he never lost his genuine love and understanding, even for those who publicly resisted and antagonized him. All along, it should be noted, his most outspoken adversaries often approached him with their personal problems. In their hearts, they were convinced of his sincerity and integrity.

Having been born many years after these events occurred, I must emphatically declare that I was completely flabbergasted when they were first brought to my attention. Never had I heard anything even vaguely critical of Reb Hillel Schneider. During my brief residence in Leipzig (I emigrated from Leipzig at the age of 12), he was considered perhaps the most revered individual residing in the city. All factions were virtually unanimous on this point. To state that a man possessing such lofty attributes and of such high caliber was not universally trusted, and could not be relied on in his performance of *shechitah*, is something that still boggles the mind.

Likewise, can any intelligent human even question the sincerity and wholehearted performance of a R. Carlebach? Can anybody ever be suspicious of the motives and decisions of a man so devoted and so dedicated?

By the time I was a participant in the life of Leipzig, the situation was completely different. I know of no one who ever cast the slightest shadow upon the character of these two spiritual giants. When I discussed this matter with my father many years ago, he fully concurred with my appraisal. Perhaps by then, the genuine sincerity and character of these two men had become apparent to everyone, and they were universally recognized for what they really were.

R. Carlebach was always prepared for reconciliation, even with those who had spread the most slanderous and malicious rumors about him. He never bore a grudge, nor did he ever display any malevolence toward those who had publicly maligned him. Indeed, he came to terms with rival rabbis and joined them in forming a *Bet Din*. One of his original opponents was R. Nechemiah Nobel, with whom he developed a close friendship. In the summer of 1905, they worked out a solution to their differences, where they were to occupy the pulpit at the *Brodyer Shul* on alternate weeks. At a public reconciliation, they both stated in moving terms that it was the solemn duty of every Jew to emulate the conduct of the *kohen* Aharon, to love and to pursue peace.

A short time later, R. Nobel accepted a call to serve the Jewish community of Hamburg, where he would labor successfully for the next five years. In 1910, he succeeded R. Markus Horowitz in Frankfurt.

Disappointment or reverses had no effect on R. Carlebach's energy and persistence in the cause of Orthodoxy. When he arrived in Leipzig, *shechitah* was still forbidden in the entire province of Saxony, the only German province where agitators had managed to enforce what were allegedly more humane methods of slaughter. *Shochtim* could therefore operate only on the Prussian side of the border, which meant greater expense and transport difficulties. (A similar situation exists in Switzerland today, where *shechitah* has been outlawed for more than a century.)

R. Carlebach communicated with his Berlin friend, Dr. Hirsch Hildesheimer, the courageous fighter against attacks directed at our people, and both men set about the task of gathering testimony from the most renowned authorities in the fields of medicine, anatomy,

veterinary science, pathology, and physiology at home and abroad. More than 200 of these experts unanimously agreed that *shechitah* is the most humane of all methods of slaughter, and causes the animal no pain whatsoever.

At last, after ten years of zealous pursuit, their efforts bore fruit. The Saxon cabinet finally relented and accepted the views advanced by so many eminent authorities; and as of the year 1910, *shechitah* was permitted in Saxony. Only with the advent of the Hitler regime in the 1930s was *shechitah* again placed off-limits, as the Nazis, simply bursting with humanity, sought a "more humane" method. Preventing cruelty to animals was foremost on their agenda.

In March of 1905, R. Carlebach married Gertrude Jakoby of Bromberg. Between the years of 1908 and 1914, the couple was blessed with five children, two sons and three daughters.



The Hoehere Israelitische Schule

The crowning achievement of R. Carlebach's career was in the field of education. He founded the *Höhere Israelitische Schule*. He devoted all of his energies to this cause, whose importance he had recognized immediately upon his arrival in Leipzig. The state of affairs, whereby Jewish pupils were compelled to desecrate the *Shabbat* in the public schools or pay exorbitant fees in the private schools, was simply intolerable to him. Furthermore, compulsory school attendance, even on

Shabbat and *Yom Tov*, prevented children from participating in synagogue services on those days, and precluded them from joining their parents for their festive meals.

Even on weekdays, Jewish education was considered second rung. Since the youngsters attended secular school in the morning hours, religious training could only be scheduled in the afternoon. As a result, youngsters arrived at their religious classes in a most depleted and exhausted frame of mind, often finding it difficult to function adequately. No wonder that many considered these afternoon classes as undue hardships and an interference in their daily routine, which included sports and other facile activities.

Under such circumstances, how can even the most dedicated and conscientious instructor succeed in the holy task confronting him? How can he hope to successfully captivate and inspire these youngsters with Torah traditions and steer them towards a life of Torah? Before they even commenced their activities, they had already been hit with three strikes. To R. Carlebach, there was only one solution. A Jewish school, he knew, was vital. Judaism's future in Leipzig was at stake.

However, R. Carlebach faced formidable difficulties, more from Jews than from official government quarters. In addition to those who sneered at him as an impractical dreamer, there were others who openly maintained that a Jewish parochial school meant a return to the ghetto life of the Middle Ages, and that the isolation of Jewish children would harm them in later life. They would be unable to integrate into a society dominated by Christians. The "upper-class" Western Jews, who were so proud of their ancestry and constantly boasted of their pure German origins, categorically rejected the school, preferring that their children associate with

gentile children of their own class and rank on the social ladder, rather than with those whose parents might have come from Eastern Europe and lack culture and social graces.

R. Carlebach was not discouraged or deterred by all of this varied opposition. He had staunch and faithful allies. There was Leopold Dubiner, who was the only Eastern European Jew in the administrative body of the Jewish community. Due to his fairness and altruism, he enjoyed the respect and admiration of Eastern and Western European Jews alike. As soon as the Saxon Ministry of Religion gave the necessary approval for the school, Dubiner registered all of his children there. Countless other families followed suit.

There was Leib Merkin, the *gabbai* of the Brodyer Shul and a bonafide *talmid chacham*, who became a fervent supporter. There were many others too numerous to mention. Even in the non-Orthodox community, the Rabbi's status began to improve as many came to admire his efforts, which were totally saturated with love for his people.

Alderman Samuel Hodes, an Orthodox businessman who was the proprietor of the *Textilhaus* on the *Neumarkt*, became the chairman of the newly elected school board. Among its members were men of great stature and nobility, such as Max Rosenfelder, Rudolf Schick, and Isaac Hepner.

When the school finally opened in 1912, classes were conducted at two different locations. The school for girls was temporarily located in the Humboldtstrasse 14, while the boys utilized the rooms of the Volkwohl Verein on the Löhrstrasse 7. Even during this first year of operation, as many as 204 boys and 73 girls were in

attendance. These figures were encouraging indeed, and they forecast a bright future for the school. R. Carlebach was elated.

Finally, in 1913, the construction of the new edifice of the *Höhere Israelitische Schule zu Leipzig*, on the Gustav Adolf Strasse 7, was completed. The building was officially dedicated on June 25th of that year.

It was a most festive occasion for Leipzig's Jewry. Guests arrived representing Jewish communities from all corners of Germany. R. Carlebach's own father, the rabbi of Lübeck, honored those assembled with his presence. Many eminent religious leaders graced the dais. There were government leaders who had traveled long distances to honor R. Carlebach and all that he represented. What a glorious day in the annals of Jewish Leipzig's history!

The guidelines of the school and its goals were brilliantly outlined and expounded by the school's new director, R. Carlebach. It followed the classic formula prescribed by German *gedolim* (R. Ya'akov Ettlinger, R. Shamshon R. Hirsch, R. Ezriel Hildesheimer, and R. David Hoffman), "Torah nebst weltlichen Wissen," (Torah next to secular knowledge). There must be complete harmony between the two.

Though Torah is the key to our existence and our survival, and we dare not compromise or undermine it in the slightest, we must nevertheless never diminish or even slightly reduce our endeavors in the secular area. Worldly knowledge is most vital for us today, because it enables us to cope adequately in a modern society.

Despite the fact that R. Carlebach's views had carried the day, Leipzig's community continued to be plagued by division, though to a lesser degree. While some celebrated the founding of the new

school, others remained totally unimpressed and continued to keep their distance.

As the school's popularity increased during the ensuing years, its enrollment continued to grow by leaps and bounds. Whereas at the beginning of World War I only 350 students were in attendance, by the time the war ended, the school's population had more than doubled. Leipzigers were no longer discussing a school with great potential; rather, a school with a proven record of excellence.

Leipzig's students of all schools wore specially designed shielded caps. The caps of all schools were identical in all but color. The cap representing the *Carlebach Schule* was chocolate brown, encircled by a silver band. Students of the *Carlebach Schule* wore it with pride, although it easily identified them as Jews. We never harbored even the slightest intention of concealing our Jewishness. Besides, we were especially proud of our school, which rated among the best in education. *Kaufhaus Brühl* always carried a large supply of these caps.

I can still recall, quite vividly, when my parents took me to the *Kaufhaus* to purchase such a cap, before the arrival of the *Yomim Tovim* in the fall of 1938. Unfortunately, no chocolate colored caps were available. The caps were of a similar color, perhaps purplish, but not really brown. When my parents decided to purchase the available cap despite my opposition, I was reluctant to don it on *Yom Tov*. The cap would not identify me as a student of the *Carlebach Schule*, I insisted, and there could be no pride in wearing such a cap. Only after *Yom Tov* started, when I discovered that many of my friends had donned such caps, did I succumb to the pressure of my parents.

Why were the brown caps no longer available? Many felt that it was simply a business decision. With the steady decrease of the Jewish population due to emigration, perhaps the proprietors concluded that the brown cap was no longer an item of popular demand, and thus suspended its distribution.

Others, however, felt (and this feeling was eventually substantiated by friendly gentiles) that the German population actually despised the cap, which was worn exclusively by Jews. They considered it an act of arrogance and haughtiness. How dared these lowly Jewish creatures so proudly display this cap in the presence of men of the superior master race? Did they not recognize their inferiority and lowly status in German society?

On one occasion, we were confronted by Nazi youths, who lambasted and thrashed us because of our arrogance, manifested by the cap. Some suggested that we wear white caps circled with a red band to symbolize the Jewish blood they intended to spill. This led to inevitable altercations, followed by fisticuffs. Being greatly outnumbered we were, as usual, on the losing side of the battle. Bloody noses and swollen lips were the end result. It is noteworthy that two German police officers nearby were able to observe the entire scene, and made absolutely no effort to intervene and halt the proceedings. "So much for justice and equality in Germany," my father sadly remarked when I informed him of our encounter.

Eventually, even certain Jewish elements opposed the wearing of the cap because it might serve to incur the wrath of the German masses. It was the old policy of "be a Jew at home and a German on the street." Why must Jews be so conspicuous in public and present such a high profile? This is the path, they warned, that would ignite the flames of anti-Semitism within the city.

R. David Ochs, who became the Orthodox *Gemeinderabbiner* when R. Carlebach emigrated, did not share this view. Concealing one's Jewish identity, he declared, would not save us. The anti-Semites knew who we were, and they would find us even if we abandoned the brown caps. Jews must take pride in their religion; and as long as we remained within the confines of the law, nothing should compel us to modify our mode of dress or alter any of our customs.

As required by Leipzig's educational authorities, many secular subjects were taught at the *Carlebach Schule*. The daily study of Jewish religion was also part and parcel of the regular program. However, due to the varied educational levels of the students in this area, preparing a curriculum proved to be an almost impossible task.

One must remember that first graders were generally six year olds, many of whom had never seen the inside of a *siddur*. Therefore, in order to cater to the needs of these beginners, first grade instruction concentrated on teaching the *aleph-bet* to enable these youngsters to read Hebrew fluently.

This presented quite a problem for those who had attended R. David Feldman's *Talmud Torah* since the age of four. In the *Talmud Torah*, where students attended religion classes for 12 hours weekly, many had already advanced to the study of *chumash*, and perhaps even to the commentary of *Rashi*. These youngsters felt completely out of place in a beginner's class. Since virtually no new material was presented to them, the class was extremely boring. Naturally, their report cards always read number one, which was the top mark attainable, though they had not expended an ounce of exertion or effort.

I must, however, vehemently disagree with some of my former classmates from Leipzig, who maintained that the religious education in the early classes at the *Carlebach Schule* were a total waste of time. Despite their shortcomings, we were still able to learn a great deal.

Our instructors were all fabulous and well-liked individuals. They taught us many laws and customs. The fascinating and entertaining stories they related taught us much of the eminence of our distinguished *gedolim*, and we learned of the appropriate character traits that a true Torah Jew should possess. Who can ever get bored while listening to the amazing events in the life of the renowned *Chofetz Chaim*, or of the famed *Lubliner Rov*, R. Meir Schapira, both of whom passed away during my first school year?

We sincerely loved and admired our *rabbeim* at the *Carlebach Schule*, although corporal punishment was very much in style. I still maintain warm feelings for R. Lipschütz, R. Löwy, R. Werczberger, R. Kohn, and R.Schereschevsky, bright stars and innovators in the promotion of Torah in Leipzig.

In the fourth or fifth year of my schooling, the class was finally divided for religious studies. The more advanced students—those who had been attending daily Talmud Torah classes—were placed in a more accelerated program. (As far as I can remember, girls had always been separated from boys during religion classes.)

With unbridled enthusiasm, we arrived for the first class. This year we'd really learn something, we reasoned. Much to our delight, we soon discovered that R. Pinchos Ya'akov Kohn, the great *Talmudic* scholar, would be our *rebbi*, and would be teaching us *Mishnayot*. R. Kohn, born in Hungary, had studied at the world

famous *Chatam Sofer Yeshivah* in Pressburg (now Bratislava), where he received his rabbinic ordination. In 1912, he became one of the first instructors at the *Carlebach Schule*.

Word of R. Kohn's *Talmudic* know-how had spread far and wide. He edited the 11-volume work of Ya'akov Leib Kroch, entitled *Chazaka Rabbah*, which deals capably with a most intricate *halachic* concept with ramifications throughout all tractates of the *Talmud*. (The final volume of this opus, as well as three volumes of *Halachah Rabbah*, was later published in Jerusalem.) Among my fellow students, the enthusiasm was unanimous. What an honor to study Torah under the tutelage of this Torah giant!

After consulting with R. Ochs, R. Kohn selected the tractate of *Beitzah* for our *Mishnayot* studies, and we began to study in earnest. Although we all had studied *Mishnayot* before, this class turned out to be a new experience for us. We learned *Mishnayot* in depth. R. Kohn taught every section of the *Gemarah* relevant to the *Mishnah* we were studying. R. Kohn constantly taught that genuine Torah study requires one to delve more deeply into the text, to toil and to proceed with great effort in order to comprehend the text in a more mature manner, and to discover original and novel approaches that might help to reconcile inconsistencies. Needless to say, we learned a great deal in this class.

Even in classes at the *Carlebach Schule*, where secular subjects were taught, *limudei kodesh* subjects were not ignored as many instructors attempted to integrate their lessons with Torah thoughts. Thus, during the orientation session for the German language course, when Dr. Guttman (or Gutenberg) informed us that we would be required to turn in a composition on a monthly basis, he assured us that extra points would be added for those who wrote on

a Torah-related topic. Likewise, during Friday's sessions, when four different students were required to present a brief discussion on a selected topic, a comment on the weekly *parsha* would be highly regarded, and result in a higher grade.

I can still recall a time when we spent two weeks in Professor Levy's math class learning about the intricate dimensions of our holy *Beit Hamikdash*, as detailed in the tractate of *Midot*. We attempted to convert the biblical measurements of *tefach* and *amah* to the modern-day meter. Likewise, the 40 *sa'ah* required for a *mikvah* were scrutinized in great detail and finally adapted to the liter.

R. Carlebach, in Leipzig's yearbook of 1931, emphasized a major difference between a secular school and the *Carlebach Schule*. In a secular school, the child's soul is saturated with facts that have no relevance to religion. Often, these facts are diametrically opposed to religion. In the *Carlebach Schule*, however, all lessons were positioned firmly under the rule of religion. All other cultures taught must be evaluated and measured against the yardstick of religion. There must exist an unequivocal state of total harmony. No contradictions can remain in the mind of an impressionable youngster, and of course, Torah must never be compromised or conveniently whittled down.

Although the overwhelming majority of the *Schule's* instructors were of the Jewish faith, one Christian professor, Alfred Menzel, deserves special mention.

Professor Menzel, a Social Democrat, commenced his higher education at the University of Kiel, where he received his degree in 1919. As early as 1920, he was already a welcome guest of Jewish

organizations in Leipzig, where he lectured extensively on various topics of his expertise. From 1922 to 1939, he taught at the *Carlebach Schule* with great success. Recognizing his prominence as a distinguished scholar, students from all classes flocked to him constantly, eager to gain access to his superior mind. He was rarely seen alone.



Professor A. Menzel

The professor would expend much of his energies to address his friends from the academic world, philosophers and scientists, for the purpose of soliciting much-needed funds for the *Carlebach Schule*. He was a most dedicated and devoted member of the faculty. There was not a racist bone in his body.

Unfortunately, the Nazis accused him of being an enemy of the state, of insulting the *Führer*, of teaching at the *Carlebach Schule*, and of being sympathetic and supportive of Jewish causes throughout the years. As a result, he and his wife were arrested by the *Gestapo*, and both were sentenced to long prison terms. When they were finally released in 1945, he continued to teach at the University of Leipzig until his retirement in 1953.

People who knew him still sing his praises. He was a genuine *ohev Yisrael*. Undoubtedly, he will be amply rewarded as one of the *chassidei umot haolam*.

What kind of man was R. Carlebach? How did his congregants

and his students evaluate him? What message did he convey?

In the eyes of all who knew him, he was not merely the *Gemeinderabbiner* and the director of the *Carlebach Schule*. He was the heart and brain of both. In Leipzig, he began what he considered to be his task as a spiritual shepherd of the community without ever neglecting its day-to-day needs. He became the patron of the community.

He possessed a glowingly warm personality, one that could melt the iciest heart. He was deeply concerned with the welfare of all and acted whenever a need arose. No task was ever too arduous for him.

Arrogance and vindictiveness had no place in his constitution. But despite the fact that he displayed a sense of humility and meekness at all times, the community envisioned him in a different light. They saw him as an aristocrat, a noble, a person one could look up to and revere and venerate. Are these not the credentials of a successful spiritual leader?

R. Carlebach often preached about a matter he considered of utmost importance. A person's outward appearance, he often suggested, should match his character and performance. Therefore, each individual should always dress in good taste. Wearing dirty clothing is both unseemly and totally inappropriate. The *Talmud* itself abuses a scholar upon whose garment is found a grease stain (see Shabbat 114a). Shouldn't we all, as people created in the image of *Hashem*, strive to embrace and emulate the demeanor and comportment of the scholar?

The Rabbi would never offend or reprimand a youngster in public. Thus, when he occasionally noticed a student dressed sloppily, an invitation to his office generally followed. There, the

student received a stern lecture on the proper dress for Torah students. The meeting was then concluded with a friendly and warm smile from R. Carlebach. An amusing saying made the rounds of the students and was quite popular at the time. Students may forget the subject matter that R. Carlebach taught in the classroom, but no one would ever forget his lectures on clothing and aesthetics.

The *Carlebach Schule* consisted of only ten grades. These included eight years of elementary school and two years of high school. Thus, the students received their high school diplomas only after studying two additional years at gymnasiums throughout the city. However, at the end of the tenth grade, the *Schule* issued its own certificates at an annual festive ceremony in the school's auditorium. In the year 1933, a minor but sad change occurred, one that would mark the beginning of the end for the *Carlebach Schule*.

In March of that year, several weeks after the burning of the *Reichstag* by Germany's new rulers, after the manipulated elections in which the Nazis became the largest—yet not the majority—party in Germany, and right before the Nazi-ordered boycott of Jewish places of business, the annual certificate distribution ceremony was scheduled to take place.

Despite the shock of rebellion that permeated the air, despite the threat of oppression and persecution that reverberated throughout the land, and despite the overt threats to the Jewish presence in the *Third Reich*, some individuals assured frightened Jews that "life as usual" should continue. The scheduled certificate ceremony should not be altered in any way. These individuals were confident that the threat to Jewish existence in Germany was overstated and exaggerated. "So schnell schiessen die Preussen nicht" (the Prussians don't shoot so quickly) was their motto.

The *Vorstand* of the *Schule* did not share this expression of optimism. In the past several weeks, they had witnessed new barriers erected in the gymnasiums. Tenth grade graduates of the *Schule* were no longer so readily accepted. With a feeling of uncertainty and alarm, they began preparing for the annual certificate ceremony amidst an atmosphere of tension. It was a time when the old flags of the Republic were ripped from their poles and torn apart by jubilant packs of human hounds. Nazi flags now decorated the streets of Leipzig. The obscene and repulsive *swastika*, which symbolized hatred and hostility, reigned supreme.

In order to avoid attracting the attention of the endless Nazi marching groups, whose echoes reverberated throughout the streets, it was decided to conduct the ceremony with a low profile. The small teachers room rather than the more spacious auditorium was used. Thus, the participation of teachers and parents was extremely limited. However, a festive mood prevailed as the room was beautifully decorated with many flowers. A quartet offered musical selections to create a more pleasant and cheerful atmosphere.

All came to an abrupt halt as a trembling R. Carlebach mounted the platform. As he stood at the pulpit, words suddenly erupted from his mouth. With outstretched arms, he tearfully pleaded, "From the depths of despair, I call upon you, *Hashem*," (T'hillim Ch. 130). The moment was electric. In a voice choked with emotion, he expressed both the grief and the pain confronting German Jewry, and his words entered the wailing hearts of all present. Nary a dry eye remained among the audience. Everyone recognized that life in Germany would never be the same again.

In the spring of 1935, R. Carlebach contracted a serious illness and was forced to resign from his duties at the *Schule*. Helga

Dresler (now Ehlert) sadly commented that the school's staircase, without the warm-hearted Rabbi ascending it to greet the students, was a difficult scene to imagine. Many others concurred. Being only a youngster of eight at the time, I, too, yearned for his radiant smile and his daily cordial greeting. The Rabbi had known me personally and often chatted with me on the staircase ever since, at the age of three, I had interrupted his *Shabbat* morning sermon at the *Otto Schill Strasse Synagogue* with a sudden outburst of extremely loud crying.

It was at this time that, due to his remarkable achievements and self-sacrificing devotion to the school, the name of the school, the *Höhere Israelitische Schule*, was officially changed. The school was now renamed the *Carlebach Schule*. This honor was conferred upon the Rabbi by both the *Vorstand* of the *Religionsgemeinde* and by the Board of Directors of the school. The declaration was signed by Dr. Fritz Löhenstein, the *Vorsitzender* of the *Schulverein*.

Dr. Siegfried Weikersheimer, who hailed from Bavaria, became the school's new director. He had studied in Munich and in Würzberg, where he received his doctorate in 1914. Although he was a gentleman of high caliber and treated the students with the utmost courtesy at all times, he initially found it difficult to follow in his predecessor's footsteps. R. Carlebach, by then, had become a living legend. Perhaps the student body did not really extend to him the opportunity to be the competent administrator he was reputed to be. Gradually, however, the students adjusted to his deportment, and his rapport with the students improved considerably. He was indeed an effective and remarkable administrator.

At the age of 57, R. Carlebach and his family immigrated to Palestine in February of 1936, hopeful of gaining a complete

recovery from his ailment. He had served the Jewish community in Leipzig, both as a rabbi and as a teacher, for 35 years. He will remain tall in its annals forever.

I can still recall the Friday night when he *davened* at the *Brodyer Shul*, and delivered his farewell address. Would we ever see his like again, many questioned sadly?

Upon the conclusion of services, a group of congregants had a private audience with the Rabbi. He then openly revealed his misgivings concerning the future of German Jews. He saw dark clouds gathering upon the horizon. A sudden catastrophe was not remote or far-fetched, he felt. Therefore, Jews must seriously consider emigration from Germany, he strongly urged. They dared not tarry.

His words had a powerful impact upon my own parents, who promptly set the wheels in motion to leave. They were convinced of the accuracy of the Rabbi's prognosis, and immediately began seeking a new haven for the family. My father then wrote to his sister, Ettie Geisler in Brooklyn. He explained the tragic situation of the Jews in Germany and why we had to leave the country. A short time later, we received her affidavit, which would eventually enable us to immigrate to the United States.

It was only February 1936, and more than three years were to pass before we were permitted to enter the U.S. as permanent citizens. We arrived on these shores in the nick of time, April 23, 1939, just four months before the beginning of the Second World War.

In October of 1936, R. Carlebach succumbed to his illness. He suffered a severe heart attack and passed away in Ramat Gan, Israel.

Now, 64 years later, he is still remembered with esteem and admiration by all who knew him.



Horav Moshe Eliyahu Rogosnitzky

Horav Moshe Eliyahu Rogosnitzky was born in Lithuania in 1884. He received his religious education at the *Yeshivah of Mir* and was ordained as a rabbi. Before coming to Leipzig, he served the community of Memel (now known as Klaipeda, Lithuania).

Eventually, he became the rabbi of the newly founded *Ohel Ya'akov Congregation* of Leipzig, which was situated on the Pfaffendorfer Strasse 4, now Kurt Fischer Strasse. When the synagogue was first organized, its base of operations was the auditorium of the *Höhere Israelitische Schule*, where they conducted daily services. It was only after 1920 that they were able to obtain their own building, which was capable of accommodating more than 400 worshippers. Originally, R. Rogosnitzky's residence was on the 3rd floor of the synagogue building. It was only in the 1930s that he moved to the Humboldtstrasse, diagonally across the street from R. Feldman's residence.

R. Rogosnitzky had come to Leipzig upon the recommendation

of his long-time colleague, R. Feldman. He was regarded as a *Gaon* par excellence by all of Leipzig's rabbis. He was constantly laboring to interpret *halachic* topics, some academic and some that required immediate solutions. This was the field of his expertise.

His notes included several volumes of original thoughts on various Torah topics that he intended to publish. In fact, he had received approbations from some of the most eminent scholars of the time. They praised his responsa, which was saturated with profound thoughts and poignant observations.

My father had seen a letter from R. Chaim Ozer Grodzenky of Vilna, who addressed R. Rogosnitzky as one of the generation's leading *gedolim*. He strongly urged the Rabbi to spread his *chidushei Torah* throughout the world. R. Reuven Katz, the chief rabbi of Petach Tikvah and author of the classic sefer *Degel Reuven*, marveled at the Rabbi's strength of character. This enabled him to concentrate on intricate Torah issues and study them in depth, at a time when he and his countrymen were suffering endless persecution at the hands of Nazi beasts on a daily basis.

R. Rogosnitzky was known as a "rabbi's rabbi." Rabbis from all corners of the earth consulted him, and his decisions were readily accepted as authentic Torah law. Tens of Leipzigers would approach the Rabbi daily for solutions to various *sha'alot* confronting them. Young scholars, potential candidates for rabbinic ordination, would spend weeks and even months at his home, observing how the Rabbi meticulously treated each *sha'alah* with a spirit of reverence and dignity, and how he eventually solved it. He received many inquiries by mail, and he carefully analyzed each problem before he offered his considered *p'sak halachah*. Leipzigers recognized the *Gaon* who dwelled amongst them. They

fully realized that his presence had placed Leipzig on the world map of Torah.

Just as he was a *gadol*, and unique in his Torah learning, so, too, was he original in his service to *Hashem*. Mere words cannot describe the care, diligence, unparalleled love and emotion with which he performed every mitzvah. His prayers pierced the very heavens. He was meticulous in observing even the most minor *minhag* (custom). He regarded a light approach toward any *minhag* as a major violation, as such an attitude might foreshadow offenses that could lead one to the lowest levels of impurity. He was filled with compassion for every Jew. His heart was saturated with mercy, his ear was always attuned to the request of a poor widow, and his hand was always open to disburse needed funds for the poor and weak. With every fiber of his body, he did not forsake the needs of the community. When necessary, he was willing, as was Moshe Rabbeinu, to descend the mountain and walk among the people.

His closest confidants said that no one ever saw him exhibit any anger. Among the many petitioners who had come before him over the years were some who behaved in a manner that would have provoked a lesser man. R. Rogosnitzky, however, was not such a man. Herr Potok once witnessed the Rabbi inspecting the defective liver of a turkey; when he ruled that the bird was *treif*, the questioner completely lost his temper and thundered, "How did you ever become a *rav* if you are unable to rule correctly on such a basic *sha'alah*?" R. Rogosnitzky remained silent, even when the questioner's epithets became more abusive. He later explained that the questioner was obviously embittered over the loss of money he had suffered. One cannot be taken to task for his actions when he is so upset (Bava Batra 16b).

He would expend every effort to find merit in the actions of his congregants, and was always hopeful of their repentance. "The gates of repentance are not locked," he would say. The Torah relates that Ya'akov called for his sons, and said, "Gather yourselves as one, that I may tell you that which shall befall you in the end of days." *Rashi* comments that Ya'akov desired to reveal the time of Moshiach's advent, but the Shechinah departed from him, and he was unable to do so. The Tzaddik of Rizhin explains that the Sages teach us that if Israel deserves merit, the end of *galut* will be hastened; otherwise, it will come at its proper time (Sanhedrin 98a). Since Ya'akov could only reveal the proper time as predestined, it would indicate that he lacked the belief that Israel would merit the redemption before the appointed time. Such an uncharitable view of Israel caused the *Shechinah* to depart.

The *Talmud Torah* students generally looked forward to the Rabbi's monthly examinations with a great sense of anticipation. When he arrived, the very atmosphere seemed to become warmer. He was such a gentle and soft-spoken individual; he would hug and embrace students whose responses to his questions reflected logical thought and reasoning. Often, a friendly pinch on the cheek was in order. His actions always displayed a genuine and unbounded love. Meeting the students and conversing with them was perhaps the most pleasant and gratifying part of his responsibilities as a rabbi, he once informed us. When he assured us that the future of *yiddishkeit* was safe and secure because of our total dedication and commitment to Torah, he instilled within us a feeling of pride that motivated us to reach for higher levels. What a man he was! We all loved him.

The one drawback and hindrance in our close relationship with the Rabbi was the language problem. The Rabbi conversed in

Yiddish with a heavy Lithuanian accent. As youngsters, we were accustomed to *Yiddish* using a Galician pronunciation, and his speech was quite foreign to us. It appeared as if the Rabbi was actually speaking in a different language. Despite my persistent efforts to master this "foreign" language, I never really succeeded.

When one entered R. Feldman's residence to present him with a *sha'alah* concerning the *kashrut* of a chicken, the Rabbi would simply inspect the evidence and rule on the chicken's status; *kosher* or *traif*. The entire process lasted no more than several minutes. At R. Rogosnitzky's home, however, the procedure was not so expeditious. The process usually ended with what must be termed...a social visit.

At first, the Rabbi would insist that I sit down and recite a *b'rachah*. Plates of cookies, fruits, and other goodies were immediately placed before me, and I was urged to eat to my heart's content. The Rabbi would then inquire as to the welfare of my family, and ask how I was progressing in my studies. The Rabbi always displayed a keen interest in my responses. Finally, I was asked to recite the *b'rachah ha'acharonah*, to which the Rabbi responded with an impassioned "*Amen*."

Although the Rabbi had offered me his unbounded hospitality, certainly a most amicable gesture, I nevertheless felt quite uneasy throughout the entire visit. I was apprehensive mainly due to my inability to really comprehend the Rabbi's Lithuanian *Yiddish*. How many of the Rabbi's pearls of wisdom had I been deprived of, solely due to these language problems?

I can still recall one afternoon when several of my classmates had scheduled a soccer game at the *Gohliser Prendel Wiese* on a day

when school sessions had been canceled. Thus, it was only reluctantly that I consented to my mother's request to ask a *sha'alah* of R. Rogosnitzky. It involved a chicken with a defective liver. Realizing how time-consuming a visit to R. Rogosnitzky would be, I was convinced that I would be arriving late for the game. However, I had no other alternative. How could I disregard my mother's request?

When one of my friends then suggested that, in order to save time, I could present the *sha'alah* to the Reform rabbi, I enthusiastically accepted his recommendation. Dr. Gustav Cohn was also a *Rabbiner*, I reasoned, and certainly should be familiar with the *kashrut* regulations. Why not go to his home on the Walter Blümel Strasse (now Löhrstrasse), which was in close proximity to out own home?

I was greatly disappointed when Dr. Cohn informed me that, much to his regret, he was unable to help. He had never studied *kashrut* in depth, he said, and added the word "*leider*" (unfortunately), which he kept repeating over and over again. He suggested that the great *Gaon* R. Rogosnitzky, who was a recognized authority on all aspects of Torah, would be able to ascertain the *kashrut* status of the chicken. He jotted down R. Rogosnitzky's address for me, and asked that I convey his personal regards to the Rabbi. I swiftly completed my mission and returned home after R. Rogosnitzky had rendered the *p'sak* (which I remember to be *kosher*), with still enough time remaining to catch the beginning of the soccer game.

I have often wondered how today's Reform rabbis would act in a similar situation. Would they, too, act in a cooperative spirit and offer proper guidance, or would they react in a negative fashion and

instill within the questioner (a ten-year-old boy in our situation) a feeling that the *kashrut* regulations are outdated, archaic, and no longer relevant nowadays? Would today's so-called rabbinic leaders of the Reform movement possess the moral courage and fortitude to openly confess their shallowness and ignorance of *kashrut* and Torah knowledge? Does not simple integrity require them to emphatically proclaim that their decisions and determinations are based solely on social issues and convenience, deprived of any flavoring of Torah and the *Shulchan Aruch*?

A young Reform rabbi once proudly informed me that when a member of his congregation initiated an academic discussion on the laws of *kashrut* and then posed a practical question relevant to the discussion, the rabbi had promptly responded that he was a rabbi, not a veterinarian. What sarcasm!

Dr. Felix Goldman, an associate of Dr. Cohn, in the course of a lengthy discussion with my *rebbi*, R. Potok, explained why he felt that all matters pertaining to Jewish divorces be left exclusively in the hands of the Orthodox rabbinate. When two factions disagree on a topic, he reasoned, the more stringent view must always prevail and be adopted. Even those elements who do not require such rigidities as advanced by the more stringent view would readily agree that there could be no potential harm in them. They challenge the necessity and the exigency of Orthodoxy, but no one actually abrogates and invalidates it entirely, he pointed out. Therefore, in order to avoid splitting Judaism into two separate religions that could not intermarry, Orthodoxy must control the divorce courts.

Likewise, Dr. Goldman felt that ideally, conversions to Judaism must be enforced in the same light, and could only be valid when performed by or with the approval of the Orthodox rabbinate. This

would be the glue to cement us together as one, and enable us to retain our status as one religion. Unfortunately, not many Reform and Conservative rabbis today subscribe to Dr. Goldman's agenda for Judaism. Witness today's controversy in Israel on this issue, a controversy so aggressively fought that it once threatened the downfall of the government of the State of Israel.

Several months prior to his demise in October 1934, a 52-year-old, ailing Dr. Goldman confided in R. Potok and entrusted him with a most stunning revelation. In retrospect, he said, the greatest regret of his life was that he had never studied the *Talmud*. Perhaps, he added, had he studied the *Talmud*, he would have perceived a different outlook on Judaism. Was R. Goldman becoming a *ba'al teshuvah*? R. Potok certainly thought so.

Although R. Rogosnitzky had been recognized by Leipzigers as attuned to the highest moral and ethical levels, and his piety and dedication to authentic Torah remained unchallenged, Leipzigers were yet to unearth a new dimension in the Rabbi's character and disposition, one that included *mesirat nefesh*, the act of self-sacrifice.

It happened on Thursday, November 10, 1938, the morning following the events of the infamous *Kristallnacht*. No Jew dared to be seen on the street in the hostile and hazardous atmosphere that prevailed on that day. The *Ahavat Torah Synagogue* on the Färberstrasse was being ransacked and demolished beyond recognition, while religious and holy items—including Torah scrolls—were maliciously hurled into the street by Nazi hoodlums, to be further abused by cheering throngs. Yet there was R. Rogosnitzky, a lone Jew on the street, dressed in his rabbinic garb, attempting to recover and salvage some of the holy objects. What a

perilous and risky situation to be in! He apparently could not stand idly by. He could not tolerate watching such abuse and violation of the sacred without getting personally involved, even at the risk of his health and safety. Naturally, the *Gestapo* could not permit such audacity and temerity to go unpunished. They arrested him on the spot.

The Brenner family, who resided near the corner of the Färber and Gustav Adolf Strasse, were able to observe the depressing proceedings from behind the drawn window shades and curtains in their home. My friend, Ruth Brenner, later related to me how she watched in horror as a large portion of the Rabbi's beard was cut off, in an atmosphere of hilarity and high-spirited boisterousness, to further humiliate and degrade the defenseless Rabbi. Cameras recorded the proceedings for posterity. The Nazi beasts appeared to be enjoying the beard-cutting ceremony to no end. R. Rogosnitzky had apparently accepted his fate and made no effort to resist. He chose to ignore the humiliation heaped upon him. Soon thereafter, R. Rogosnitzky was unexpectedly released from custody.

The Shabbat two weeks afterwards was the last time I saw R. Rogosnitzky. Since his own synagogue had been totally wrecked during the pogrom of *Kristallnacht*, he chose to attend services at the *Chevrah Mishnayot Shul* on the Humboldtstrasse 24, which was one of the two *shuls* permitted to reopen by the Nazi authorities. When I noticed that most of his beard had been cut, I was appalled and greatly perturbed. I fought back tears as I considered our own presence among these "master race" beasts. How low had they sunk! Can even a sub-human creature ever abuse so utterly a man so devout and so pious? What kind of creatures are they?

Although it was not customary to have a sermon at the *Chassidic*

Shtiebel on the Humboldtstrasse, R. Rogosnitzky was asked to address the congregation before the commencement of the *mussaf* service. He spoke only for several minutes, and I can still clearly recall his concluding words.

He quoted from the Book of T'hillim (Ch. 20), "'Some come with chariots and some come with horses, but we come in the name of *Hashem*, our G-d,' we call out. They slumped and fell, but we arose and were invigorated." R. Rogosnitzky explained, "They shoot with cannons but our weapon is the Torah. Although oppression and persecution may yet increase at alarming rates," the Rabbi concluded, "we, with the help of *Hashem*, will ultimately prevail and survive this dreadful ordeal of *galut*, with the total redemption coming speedily, in our days."

Now that I consider these events, more than sixty years after they occurred, I have come to the realization that R. Rogosnitzky's words on that Shabbat were brave and courageous. The Nazis would certainly have considered them traitorous. It would not have been too farfetched to suspect that *Gestapo* agents might be eavesdropping on a public service in which several hundred Jews participated. As a matter of fact, uniformed S.S. men were constantly stationed on the Humboldtstrasse and adjacent streets in large numbers. So what prompted the Rabbi to speak out so openly? Why did he take the chance and speak his mind amidst such hostile surroundings? Such faith and commitment in the face of adversity! It still boggles the mind.

I was much too shy to approach the Rabbi for the customary *Shabbat* greeting upon the conclusion of services. How could I confront him face to face when the effects of his humiliation were still deeply visible? Would I not be adding to his misery and agony?

Upon my father's urging, but with a feeling of awkwardness and apprehension, I slowly made my way through the crowd and stood before him.

The Rabbi embraced me and bestowed a blessing upon me, a blessing I shall never forget. Then he advised me, "You must learn Torah diligently wherever you may be. You have the potential to become a great *talmid chacham*. It's all in your hands. May *Hashem* bless you."

When I apprised the Rabbi of the fact that we would probably be moving to the United States (a fact that was far from certain at the time), he informed us of a Torah giant who lived on those shores, *Horav* Moshe Rosen. R. Rosen had authored a set of *halachic* books called *Nezer Hakodesh*. R. Rogosnitzky was constantly corresponding with him on Torah matters. He suggested that my father contact him upon our arrival in America.



R. Moshe Rosen

We arrived in the U.S. on April 23, 1939. Approximately one week after our arrival, my father visited R. Rosen at his Brownsville home. R. Rosen was delighted to receive personal regards from a friend with whom he was closely associated since R. Rogosnitzky's pre-Leipzig years. There were not sufficient words in his vocabulary to adequately depict the *gadlut* of such a Torah giant. Several years later, I heard similar expressions of esteem and admiration from the eminent R. Elyah Meir Bloch, the *Rosh Hayeshivah* of the *Telshe Yeshivah* in Cleveland.

R. Rogosnitzky's parting words to me that *Shabbat* morning were, "Learn with *hatmadah* and with the help of *Hashem*, you will succeed." These kind words have served me as a motivating factor and incentive to serious Torah study throughout the years.

The Rabbi succeeded in fleeing the raging inferno that was Leipzig. He immigrated to England, where he became the spiritual leader in Newcastle-on-Tyne. His grandson serves in the rabbinate in Cardiff, Wales, today.

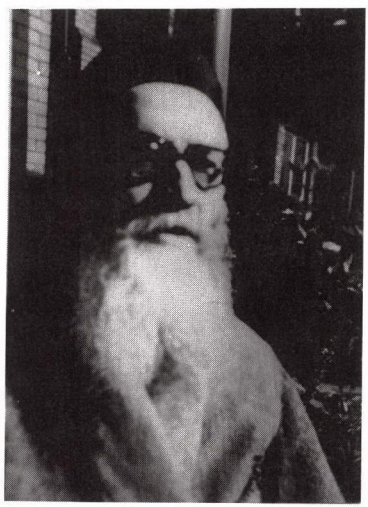
In the spring of 1998, I returned to the corner of the Färber and Gustav Adolf Strasse and stood in awe, completely engrossed and absorbed in my thoughts. I felt that I was standing on a spot that had become sanctified, and could duly be referred to as a holy place, a *makom kadosh*. And why not? Was it not the very corner where a pious rabbi was persecuted and humiliated by hooligans, solely because he was a dedicated and committed Jew who followed the mandates of his religion? Did the rabbi not suffer *al kiddush Hashem*—while sanctifying the name of *Hashem*?

With tears streaming down my face, and with a broken voice full of emotion, I recited several chapters from *Sefer T'hillim*. I, for one, shall never forget this holy man.

Horav David Feldman

Horav David Feldman was born in Tolna, Ukraine in 1985. His father, Shammai, earned his livelihood as a *shochet*. Since he was reputed to be an outstanding Torah scholar, many community members turned to him for decisions on Jewish law.

Young David was blessed with an extraordinary memory and a brilliant mind. Rather than entering a formal *yeshivah*, he studied mainly in the local *Bet Hamidrash*, as was the custom in the Ukraine at the time. He studied at a frantic pace and made excellent progress. At the early age of 19, he was tested by the world-renowned R. Yechiel Michel Epstein of Nowardok, the author of the classic work, *Aruch Hashulchan*. R. Epstein then informed David's father that his son had clearly become a scholar of great distinction, a genuine *Gaon* who was unquestionably competent to be ordained for the rabbinate.



R. Dovid Feldman

In 1905, R. Feldman arrived in Vishnitz, Hungary, where he became a staunch follower of the eminent R. Yisrael, the *Chassidic Rebbe* of Vishnitz. Residing in his *Chassidic* court and under the tutelage of the Rebbe, he continued his studies with much fervor and enthusiasm. Eventually, in 1908, he was ordained as a member of the rabbinate by R. Aryeh Leib Halevi of Stanislov, and in 1909 by R. Sholom Mordechai Hakohen of Berezhany, otherwise known by the title of his magnum opus, the *Maharsham*. With such credentials under his belt, it is no wonder that many communities throughout Europe now vied anxiously for his services.



The Maharsham

In 1907, R. Feldman was married to the noble and virtuous Golde, whose father, R. Yechiel Michel, was a scholar in his own right. How he appreciated his son-in-law's natural *gadlut*! How he loved and cherished his outstanding character traits! He offered him full financial support to enable R. Feldman to continue to study Torah unabated. R. Feldman took full advantage of this generous opportunity, and utilized the first three years of his marriage to delve more deeply into the wellsprings of our tradition; his Torah scholarship rose to ever-loftier heights.

In 1910, he accepted the offer of Leipzig's Eastern European Jews (*Ostjuden*) and officially became their spiritual leader. He was

not a *yecke*, so he could certainly be trusted in matters of religious law, reasoned the people still suspicious of German scholars. They felt right at home with a rabbi of their own background. His long, flowing beard, absent on the German-born rabbis, reminded them of their own rabbis back home in Galicia. The fact that R. Feldman spoke a fluent *Yiddish*—and hardly spoke German—was another feather in his cap. Better still, he wore a *kapotte*, a long jacket, as was the custom in Galicia. This really convinced the people that R. Feldman was the perfect choice for this position. They now felt that their type of Orthodox Judaism had established a powerful base in the city of Leipzig.

Little did these people realize that R. Feldman and R. Carlebach, a full-fledged *yecke*, were to become close friends and associates. United they labored, shoulder to shoulder, to promote Orthodoxy in Leipzig. There existed absolutely no malice between them, and each complemented the other. Often, R. Carlebach delivered sermons at R. Feldman's synagogue, *Ahavat Torah*, on the Färberstrasse. As a result, the unfortunate temporary split among the Orthodox Jews was permanently mended, never to recur. The Orthodox community always remained solidly unified.

Had not many of our esteemed *gedolim* at *Agudat Yisrael* conventions strongly embraced German Orthodoxy as authentic Orthodoxy? Such spiritual giants as the *Chofetz Chaim* of Radin, the *Rebbe* of Gur, R. Chaim Ozer Grodzensky of Vilna, and many others had publicly proclaimed that the teachings of R. Shamshon Raphael Hirsch of Frankfurt, the leader of German Orthodox Jewry, are an integral part of Judaism. By bestowing the title of *Morenu* upon Reb Yaakov Rosenheim of Frankfurt, they once again confirmed their complete faith in R. Hirsch's *hashkafah* of genuine Orthodoxy.

R. Carlebach had always championed this *hashkafah*. His status as a *yecke* did not, in any way, alter his total commitment to this legitimate form of Judaism. As years passed, this fact was recognized even by Galician Jews, those who had been so opposed to him at first. R. Carlebach became a welcome mentor and counselor of this group. They, in turn, became his most impassioned backers.

R. Feldman's most significant contribution on behalf of Leipzig's Jewry was in the area of Jewish education. With only eight hours weekly allotted to religious education at the *Carlebach Schule*, many felt that one could not really attain a well-rounded Jewish education at that institution. Certainly, the school would not be able to produce the genuine *talmidey chachamim* so vital to the guidance of future generations. With this problem facing the community, R. Feldman went to work. His solution was the founding of a new *Talmud Torah*, a school that would elaborately supplement the teaching at the *Carlebach Schule*.

R. Feldman was not only a Torah scholar par excellence; he was blessed with the ability to "come down to earth" when the situation warranted, and thus was able to develop innovative real-world solutions. He possessed an unlimited ability to inspire and gain the confidence of youthful elements. He was really not compelled to utilize excessive measures of persuasion to convince his religious activists and benefactors to accede to his wishes. All unanimously agreed that it was only due to his own initiative that the *Talmud Torah* came into being.

It should be pointed out that R. Carlebach himself, the founder and director of the *Carlebach Schule*, enthusiastically supported and assisted R. Feldman in his endeavor. He, too, was firmly convinced

that increasing the hours of Torah study for youngsters was a splendid idea.

The name *Talmud Torah*, which R. Feldman chose for his school, was a bit of a misnomer; certainly it was misleading. The school was actually a small *yeshivah*, whose standards and quality of education compared favorably with many of the *yeshivot ketanot* existing in the United States today.

The *Talmud Torah's* curriculum was quite ambitious. It consisted of the study of *Chumash*, Prophets, *Mishnah, Gemara* with commentaries, Jewish laws and customs. Classes commenced at 4 p.m. each weekday, and 9 a.m. on Sundays. Thus, the school offered twelve hours of religious education weekly. In the most advanced class, nine of those hours were dedicated exclusively to *Mishnah* and *Gemara*, one hour for laws and customs, and two for the weekly Torah portion with the commentary of *Rashi*. A student would generally begin his *Talmudic* training at the age of nine and a half, and by the time he reached the age of *Bar Mitzvah*, he would have absorbed more than 60 *blatt* of *Gemara*. He was now well prepared to attend a *yeshivah gedolah* outside of Leipzig.

The classes at the *Talmud Torah* were not arranged according to age, but according to the ability and level of the individual students. Although the top *Gemara* classes were generally attended by thirteen year olds, many of a younger age became members of that group. (I was privileged to attend this class, together with my close friends Feivel Brand and Max Horn, though none of us had reached his eleventh birthday.) The instructor of that class, R. Yehudah Potok, was recognized by all as a fabulous *rebbe*; he made us feel right at home among so many older students.

Monthly examinations were conducted under the keen supervision of R. Feldman and R. Eliyahu Moshe Rogosnitzky (who became the *Talmud Torah's* spiritual director when R. Feldman immigrated to England). The two of them ensured that each youngster was progressing in his studies, and on the way to becoming a *lamdan* and a true *ben Torah*. R. Potok usually beamed with pride during these proceedings, gratified to know that his efforts had not been in vain.

The examinations were always concluded with a pep talk by R. Feldman. It was a glorious feeling to see R. Feldman leave the room with a broad smile on his face, obviously content with our progress.

More than two hundred students were enrolled in the school, ranging from *Aleph-Bet* youngsters up to *Gemara* and commentaries. In their post-*Bar Mitzvah* years, some continued their studies at the *Yeshivah R. Solomon Breuer* in Frankfurt am Main, some traveled all the way to the *Mirrer Yeshivah* in Poland, but the overwhelming majority made their way to the *Yeshivah Etz Chaim* in Heide, a suburb of the industrial city of Antwerp, Belgium.

A few words concerning the lofty stature of R. Potok are certainly in order here. R. Potok, a *Gemara rebbe* in the *Talmud Torah's* senior class, was a fascinating individual who displayed sincere love for every youngster. I am still not quite sure why he insisted that we address him as *Herr* Potok, rather than *Horav* Potok. We were all aware of the fact that he had received his *semichah* from the leading Torah authorities of Poland, including the world-renowned *gadol*, the *Maharsham* of Brezhani.

Each *Shabbat* afternoon, youth groups would meet at the *Talmud*

Torah under the auspices of the *Agudat Yisrael* youth movement, known as *EZRA*. Although these sessions were certainly not formal learning classes, a world of learning took place there nevertheless. The refreshments served helped create a more serene and tranquil atmosphere that proved to be a marvelous stimulant to learning.

Herr Potok often visited these sessions. Despite the fact that his German speech was colored by a heavy *Yiddish* accent and was, at best, difficult to understand, the stories he related were always both fascinating and entertaining. Each story contained an inspirational message. These stories taught us to appreciate and to treasure the greatness and eminence of our distinguished *gedolim* of generations past. We learned of the appropriate character traits that a true *ben Torah* should possess, and we learned how to live a life saturated with Torah and *mitzvot*.

When *Hashem* told Moshe to descend from Mount Sinai because the Israelites had become corrupt and had made themselves a calf of cast metal, *Rashi* comments, "*Lech reid migdulotcha*," that Moshe was told to "descend from his greatness." One who aspires to influence others cannot talk down to them, as if they are lowly creatures. It is incumbent upon him to lower himself to the level of those he attempts to motivate and to address them at their own level. His lesson will then have a more powerful and lasting effect. This has been the method employed by many of our *gedolim*. Anyone who ever had the privilege of conversing with *haGaon Rav* Moshe Feinstein immediately noticed his deep humility. He spoke to others not as a *gadol*, but as an equal.

R. Potok employed this method constantly as a teacher. He never used his authority to look down upon his students as if they were unworthy, and as a result, we all enjoyed his warmth and

friendliness when we were fortunate enough to be in his presence. He personified *chessed* with dedication and sincerity. He epitomized the message of the classic rabbi/teacher, the message of love and unlimited truth, of closeness to *Hashem* and the ability to feel His presence.

Herr Potok was by far my favorite and most influential *rebbi*. He instilled within me a love for Torah and a genuine desire for learning. As I prepared to immigrate to the United States, I often wondered, "Where in the U.S. will I find another *rebbi* like *Herr* Potok?" A *rebbi* of his caliber is rare, indeed.

The *Talmud Torah* was situated in an old building on the Färberstrasse, the block between tranquil Gustav Adolf Strasse and the roaring Ranstetter Steinweg (now Jahn Allee), right around the corner from the Carlebach *Schule*. It was originally a glass factory. The building was also the home of the *Ahavat Torah Synagogue*, the seat of R. Feldman's rabbinate.

It housed the huge Judaic library of the *Agudat Yisrael* organization, which was used extensively by its members. Whenever one passed by on the street, especially during the summer months when the windows were wide open, one could hear the resounding *kol haTorah* reverberating from the building. People studied at all hours of the day, and in large numbers.

Situated right around the corner from each other, the two schools formed a Torah enclave within Leipzig. Many referred to it as Leipzig's own "*makom Torah*." Today, the building that housed the *Talmud Torah* no longer stands. In fact, that particular block of the Färberstrasse has become a dead-end street, with no exit to the Ranstetter Steinweg.

Because R. Feldman's adherents were mainly from the strictly Orthodox faction, there was one area in which he did not live up to the expectations of some of his constituents: the *Talmud Torah* was always closed on December 24th and 25th, which were days observed as holidays by members of the Christian faith. Some contended that this closure was utterly shocking, as it might erroneously appear to the youngsters to be an act of approbation to Christian theology. Some even went so far as to castigate the Rabbi for his apparent insensitivity in condoning such a practice.

R. Feldman decided to answer his critics in a public forum at the *Ahavat Torah Synagogue*. He maintained that the health and welfare of the students had to be his prime concern. He felt that it was extremely dangerous to be out on the streets after sunset, even in the pre-Hitler years. It was especially so on Christian religious holidays, when anti-Semitic rabble-rousers and demagogues roamed the streets in large numbers, creating havoc among the Jewish "traitors." Past German history, reasoned R. Feldman, had proven beyond a shadow of a doubt the accuracy of his trepidation, and the suspension of classes was justified. With the advent of Hitler's "master race," he asked, how could anyone seriously doubt the soundness of the *Talmud Torah's* position?

R. Feldman's decision to close the *Talmud Torah* on those particular days was not a unique occurrence in our long history in the Diaspora. The sefer *Ta'amey Haminhagim* reports similar situations existing hundreds of years ago, when Jews were apprehended and savagely beaten by their hostile neighbors whenever they appeared on the streets on the eve of that Christian holiday. Often, these harsh encounters resulted in bloodshed and outright murder of innocents. In order to avoid such violent hazards,

the *gedolim* of the era decreed that no one was to leave the safety of his residence that evening, even if this might result in the cancellation of regularly scheduled Torah study classes. It was a major decree of life-saving proportions. This is one of the rationales of numerous groups who, even nowadays, abstain from Torah study on the eve of December 24th.

The sefer *Ta'amey Haminhagim* further relates a story about the renowned Chassidic scholar, the *Gaon* R. Yitzchok Meir Alter of Ger, better known by the title of his sefer, the *Chiddushey HaRim*. He explained to his followers that abstaining from the study of Torah on the eve of the Christian holiday is, in itself, an integral part of Torah observance, since a *minhag* (a custom established by Israel) is considered part and parcel of Torah itself (Matteh Ephraim, Ch. 610).

Although R. Feldman's position was staunchly and tenaciously supported by R. Rogosnitzky, R. Carlebach, and Leipzig's own Boyaner Rebbe, the disparity remained. Even when the prestigious Warsaw Rabbinate officially commended R. Feldman or his courage and superior wisdom regarding this situation, unanimity was never achieved. As late as December 1937, the issue was still being hotly debated. In 1938, of course, the problem became academic, as the *Talmud Torah's* facilities had been totally demolished during the pogrom of arson, property destruction, and murder of *Kristallnacht*. Classes never resumed again.

R. Feldman constantly sought to improve the religious facilities in the city. Many otherwise observant women were reluctant to use the local *mikvah* because they considered its facilities antiquated and dilapidated, and not up to the standards of a modern bathhouse. When R. Feldman became aware of this, he immediately launched a

campaign to improve the situation; not merely to renovate the old *mikvah*, but to construct a new, ultra-modern one.

The new *mikvah*, which met all *halachic* and modern health requirements, was truly a beautiful edifice. Women who had never even crossed the threshold of a *mikvah* now began to utilize the facility on a regular basis. The *mikvah* undoubtedly enhanced the observance of *taharat hamishpachah* in Leipzig.

R. Feldman always strove to perform each *mitzvah* with the utmost perfection. Nevertheless, he cautioned community members not to adopt stringencies in observance that went beyond the letter of the law, if such performance would cause hardship or heartache to others—especially a parent or a spouse. R. Feldman said that the two *mitzvot* in which one should seek stringencies are, "Honor your father and your mother" (Shemot 20:12), and "Love your neighbor as yourself" (Vayikra 19:18).

Although R. Feldman published material commenting on various areas of Torah, his magnum opus was the classic *sefer*, <u>*Ir David*</u>, which augmented the <u>*Kitzur Shulchan Aruch*</u> of R. Shlomo Ganzfried of Ungvar. The *sefer* was first published in 1921 and was so widely acclaimed by both scholars and laymen that, in 1975, it was reprinted for the


קצור

שלחן ערוך

עם

כללים נחוצים

מכתב"ד שלא נדפס עדיין

מאת הגאון המחבר ר' שלמה גאנצפריד ז"ל

עם

עיר דוד

המכיל

מצודת ציון · מצודת דוד · המתרגם · לוח ל"ט מלאכות
שער הציורים · שיעורי המצוות · לוח הקביעות · נוסח שטרות ועוד

כמבואר בהקדמת

מאת

הרב דוד בר' שמאי זיל פעלדמאן

אב"ד דמחזיקי הדת במנשסטר
ומלפנים רב דקהל יראים בלייפציג

תרצאה שביעית
עם הוספות ותיקונים

Cover Page of R. Feldman's Magnum Opus

seventh time. Since, unfortunately, many observant laymen were not even familiar with some of the basic rules and concepts of our tradition, the work was indeed a necessity of the times. It surely accomplished its intended purpose. In his later years, R. Feldman published his *Shimushah Shel Torah*, which similarly deals with areas virtually unknown to many. This book contains many pictures and illustrations to attain better understanding of vital areas of Torah law.

R. Feldman often displayed his leadership qualities and was actively involved in all problems confronting the community. In 1933, President Paul Hindenburg appointed Adolf Hitler to serve as Chancellor of Germany. A short time afterward, an announcement appeared in Leipzig's *Gemeindeblatt* stating that on the following *Shabbat*, R. Feldman would be addressing Leipzig's Jews in the *Brodyer Shul* on a topic of major significance.

On the following *Shabbat*, at the designated hour, the *Brodyer Shul* was filled to the rafters. R. Feldman discussed the legislation of April 21, 1933, which effectively banned *shechitah* (ritual slaughter) throughout Germany. Due to legal technicalities and loopholes employed by the Nazi regime, the importation of *kosher* meat from foreign countries was virtually impossible. Therefore, R. Feldman announced that *kosher* meat would no longer be available in Leipzig. My father once explained to me that the Rabbinate selected R. Feldman to make this appalling announcement because he was deemed to be Leipzig's foremost authority on the laws of *kashrut*. He was revered and venerated by all.

Since some quarters had advocated electrical stunning of the animal before the act of *shechitah*, rendering the animal unconscious and thus insensitive to pain (a process not outlawed by the Nazi

regime), R. Feldman quoted the opinion of the renowned *Gaon*, R. Chaim Ozer Grodzensky of Vilna, and the many other Torah luminaries who agreed with him: *Halachah* strongly opposes such stunning. Stunning often causes a strong jerk of the muscles that would impair the act of *shechitah*. It may also injure the animal's brain and lungs, rendering the animal forbidden. In addition, stunning causes extravasation of blood, so that small blood clots form in the meat, causes hemorrhage, and severe congestion of the muscles. These problems are discussed in detail in the classic *S'ridey Eish* by R. Ya'akov Weinberg, who headed the *Hildesheimer Yeshivah* in Berlin.

In the seventh edition of the *Ir David*, R. Feldman's son, R. Bezalel Moshe, informs us that despite his many accomplishments in the areas of Jewish education, *kashrut*, and *taharat hamishpachah*, his father was most proud of the close relationship he enjoyed with his congregants. Leipzig's Jews knew him as a peacemaker. He simply loved arranging the peaceful settlement of disputes, especially between married couples. R. Feldman was often called upon to arrange divorces for feuding couples who could no longer cope with each other and opted out; delaying the inevitable was his tactic and battle plan. This offered him sufficient time to work for reconciliation. He expended many daytime hours reasoning with these couples, attempting to resolve their problems. He spent many sleepless nights, too, preferring rather to build than to destroy a Jewish home.

He would often point to the pleasant results of his endeavors. "In all of my twenty-four years in Leipzig, even though I was approached hundreds of times, I officiated over only two divorces," he would proudly inform us. Often, when a son was born to a newly

happy married couple that had once opted for divorce, he was honored by being selected as the baby's *sandek* at the *brit* ceremony. In this way, parents were able to show their deep appreciation of the Rabbi's efforts on their behalf.

In 1934, he and his family immigrated to Manchester, England, where he was chosen to be the spiritual leader of the *Machzikey Hadat Congregation*. There he continued his efforts on behalf of Torah at a frantic pace, and published his *Shimushah Shel Torah*. When he returned to Leipzig for a brief visit in the beginning of 1938, his red beard had already turned gray. He appeared to have aged rapidly. Even as a youngster of 11, I was able to recognize quite clearly that his youthful, vigorous appearance was no more. I was deeply distressed.

He appeared delighted when my father informed him that we had applied for an American visa. He urged all Leipzigers to flee the country to avoid an imminent catastrophe. Unfortunately, not many heeded his warning. They felt that Germany was a civilized country, and that they were there fore perfectly safe.

In 1947, R. Feldman contracted a serious illness, one that would haunt him for the rest of his days. In the spring of 1955, he finally succumbed and returned his soul to his Maker.

Many still-unpublished manuscripts remain with the family. The Torah world would benefit greatly from their publication.

As this book was about to go to press, I was informed that the long-awaited *Sefer*, "Lev Dovid", by R. Dovid Feldman, has just been published in Manchester, England. The *Sefer* contains responsa an all four sections of the "Shulchan Aruch".

Horav David Ochs

R. David Ochs became the *Gemeinderabbiner* in 1936, when R. Carlebach immigrated to Palestine. He was born in Cologne in 1904, and it was there that he received his early education. He continued his education in Würzberg and in Berlin. He received his rabbinic training at the *Hildesheimer Yeshivah*, where he was ordained in 1928. For the next four years, he was an instructor in the *Adat Yisrael Realgymnasium* in Berlin. In 1932, he became the spiritual leader of the Orthodox community in Königsberg, East Prussia. It was during this period of his life that he became recognized throughout Germany as a *talmid chacham* par excellence, and many communities were anxious to obtain his services.



R. Dovid Ochs

Leipzigers were already quite familiar with R. Ochs' intense scholarship and of his unusual eloquence. At the end of 1934, he had visited Leipzig as a guest, and was invited to present several lectures and *halachic* dissertations at the *Eitz Chaim Synagogue*. His audience was highly impressed with his discerning presentations

and his charming demeanor. As a result, he gained many adherents and enthusiastic devotees, some among the most prestigious and influential leaders of the community. Many felt that he was the most qualified successor to R. Carlebach. He was offered the position, and he graciously accepted it; his installation took place on the first day of *Pesach*, 1936.



Einführung des Herrn Rabbiner Dr. Ochs.

Anläßlich des Gottesdienstes am ersten Pessachtage, am **Dienstag, den 7. April 1936,** wird die feierliche Amtseinführung des Herrn

Gemeinderabbiner Dr. Ochs in der Synagoge Otto-Schill-Str.

erfolgen. Im Anschluß daran findet um 10,30 Uhr Predigt statt.

Leipzig, den 23. März 1936.

Der Vorstand
der israelitischen Religionsgemeinde zu Leipzig

Announcement of the Installation of R. Ochs

Under R. Ochs' guidance, substantial improvements were initiated in Leipzig's religious life, despite the menacing anti-Semitic acts that abounded at an ever-increasing rate. Additional Torah study groups were organized in numerous places of worship. The *daf hayomi* was now studied diligently in at least seven synagogues. R. Ochs also became actively involved in R. Feldman's *Talmud Torah* on the Färberstrasse. He visited classes on numerous occasions to familiarize himself with the school's curriculum and its procedures.

Occasionally, he would converse with the students in order to motivate them and inspire them to reach for greater heights. How the students loved and cherished these informal talks with R. Ochs!

His residence was situated on the Leibnitzstrasse 30, the same building as the Jewish kindergarten. Whenever I picked up my younger brother Shim'on from the kindergarten, I rang the Rabbi's doorbell simply to say hello. The Rabbi, of course, never reacted

negatively to these constant and vexing intrusions upon his busy schedule. On the contrary, he would offer me cookies and invite me to visit again. I was only ten years old, and I simply loved that man.

The lengths to which R. Ochs went to honor others served to highlight the difference between etiquette as a collection of mere social forms, and the Jewish ideal of honoring one's fellow man. When visitors came to his home, he rushed towards them to greet them, an infectious smile on his face. There was nothing abstract about his love of people. It was individuals in all their infinite variety he enjoyed, not just humanity in general. He accepted people for who they were, and did not cause them to feel that they were being judged. As a result, people felt comfortable in his presence. His unfailing courtesy was the vehicle for conveying his respect to others. With a single word or action, R. Ochs was able to build up anyone's self-esteem.

In addition to the Torah one learns from our sages, one can learn both *halachah* and proper behavior from closely observing their every action, for a genuine *talmid chacham* is a living *sefer Torah.*

In *Pirkey Avot*, Ch. 6, the sages taught: Blessed be He, who chose them and their teachings. In today's fields of academe, within the ivy-covered walls of secular learning, scant attention is paid to a teacher's moral standards or character. That is considered to be the teacher's own personal business. If his lectures are good, his academic records in order, nothing else matters. Authentic Judaism, however, must first know who the teacher is. For Torah, *mishnatam*, their teachings alone, are not sufficient. Torah also requires *bahem*—themselves. It is vital that teachers possess proper morals and ethics. They must embody their teachings within themselves. Each one must be a living *sefer Torah.*

King David had amassed a fortune in gold with which to build the *Beit Hamikdosh*. But he clearly understood that "It is not my gold. It is all Thine, O Lord. Indeed, I took it from Thy hand, and now I simply give it back to Thee" (Divrei Hayamim I, 29:14). Similarly, R. Elazar of Bertotha taught: "Give Him of His own, for both you and whatever is yours are entirely His" (Avot 3:8).

Whenever the charity officials, in charge of collecting and distributing money for the poor, saw R. Elazar, they would hide from him because he would insist on giving them all the money he had with him (Ta'anit 24a).

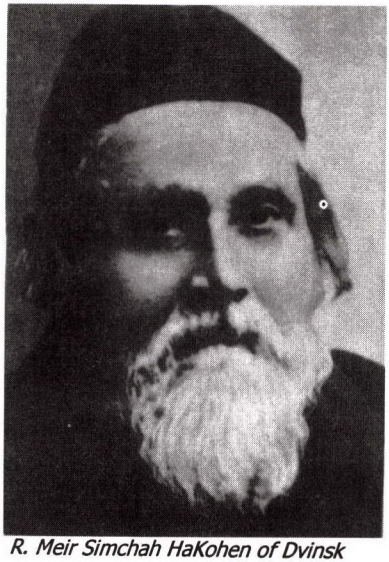
How great is the integrity and sincerity of our *gedolim*! They meant what they said and practiced what they taught. Their mental processes and "official ethics" were never divorced from their private lives, and their pronouncements were certainly not removed from their personal code of conduct.

R. Ochs was such a *talmid chacham*. He served the community as a role model, and was surely a living *sefer Torah*.

His humility was one of the traits mostly stressed by all who knew him. His self-effacement and extreme modesty were apparent even to the casual observer. Just as *Beit Hillel* merited having their opinion accepted as authentic *halachah* because they were patient and pleasant to all (Eruvin 13b), so did R. Ochs exemplify those very same traits. The *Midrash* compares *Klal Yisrael* to a grapevine; just as on a grapevine, the largest clusters hang lowest on the vine, so the greatest among us are the most humble. Leipzigers fully recognized this quality in the lifestyle of R. Ochs.

Despite his deep personal humility, he was ever mindful of the sage advice offered by the *Gaon*, R. Meir Simcha of Dvinsk. When

Moshe instructed his disciple Yehoshua, "in the sight of all Israel, be strong and courageous" (Devarim 31:7), the *Gaon* read this verse, "before the eyes of the people, you must appear strong." Yehoshua was a profoundly humble person (Targum Yonatan Bamidbar 13:16), and Moshe cautioned him that humility is commendable as a personal and private characteristic, but not as a feature of leadership. A leader must have the fortitude to stand by his convictions; he dare not be self-effacing. When King Shaul capitulated to the wishes of the populace to spare the spoils of Amalek (Shmuel I 15:9-21), Shmuel sharply rebuked him, "if you are small in your own eyes, you are nevertheless the head of the tribes of Israel."


R. Meir Simchah HaKohen of Dvinsk

Although humility is a great virtue, it loses its moral excellence when it is misplaced. Accepting counsel from one's equals and subordinates is indeed virtuous, but it is wrong for a leader to abdicate his authority. Moshe was the humblest of all men upon the earth (Bamidbar 12:3), yet when the authority of his position of leadership was challenged (Bamidbar 16:35), Moshe set aside his humility and manifested his authority. He was not intimidated, and did not submit as a consequence of his humility.

Leipzig's local *mikvah* on the Blücherstrasse 18 (now Rudolf Breitscheidstrasse) was made more accessible under the auspices of R. Ochs. Its hours were extended significantly. In addition, it was

now available daily, rather than six days a week as it was previously. In order to intensify and enhance the observance of *taharat hamishpacha*, R. Ochs organized special classes in this area. I have been told that these classes were well attended. R. Ochs was reputed to be a fabulous teacher.

On Friday, October 28, 1938, all of Leipzig's Jews in possession of Polish citizenship were deported to Poland, without any prior notification. Thousands of Leipzig's Jews were being deported, far more than from any other German city. This was due to the fact that the overwhelming majority of Leipzig's Orthodox community were *Ostjuden*. Seventy-three percent of Leipzig's Jews were foreign-born; only seven percent of the *Talmud Torah Verein* (which included congregants from the *Otto Schill Strasse Synagogue*, the *Brodyer Shul*, and many others) possessed German citizenship.

When the *Religionsgemeinde* became aware of the exile to Poland, they immediately wrote out a check for 10,000 *Reichsmark*, which the *Bankhaus Kroch* paid out in 5 mark bills. R. Ochs, the Reform rabbi Dr. Cohn, and Martin Alterthum—the social welfare chairmen of the *Gemeinde*—then rushed to the *Hauptbahnhof* to distribute ten *Reichsmark* to each family scheduled for deportation. This was the maximum amount each family was permitted to take along on a yet-uncertain journey.

R. Ochs and Dr. Cohn worked feverishly to calm the shattered nerves (some bordering on hysteria) of the unfortunate deportees, to offer them spiritual counsel, to inspire them with courage and hope, and instill within them the strength and stamina to withstand the pain and agony they were destined to endure. This was perhaps the final chapter of the Rabbinate in Leipzig, as two weeks later they were both incarcerated in the concentration camp in Buchenwald.

R. Ochs served the community from April 7, 1936 (the first day of Pesach) until November 1938 (the *Kristallnacht* period), less than three years. Following the orgy of *Kristallnacht*, he was admitted to the Eitingon Hospital with an injured back and an infected eye. He was dragged away and arrested by the *Gestapo* on the trumped-up charges that he was an enemy of the *Third Reich*, and transferred to the infamous Buchenwald concentration camp. There he remained in Nazi custody until the end of December, when he received the legal documents enabling him to leave the oppressive and tyrannical regime in Germany, and to immigrate to Great Britain. Eventually, in the spring of 1939, he was awarded the long-awaited certificate that permitted him to enter Palestine as a permanent resident. There he continued to live a full and active life.

Dr. Gustav Cohn succeeded in obtaining a visa to enter the Netherlands. However, in May 1940, when German forces marched in and occupied the country, he was again subjected to Nazi persecution. His life ended in a concentration camp, and he became one of the six million martyrs.

R. Ochs served as spiritual leader in the Israeli youth village *Kefar Hanoar Hadati* from 1939-1946. In the ensuing years, 1946-1956, he was the director of Jewish education of the *Moriah High School* in Tel Aviv. He later became an inspector supervising Jewish education for high schools and for Bar-Ilan University. He concluded his career as an advisor for religious affairs in Israel's Ministry of Education. The education of youngsters was his life's work.

In 1974, at the age of 70, he passed away in Tel Aviv. His life was reminiscent of that classic "Wandering Jew," continuously moving from place to place and from position to position. His aim

was to establish a sense of serenity and tranquility among his neighbors and friends. He was a good man who only sought to promote the Torah way of life, and to educate children in the paths of *Hashem*. He deserved better.



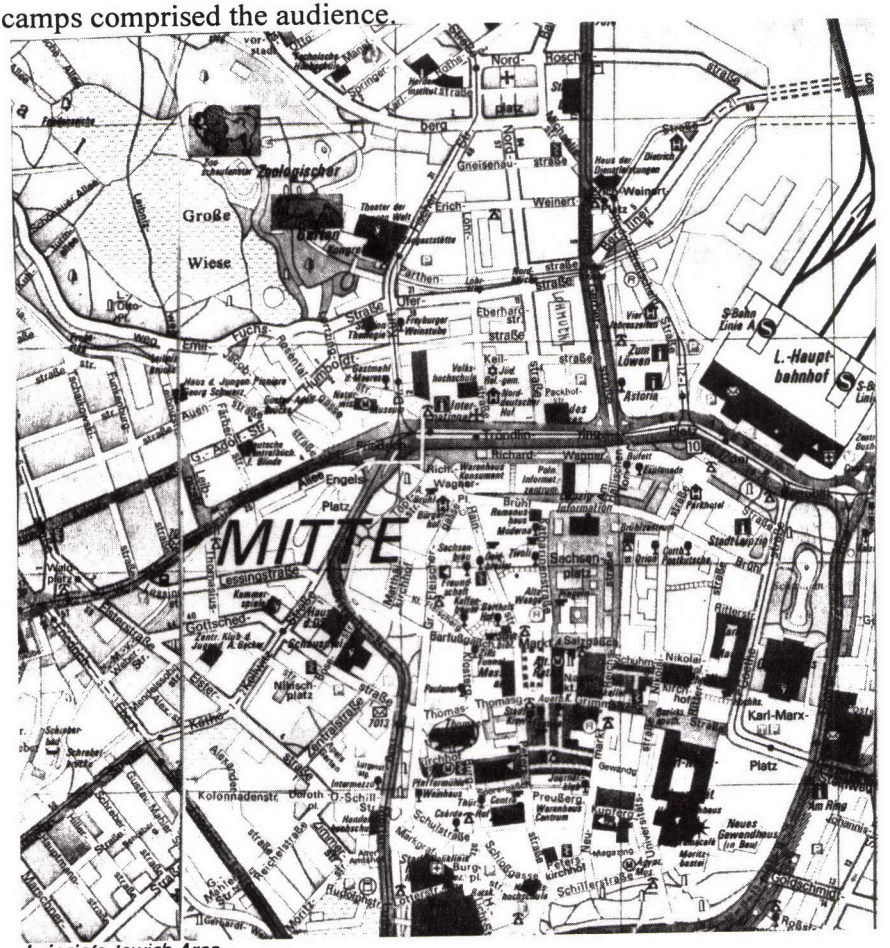
After the Storm

On May 8, 1945, when the German army surrendered to the Allies on all fronts, only 24 Jews had survived in Leipzig. Soon thereafter, concentration camp inmates from Buchenwald, Theresienstadt, and Auschwitz began returning to Leipzig. In May and June, the *Israelitische Religionsgemeinde* was organized once again.

The first task confronting the *Gemeinde* was to cater to the necessities of the sick, feeble, impoverished, abused and oppressed returnees, to alleviate their physical and mental anguish, and to rehabilitate them to a life of civility. Numerous communal agencies assisted in this endeavor and, often, success was achieved.

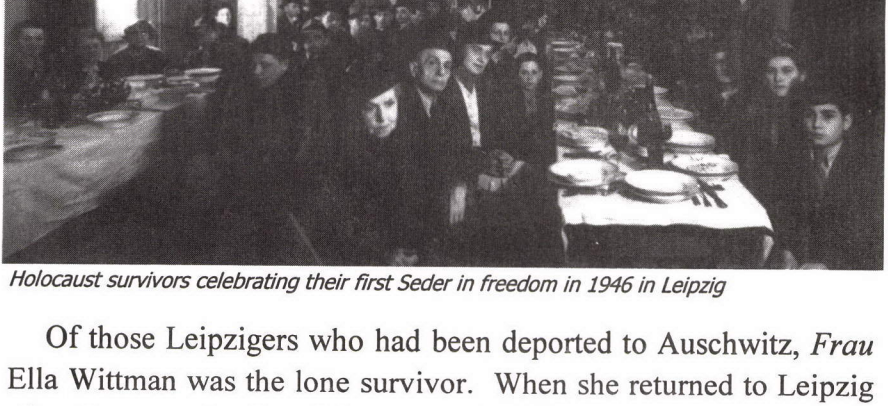
Restoration of the *Brodyer Shul* became a prime task for the newly established *Gemeinde*. The Nazis had occupied the building during the war and turned it into a storage house for chemicals. With the defeat of Nazism an accomplished fact, the building was returned to Jewish hands. They immediately proceeded to renovate and refurbish the sanctuary. On *Shabbat*, September 8, 1945, which was the first day of *Rosh Hashana*, the first post-war services were conducted at the synagogue. It was finally rededicated in a festive

ceremony on October 28, 1945. Survivors from concentration camps comprised the audience.



By the end of 1945, Leipzig's Jewish population had increased to almost 300. Approximately half of them were returning Leipzigers, former members of the *Gemeinde*. In 1949, the population reached 368, its highest number in the post-war era. Since few returnees were from the younger generations, the population has naturally declined.

In the early 1950s, the Communists, those self-proclaimed liberators of Germany, began to tighten their grip on the country, and made life miserable for its citizens. Many people abandoned the D.D.R. (*Deutsche Demokratische Republik*) and moved to Western Germany. This caused an abrupt decline in the Jewish population of Leipzig. By 1989, it reached a low of 35 members. *Herr* Aron Adlerstein, a survivor of Auschwitz and one of the last *Ostjuden* to settle in Leipzig after the war, became the chairman of the *Gemeinde's* board of directors.



Holocaust survivors celebrating their first Seder in freedom in 1946 in Leipzig

Of those Leipzigers who had been deported to Auschwitz, *Frau* Ella Wittman was the lone survivor. When she returned to Leipzig after the war, she found it extremely difficult to relate any of her experiences at Auschwitz; it was too painful for her.

My sister and I met *Frau* Wittman at the *Religionsgemeinde* in August 1980, where she was performing secretarial functions. She was eighty-one years old at the time. She graciously invited us to her home on the Gustav Adolf Strasse, and we accepted the invitation.

We soon discovered that *Frau* Wittman was all alone in the world. Every member of her family had been murdered by the

Nazis, and she did not have a single relative anywhere. She would love to leave East Germany, she told us, but then she would no longer be eligible for an old-age pension. With no other income, she had no choice but to remain in Leipzig.

I asked her how she got along with her gentile neighbors, and her answer was most revealing. She recognizes many of her present, supposedly friendly, neighbors as the very same people who made life miserable for herself and her family during the Hitler era. She is firmly convinced that a large number of Germans remain vicious anti-Semites, even today. Nowadays, however, it has become fashionable for Germans to display tolerance toward Jews. It is part of the new public image they are trying to project. So, in public at least, the Germans follow this vogue religiously. In their hearts, however, *Frau* Wittman was convinced that she was still considered an outcast in her neighborhood.

As a result, *Frau* Wittman concluded, the relationship between herself and her neighbors was virtually nonexistent. Greetings of "*guten tag*" and "*auf Wiedersehen*" are the extent of their relationship.

I received a completely different response from *Herr* Eugen Gollomb, who became the *Vorsitzende* of the Jewish *Gemeinde* in 1967. "You must realize that all the Nazis now reside in West Germany," he explained. "There are no ex-Nazis living in our midst."

It was difficult for me to believe that *Herr* Gollomb was sincerely convinced by this obvious Communist propaganda. Of course, late in 1989, the East Germans officially accepted their share of the blame for the Holocaust. Their citizens, too, were guilty, they finally admitted.

My own observations during my four trips to Leipzig fully substantiate Frau Wittman's contention concerning anti-Semitism in Germany today. Many a German has expressed to me his deep regret and anguish about what his countrymen perpetrated upon the Jews. "How could we have committed such horrendous crimes against human beings?" they question. "How could one Hitler have misled so many decent Germans?"

In Leipzig, several monuments have been erected to express contempt for Nazi terror. "*Gedenkt! Vergesst es nicht*!" ("Remember! Don't forget!"), proclaims the monument at the site of the destroyed *Gemeinde* Synagogue on the Gottschedstrasse. Monuments with similar expressions of regret can be found at the *Carlebach Schule*, at the lone area of the Rosenthal that remained open to Jews, and at the new Jewish cemetery in Eutritzsch. On the Parthenstrasse where, during the pogrom of November 10, 1938, Jews had been cast into a stream, the monument reads, "Where is your brother?"

However, despite these outward displays of solidarity and friendship, occasionally a completely different picture emerges. It is a picture of enmity and animosity directed towards those stubborn Jews, who simply refuse to disappear from the face of the earth. Let me cite some cases in point.

As we entered Germany from Basel, Switzerland, we stopped at a bank to obtain some German currency, where I overheard one woman there telling another, "The Jews, they're back, and you thought we had gotten rid of them forever." I overheard a similar comment in Leipzig's Am Ring Hotel. At the same bank, when I asked the teller about the currency rates, I was told that, "You Jews have always been stingy, niggardly, and money-crazy. No wonder

decent citizens don't like you. You're the outcasts of society."

A saleswoman at the airport in Munich completely ignored my presence in the newsstand when I entered to purchase a newspaper. After an unwarranted delay, when I insisted on service, I was curtly told, "It's about time you people realize that you're not wanted in this country. This is *Deutschland*, not *Judenland*." She then reluctantly sold me the newspaper.

When I entered a parking lot in Leipzig ahead of a German convinced that he saw the empty spot before I did, I was greeted with, "*Verfluchter Jude! Dreckischer Jude!*" and several other familiar epithets that I still remembered from the Nazi era. In addition, I was informed that, as a Jew, I had no rights to any parking facilities. I'm still not sure how he was so certain that I was a Jew.

While standing in line at the checkout counter in a tiny fruit store in Leipzig, a German physically attempted to push me aside, and when he failed to do so, his advice to me was, "*Jude*, why don't you go to Palestine to kill some Arabs?" When I ignored his outburst, he ordered, "*Jude, raus von Deutschland!*" ("Jew, get out of Germany!"). My continued silence angered him into further anti-Semitic remarks.

A taxi driver, while taking us to the airport in Berlin, complained bitterly about the incompetence of present-day German government leaders. "There hasn't been a decent and capable chancellor since the days of World War II," he informed us. "Hitler was a great leader, and his accomplishments speak for themselves." When I asked him exactly what Hitler accomplished, given that at the end of his stewardship, Germany lay in utter ruin and untold numbers had

been killed in the war he initiated, the driver pointed out that Hitler had built the *autobahn* (a system of superhighways throughout Germany). Realizing, however, that this accomplishment left me totally unimpressed, he told me that Hitler's principal accomplishment was the destruction of the Jews, whereby he had purified the atmosphere of the country and rescued it from a state of contamination and defilement.

When I informed him that we were Jewish, he began screaming hysterically and showering us with abusive comments. He ordered us to exit the cab immediately, since he was not accustomed to serving Jews. Our refusal to do so further enraged him. "You are polluting the very air in my cab!" he charged. His rage and fury persisted even when we eventually reached our destination. He then issued a stern warning to us: "Stay away from my country! We have no use for Jewish swine, the filth of the earth!" He promised that his people would soon return to power. "You wouldn't dare enter Germany with someone like Hitler in charge!" he shouted.

I declare unequivocally, it was most disheartening to hear such abhorrent talk emanating from a German so many years after Hitler's crushing defeat. Apparently, history had taught such people absolutely nothing. Their hostility towards Jews is alive and well. How sad!

A woman in a motel in the city of Baden Baden was visibly angry with me when I dared to correct a mistake on my bill as she had computed it. I heard her muttering, "Some people are like mosquitoes." When I asked, she consented to explain this deep and philosophical thought. "Although G-d gave life to mosquitoes, humans may kill them because a mosquito is detrimental to human life. Likewise," she reasoned, "it is correct to kill humans who are

detrimental to human life." However, she refused to commit herself as to which humans she was referring to. Who determines exactly which humans may be treated like mosquitoes? The implication seems quite clear.

As I paid my bill according to my own correct calculations, I noticed that the woman was obviously overcome with wrath and fury. Eventually, however, she gained the upper hand. When I wanted to buy a newspaper at her counter, I was emphatically told in a voice filled with joy and delectation that I could not have one as the store had just closed. She kept repeating, "No, you can't have one," over and over again. I then demanded to speak to the manager to complain about her negative attitude, and was told by the woman with obvious satisfaction that she herself was the manager. She had won.

When I asked a young female police officer in Frankfurt whether she could perhaps permit me to remain in the no-parking zone for two minutes while I waited for my sister to return to the car, I was immediately informed, "This is not New York. There are laws in Germany, and Jews cannot simply come and break them at their whim and fancy as they did in the past."

Not everyone, however, was able to recognize me as a Jew. When a young German lady, whom we met in Switzerland, inquired as to where I was from and I told her New York, she expressed her fond wish to visit New York someday. "There are so many tourist attractions there," she explained. She then added that she had absolutely no desire to live there because "there are too many Jews living in New York, and we all know what they're like."

The lady was clearly stunned when I revealed to her that I was

one of those New York Jews. She became quite apologetic and insisted that she was not referring to all Jews, and certainly not to me. However, I was convinced that her unfavorable opinion of Jews must be attributed to the anti-Semitic propaganda to which she had been exposed. Since she claimed that she had never even talked to a Jew, I could not really fault her for her biased opinion. She readily agreed with my conclusion, and added that she hears many derogatory and debasing comments about Jews from her parents and friends. As a matter of fact, she said that during our conversation she had discovered that Jews are really decent and normal people; certainly not the freaks she had heard so much about.

It is worthwhile to point out that there are synagogues in Germany today that require armed police to protect them from the virulent and venomous anti-Semitism so prevalent among the present German population. There are still many so-called "former" Nazis running businesses and local government administrations who have not forgotten the glorious days of the *Third Reich*, and yearn for its return. So much for those who claim that anti-Semitism has all but disappeared in Germany.

Such is the state of tolerance toward Jews in Germany today. Although the general climate is not anti-Semitic, and anti-Semitism no longer predominates, it can often be seen lurking in the shadows. Yes, *Frau* Wittman's assessment is absolutely correct. They still do not like us in Germany. We are still considered an inferior people, unworthy to tread German soil.

Although anti-Semitism also exists in the United States, it exists to a much lesser degree. In all of my 62 years in the U.S., I have not experienced as many anti-Semitic encounters as I did in one week in Germany.

At Berlin's Tegel Airport, a young German was discussing his misgivings about the then-forthcoming reunification of Germany. The basic German philosophy of *Deutschland ueber alles* (Germany above everything), as incorporated into the German national anthem, remains unaltered today, he explained. It loudly proclaims, "We are the master race; we are superior to all else." Such prevailing concepts and fundamental beliefs can easily serve as the base from which a renewed wave of anti-Semitism can suddenly emerge. Jews could again become the scapegoats for all failures and shortcomings of the newly-formed *Fourth Reich.*

This scenario of future events appears, at first glance, to be incredible indeed. However, many authorities closely familiar with the German national character have emphatically warned that such a tragic future is well within the realm of possibility. It is therefore quite disturbing to see so many Jews returning to Germany. Whereas in 1989, Leipzig's Jewish population numbered a mere 35, by 2001 it had risen to almost 700. This increase is due mainly to immigration from Russia.

In 1997, two young porters at the Frankfurt Airport were handling our baggage, and I noticed that they were conversing in Hebrew. They apprised me of the fact that they were *sabras*, born in Israel, who had resolved to spend the rest of their lives in Germany. Having resided in Israel for more than 20 difficult years, they felt that life in ultra-modern Germany, where freedom and liberty rule supreme and where the prospect of steady employment was assured, would be a step in the right direction. "We have suffered enough in Israel," they claimed.

"What about the anti-Semitism in Germany?" I asked. They readily acknowledged that in the three months they had been living

in Germany, they had been targets of anti-Semitic abuse on several occasions. However, they were prepared to accept and tolerate these abuses as part of their daily routine. "There are many advantages to living in Germany, and no country on earth is perfect in all respects," they concluded.

I was flabbergasted by their posture. I was simply unable to comprehend how immigrating to a country where there is certainly no romance between the natives and our people could alleviate their suffering in Israel. I must say, the attitude expressed by these men was highly distressing, and caused me much pain. More than ever, I now recognize the vital importance of the State of Israel to our people.

The *tzaddik* R. Yisrael of Rizhin once said that, unfortunately, many of us had grown so accustomed to living in the *galut* that we have become immune to its disastrous effects upon us, in both the spiritual and the physical arenas. We have become complacent. We appear to be quite comfortable in our surroundings, and are prepared to tolerate any prevailing social and cultural conditions. *Mashiach* and our ultimate redemption no longer play a vital role for us; they are far removed from our thoughts. The Rebbe stated emphatically that it is only realizing exile's shortcomings and striving for our ultimate redemption that can bring it about.

He quoted the verse, "*Hashem* said, 'I will bring you out from succumbing under the burden of Egypt.'" (Shemot 6:6). The Rebbe explained that *Hashem* promised that he would remove the Israelites from their state of habitual apathy so that they may appreciate the reality of their plight in the lands of their exile, and strive for complete redemption. According to the *Talmud*, the first query asked of a soul by the Heavenly Court is, did he eagerly and

anxiously await the ultimate redemption? (Shabbat 31:a).

The eminent *Gaon* of Dvinsk, R. Meir Simchah Hakohen, predicts in his classic sefer *Meshech Chochmah* that destruction will come upon the Jewish people due to their abandonment of Jewish values and their slavish adulation of secular culture, as evidenced by the Reform movement in Berlin. Then the Jews will know that their heritage is the root of Israel and their consolations are those of *Hashem's* prophets, who prophesied about the son of Yishai in the end of days.

The years since the destruction of Jewish Europe have indeed been years of growth for *Yiddishkeit*. The primacy of Torah has been mounting once again, the Torah institutions in America and Israel are blossoming, and people estranged from Judaism are finding their way back. Yet even as we witness continued advances, we must never lose our awareness that we are in *galut*. The eminent *gaon*, R. Yaakov Kaminetsky, forewarns us that if we fail to recognize this, Divine Providence has ways to remind us of this—even as we engage in rebuilding Torah institutions and communities—for only in this way will we merit our speedy redemption (A Path Through the Ashes, Artscroll).

It is high time that we realize that there is absolutely no safety or security for Jews in the *galut*. One can go on and on, listing the many of our so-called "reliable" friends in the *galut* who conveniently absented themselves at crucial times and opted out of their commitments. The list is endless. Experience long ago taught us that we are virtually alone in this world. As the Midianite Bil'am so appropriately put it, we are "a nation that dwells in solitude" (Bamidbar 23:9).

There are more neo-Nazis operating in the territory of the former East Germany than in the former West Germany, according to Peter Frisch, a senior official of the *Verfassungsschutz*, Germany's FBI. In an interview published in the *Flensburger Tageblatt*, Frisch was quoted as saying that the authorities had trouble keeping track of right-wing extremist groups in the former East Germany, where the existence of neo-Nazi organizations had been all but denied by the deposed Communist regime. As recently as October 1990, hundreds of neo-Nazi demonstrators marched through Dresden, in the former East Germany, shouting racist slogans. In Leipzig, neo-Nazi violence led to the police shooting of one person, who eventually died.

Heinz Galinski, who headed Germany's Jewish community, has called on government leaders to address the problem before it gets completely out of hand. The Auschwitz survivor said that since unification, hardly a day goes by without an attack on Jews somewhere in Germany. Anti-Semitism is alive and well in *Deutschland.*

Despite the numerous calls by Jewish leaders and Holocaust survivors for an anti-Nazi clause to be included in the country's new constitution, perhaps something banning Nazis completely, the unified German government has taken no action. It should be noted that a long-standing Allied ban on neo-Nazi groups in Berlin was recently lifted as the wartime Allies forfeited control over the city.

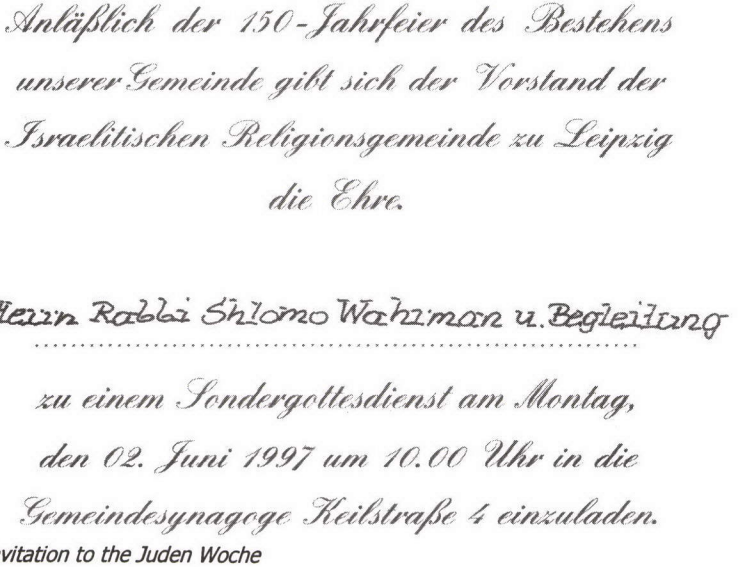
The renowned American writer William Shirer, who authored the best seller The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich, resided in Germany for many years. As an American reporter in pre-World War II Germany, he was quite familiar with the country, and the philosophy of its citizens. In an interview for the New York Times, he

expressed his deep anxieties and apprehensions concerning German reunification. He had many friends among the German liberals and socialists before the war, but when Hitler gained power, they became active Nazis. During *Kristallnacht*, he encountered these very same friends looting and plundering Jewish establishments. The Germans, concluded Shirer, cannot be trusted.

Approximately one month after the reunification of Germany, the following item appeared in the New York Times. In September 1990, two soccer matches in Berlin and one in Leipzig led to regular street battles between rival fans and the police. At a match between a Leipzig club and Football Club Jena, fighting in the stands caused officials to cut play short. Neo-Nazi groups are often at the core of the fighting, and in some stadiums, groups of violent youths have taken to jeering referees by chanting, "Jew!" Apparently, no greater insult can be hurled at a member of the so-called *master race*, even after reunification. Anti-Semitism is there, plain for all to see.

My wife and I were invited by Leipzig's *Oberbürgermeister*, Hinrich Lehman-Grube, to be the city's guests for the first week of June in 1997. Many other Jewish former Leipzigers were invited for what was to be the second *Judenwoche*. The purpose of this visit was for us to see our former home, to meet with the leaders of the *Israelitische Religionsgemeinde*, and to familiarize ourselves with the ongoing activities of the community and the *Carlebach Stiftung*. We would also attend specific cultural programs especially arranged by our hosts for the Leipzigers of yesteryear. It should be noted that the city shared in the expenses incurred. I must declare, without any reservations, that we were treated royally, with the utmost dignity and respect, throughout the entire week. *Frau* Gabriele Bock, who was assigned by the city to supervise the week's events, performed

superbly in accommodating so many foreign guests arriving from all corners of the world. Her always-gracious demeanor turned the week into a pleasant experience.


Anläßlich der 150-Jahrfeier des Bestehens
unserer Gemeinde gibt sich der Vorstand der
Israelitischen Religionsgemeinde zu Leipzig
die Ehre.

Herrn Rabbi Shlomo Wahrman u. Begleitung

zu einem Sondergottesdienst am Montag,
den 02. Juni 1997 um 10.00 Uhr in die
Gemeindesynagoge Keilstraße 4 einzuladen.

Invitation to the Juden Woche

Since the programs of Leipzig's *Judenwoche* were scheduled to commence on Sunday, June 1, at noon, we had no choice but to leave for Germany on Thursday evening. We were scheduled to arrive in Berlin on Friday morning, too late to rent a car with ample time to drive to Leipzig. Therefore, we had made prior arrangements to spend *Shabbat* in Berlin, in the section of town that had previously been under Russian control. We had reservations at a beautiful, luxurious, newly built hotel on the Friedrichstrasse, only a five-minute walk from the *Brandenburg Tor*, which for so many years had been the dividing line between the eastern and western sectors of the city. I had telephoned *Herr* Ari Abraham Offenberg, the *Vorsitzender* of the *Adass Yisroel Shul* to ascertain whether religious services were conducted there on a regular basis. The *Shul*

was within walking distance of the hotels. We had brought enough food supplies from New York to enable us to consume the *Shabbat* meals in our hotel room.

The hotel went all out to accommodate us. When I informed the manager that our room must be situated on a lower floor because our religion prohibited us from riding on the elevator on Shabbat, he immediately transferred us from the sixth to the second floor. At the same time, realizing that we would be using the staircase to ascend to the second floor and that the doors to enter that floor were kept constantly locked on the outside, he authorized personnel to open the one door closest to our room and post a sign that this door should not be closed.

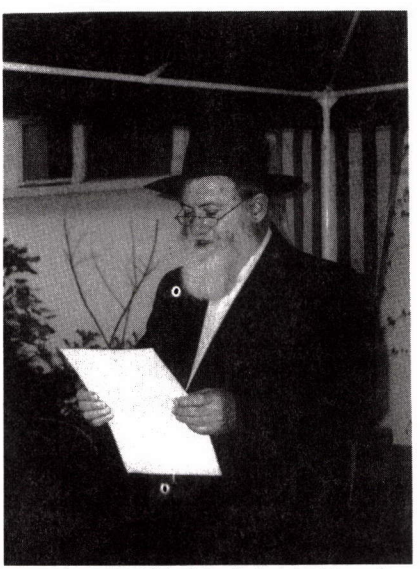
When I informed the manager that we could not use the electro-magnetic card key on the *Shabbat*, he arranged for a special key to be prepared specifically for us. Upon entering the hotel via its revolving doors, I discovered that as soon as someone steps into the area, the electricity kicks in and the door begins to revolve more rapidly. I brought this matter to the manager's attention, and without any further ado, the electricity from one revolving door was disconnected. It was obvious to us that the manager had gone to great lengths to please us, and make our two-night stay at the hotel more pleasant and gratifying.

At 2 p.m., still many hours before the arrival of the *Shabbat*, we decided to walk to Tucholsky Strasse 40, where the *shul* is located. On the way, we would purchase some fruit for *Shabbat*, and perhaps some *challot*, at the *Kolbo* grocery store right around the corner from the *shul*. With massive construction in the area, closed streets, and detours, we soon lost our way. We then approached a young lady in her early twenties and asked her for directions. "You

probably want the *shul*," she guessed, and told us how to find it. When I inquired if she was Jewish, her simple reply was, "Leider noch nicht," (unfortunately, not yet). We then parted ways.

As we began to focus on the significance of what she had said, we realized that this young lady apparently wished to convert to Judaism. Why didn't we engage her in a more detailed discussion? We wondered what had motivated her to do this. What had she learned about Judaism that would induce her to undertake such a giant step? What about her family and friends? We turned back and attempted to find her, but to no avail. It was too late; we had missed our opportunity.

At Friday evening services, I met Rabbi Reuven Unger, who serves as both rabbi and cantor at Adass Yisroel. R. Unger is also active as a *shochet* and as a *mohel*. He had just performed a *brit milah* for a youngster in Leipzig. He is a gentleman of *Chassidic* background, and a faithful adherent of the *Chassidic* dynasty of Czortkov, which has an enormous following throughout the world.



R. Rubin – Rabbi of Berlin's Adat Yisrael Community

When I described our brief encounter with the mysterious young lady, he informed me that there are many such youngsters in Germany, young people who are most anxious to accept the teachings of Judaism as their way of life. Having witnessed at first hand the extreme fierceness, the

unrestrained violence and brutality by many of their co-religionists as perpetrated by the savage Nazi regime, they sincerely desire more tranquil and serene surroundings; they want to join a more fair-minded, unprejudiced environment. Judaism appears to them the most logical choice. However, in the present-day climate in Germany, when racism and anti-Semitism rule supreme, when neo-Nazis still roam the streets, such a choice can have hazardous consequences. So these young men and women wait, hoping to realize their ambitions in better times. Their dreams, however, remain alive.

When we arrived early on *Shabbat* morning for services, the police guards did not permit us to enter. Since we had not notified anyone at the synagogue of our plan to attend, we appeared suspicious to the police. How were they to know that we were not among the neo-Nazis who frequent the area? Only when R. Unger arrived were we permitted to enter the premises.



In this building the Religions Gemeinde in Leipzig was founded in 1847

Monday, June 2, marked the 150th anniversary of the establishment of Leipzig's *Gemeinde*. At the time, the city had achieved a Jewish population nearing the 200 mark. Most of these present-day Leipzigers, more than 100 former Leipzigers, government leaders, and

other dignitaries had assembled in the *Brodyer Shul* and filled it to capacity. It was a most festive occasion. Dr. Brand, the *Landesrabbiner* of Dortmund in the province of Westphalia, officiated at the services.

In his sermon, he reminded the audience that people in years past had considered Judaism in Germany exclusively in the past tense. "'We are breathing our last breath,' we were told. Fortunately, today's gathering has clearly shown the world that 'Wir sind da, wir leben, und wir haben eine Zukunft.' We are here, we live, and we have a future." This statement appeared, with banner headlines, on the front page of every one of Leipzig's newspapers on the following morning.

Seated among the audience, I strongly doubted this positive evaluation and prognosis. I noticed that everyone present had already reached his late sixties. The younger generation was not there at all. Without youth, how can one hope to build the future? Religious life in Leipzig was virtually nonexistent at the time. There was no religious education program in the city. *Kashrut*, *Shabbat*, and other basics of Judaism were totally disregarded. Can such a scene be accurately described by the words, "We live?" Is this Jewish life? As much as I wished Dr. Brand's prognosis to be accurate, I could only describe it as a case of wishful thinking.

During the *Judenwoche*, many large placards had been posted throughout Leipzig, welcoming the Jewish former Leipzigers to the city. The Hebrew word *Shalom*, aesthetically designed, was highlighted on these placards. Despite the large neo-Nazi presence, not one placard was defaced or disfigured in any way.

Rather than display displeasure at the sudden influx of Jews,

Leipzig's citizens welcomed us with smiles and open arms. What a dramatic change! Whereas in the past, constant anti-Semitic verbal abuse was commonplace, we now discovered warm and friendly faces greeting us at every turn. I was genuinely impressed. Those who persisted in their pernicious conduct, cursing us whenever we confronted them, were greatly outnumbered by the more compassionate citizens. Their smiling faces assured us that the streets of Leipzig were suddenly safe and secure for all of us.

What had happened in Leipzig? Where did so much of the hatred go? What brought about such an overwhelming and unanticipated change in the hearts of so many Leipzigers? Is anti-Semitism really in its final stages in Leipzig, fighting for survival? Leipzig's *Oberbürgermeister*, Dr. Hinrich Lehman-Grube, had graciously invited us to his office at the *Neue Rathaus*, Leipzig's new City Hall; and I took the opportunity to present him with this conundrum.

Dr. Lehman-Grube explained that a change of such proportions cannot be achieved automatically. "For years," he said, "our administration has been attempting to educate our people on the evils of hatred, prejudiced hostility, and unwarranted animosity. To a certain extent, we have succeeded in our efforts. Abusive confrontations and violent encounters with Jews have declined sharply. Unfortunately," he continued, "pockets of resistance still remain, and there are still those among us who remain unchanged and unrepentant. There are still those who stubbornly persist in their perverted and racist attitudes towards members of the Jewish faith. In addition, many neo-Nazis reside in the city. We know who they are, and we know where they live. But unless we actually apprehend them in the act of committing criminal mischief, our hands our tied, and they remain free."

When we stopped at a local gasoline station after we left Dr. Lehman-Grube's office, we immediately encountered one of those elements within Leipzig whose anti-Semitic sentiments had remained unchanged. The station attendant (or owner?) welcomed me with hysterical screams, and ordered me to leave the gas station instantly; he does not sell gasoline to Jews, I was told. I simply ignored his order and informed him that I was prepared to telephone the authorities, as this type of discrimination was illegal in modern Germany. He reluctantly sold the gasoline to me, and suggested that for my own good, I should never again enter his premises. "We have ways of dealing with creatures of your kind!" was his farewell.

During the *Judenwoche*, we met Uwe and Ulrike Goergen, a virtuous and decent young German couple who possess high ethical and moral standards. There is not a racist bone in their bodies. When I first informed Ulrike that I was a member of the Jewish faith, her initial reaction was to ask where my *kappie* (skullcap) might be? At the time, I was wearing an ordinary hat; but when I pulled the *kappie* out of my pocket, she began to believe me. She had never spoken to a Jew before, and she had been under the impression that all Jewish people wear *kappies* at all times.

Though they had already reached their late twenties, they were, for all practical purposes, unaware of the atrocities committed during the Holocaust. Any occasionally reported outrageous acts they considered gross exaggerations. The barbaric events of the Holocaust were rarely mentioned during their many years of schooling in Germany. When I informed Ulrike of these events, her initial reaction was, "Warum sagst du solche Sachen? Es ist doch nicht wahr!" (Why do you say such things? They are not true!). However, a trip to the Buchenwald concentration camp in Weimar

that we took in 1998 finally brought the couple up to date, and they saw the light for the first time. They were finally convinced of the truth of my words.

Ulrike appeared shocked, not only by the murder of so many innocent victims, but also by the fact that crimes of such magnitude had been concealed from them for so many years. She was deeply hurt when she realized that such tight censorship actually existed. She repeatedly asked, "What kind of leadership do we have when such brutal crimes are hidden from the public?"

We eventually became friends with the Goergens, and still correspond on a regular basis. Ulrike meticulously mails to me all clippings on Jewish affairs that appear in Leipzig's newspapers.

For various reasons, we opted to leave the *Judenwoche* events before the onset of the *Shabbat*. At the Lufthansa Air offices, we rescheduled our planned June 8 return trip for an earlier flight. The lady in charge was particularly gracious, and treated us with the utmost cordiality. We were therefore stunned when, as we were about to leave the office, she remarked, "I'm so happy you're leaving a few days earlier. Now we will have fewer Jews in the city."

She immediately realized the significance of what she had said, and we were forced to listen to her shaky apology when she realized the possible repercussions of her remark. What we heard, she explained, was nothing more than a slip of the tongue. She topped her apology by professing her sincere love of the Jewish people. As a last resort, she complimented me on my beautiful use of the German language, which I speak with a proper Saxonian accent, as it is spoken in Leipzig; but to no avail. We parted peaceably, and

she wished us good fortune in the future. However, despite her valiant efforts, we felt that her benign words did not accurately represent her true and innermost feelings towards us. We did not believe a word of her apology, which we felt was intended to follow the new German vogue: the fashionableness of Germans displaying tolerance toward Jews. It is part of the new public image they are attempting to project.

An elderly German was attempting to impress me with his warm attachment and devotion to Jews. "Before the events of *Kristallnacht*, my friends were planning a break-in at Bamberger and Hertz." (This was a large Jewish-owned department store in Leipzig.) "I warned them of impending consequences. This will be our ruination! The world will condemn us as outlaws. It may yet involve us in a war. Unfortunately," he continued, "my associates completely ignored by admonitions and the building was put to the torch."

His wife sharply rebuked him. "Tell the truth!" she demanded. "You warned no one. You, yourself, participated in the break-in of the store, and assisted in the kindling of the fire. You were as guilty as all the others!"

"Now, wait a minute," I interjected, with tongue firmly in cheek. "Didn't the owners themselves start the fire? I distinctly remember that the authorities listed the cause of the fire as arson, and the owners, the accused arsonists, were immediately arrested. The allegation stated that their purpose was to collect on their insurance policy." Disbelievingly, the wife asked, "Do you still give credence to this Nazi propaganda?"

A heated argument then ensued between the couple, each

attempting to outclass the other on their total commitment to the Jewish cause. She charged him with making constant derogatory remarks about people of the Jewish faith. Both portrayed themselves as people madly in love with the Jews. It was obvious to me that their entire quarrel was merely a theatrical performance intended to demonstrate the new vogue in Germany of tolerance towards Jews. They were still at each other's throats as we parted ways.

When a sweet elderly lady inquired why my family had left beautiful Germany in 1939, I informed her of my religion and reminded her of Hitler's plans to exterminate the Jews. Her reply was incredible. "Of course," she said, "in 1939 we hated the Jews, but now we love them again. Our own government now lovingly admires Jews, and patriotic Germans always follow the lead of their government." Apparently, the lady has no feelings, no emotions, and no mind of her own. Just follow the government, is her motto. Love can be turned on and off like water in a faucet. Some love!

There is no doubt in my mind that hatred of the Jews has vastly declined in the country, and the streets now appear to be safe and secure. Only on rare occasions does a depraved anti-Semite appear upon the scene. On my last trip to Leipzig, I even ventured to walk outside wearing a *yarmulke*, just as I would in the streets of Brooklyn. Twenty years ago such a *yarmulke* would have been the cause of much hostility, abuse, derision, and ridicule aimed in my direction. Now, however, warm and smiling faces greeted me at every turn. Something has indeed changed; perhaps the mayor's initiative to uproot hatred and hostility has born fruit. Is it a genuine change, or are there perhaps ulterior motives? I'm not sure. I cannot easily overcome mistrust and skepticism based on so many

years of treachery, and suddenly affirm with certainty the sincerity of the newly embraced civil character of the German nation. It's not that simple.

In fact, recent events have shed more light and have amply helped to clarify the true character of the German people. When Operation Defensive Shield was launched by the State of Israel to defend its citizens from terrorist suicide bombers, it brought to the forefront a resurgence of anti-Semitism throughout Europe. The European nations who, sixty years ago, refused to lift a finger to save millions of Jews have now turned their collective backs on the Jewish state. Mass anti-Israel demonstrations have been organized in many countries. Germans, too, have been active participants in these expressions of disgust for Jews who have the temerity to attempt to defend themselves. Eleven thousand demonstrators marched in Berlin, 5000 in Frankfurt, and countless others in cities throughout Germany. They appear to have fully re-embraced their age-old hobby of anti-Semitism; it appears once again to be fashionable in this fortress of "justice and civility."

Debbie Maimon is not astonished by these traumatic events. In her article in the *Yated Neeman*, she emphatically states that she expected no better from these descendants of the savage Nazi regime. She writes that today, the headquarters of anti-Semitism is France, where Jew-bashing incidents are happening at the rate of 12 per day. The government of Jacques Chirac and Lionel Jospin has done nothing to curb the wave of violent crime against Jews and Jewish institutions. In fact, President Chirac, opening his re-election bid, blandly lectured reporters in front of Israeli Foreign Minister Shim'on Peres that "There is no anti-Semitism and there are no anti-Semites in France."

R. Jonathan Sacks, the Chief Rabbi of the British Empire, states that British Jewry is suffering the worst anti-Semitism since the Holocaust, and that the Jewish community is feeling increasingly under siege. In addition to an increase in hate crimes, one-sided attacks from the left, and outspoken Muslim opponents, some Christian leaders are questioning Israel's right to exist. Journalist Melanie Phillips reports that the Archbishop of Wales worries that opposition to Israel is no longer based on a particular policy, but is rather motivated by anti-Semitism rooted in the Christian theology known as "replacement theology." Simply stated, it reasserts medieval church doctrine that Jews have been replaced by Christians in G-d's favor, and therefore, any promises to the Jews—including their historic links to the Holy Land—lack any validity (Response, Spring 2002).

So fast has the poison of anti-Semitism spread in Europe that even core values such as respect for human life and the protection of children—values demolished by the new culture of suicide/murder among Palestinians—no longer frame the Middle East policies of European-based human rights groups. These groups instead devote their energies to delegitimizing the State of Israel.

So what do European humanitarians say when Palestinian civilians strap on plastic explosives and head for Israeli marketplaces? Europe says that Israeli checkpoints for Palestinians are "humiliating."

When documents signed by Yasir Arafat are found that authorize funding for a suicide bombing at a young girl's *Bat Mitzvah* party, members of the Nobel Committee publicly express the wish to take back the 1994 Peace Prize—from Shim'on Peres.

When Palestinian Red Crescent ambulances permit themselves to be used as transportation for bombs and explosives, Europe attacks Israel for refusing them free movement.

When *shuls* are firebombed in France, Belgium, and Finland, the European Union deplores the wanton destruction of property—in Ramallah.

In an impassioned editorial in an Italian newspaper, renowned author and journalist Oriani Fallaci attacks the hypocrisy of her own countrymen and other Europeans in demonizing Israel and turning against the Jews in their midst.

"Jews in Italian cities are once again afraid," Fallaci writes. "And in French cities and Dutch cities and German cities it is the same. I find it shameful that in Italy, they rally in solidarity with suicide bombers, inciting people to hate the Jews. In order to see Jews once again in the extermination camps, in the gas chambers, in the ovens of Dachau and Mauthausen and Buchenwald and Bergen-Belsen, these haters would sell their own mothers.

"I find it shameful that in France, they burn synagogues, terrorize Jews, and profane their cemeteries. I find it shameful that the youth of Holland and Germany and Denmark flaunt the *kaffiah* just as Mussolini's followers used to flaunt the club and the fascist badge. I find it shameful and see in all this the rise of a new fascism, a new Nazism, more revolting because it is nourished by those who hypocritically pose as peace-makers, progressives, Catholics, Christians...who have the gall to label as a warmonger anyone who screams the truth."

Fallaci, a Christian who fought against the Nazis as a young girl, now has one more powerful reason to feel ashamed of the new

Europe. In April, the 53-member United Nations Human Rights Commission (with the exceptions of Canada, Britain, Germany, the Czech Republic, and Guatemala) voted to condemn Israel for "acts of mass killings" and supported the Palestinian "armed struggle," meaning terror attacks.

France, Belgium, Spain, and three other European Union members endorsed the Arab-sponsored resolution, which brought U.N. hypocrisy to a new low. With a vote of 40 to five, the Human Rights Commission now joins the 57 nations of the Islamic Conference in legitimizing suicide bombers and other forms of Palestinian terror.

Alfred Moses, a former U.S. Ambassador to the commission (which last year maneuvered the United States out of its membership), now the chairman of U.N. Watch, a monitoring group, condemned the vote. "A vote in favor of this resolution is a clear vote for Palestinian terrorism," he said. "Any country that condones or is indifferent to the murder of Israeli civilians in markets, on buses, and in cafes has lost any moral standing to criticize Israel's human rights record."

So despite the many positive steps undertaken by the authorities to expunge the scourge of anti-Semitism from the hearts and minds of the German population, it is nevertheless persistent. It lingers on.

Hatred of Jews has always been deeply ingrained within the very culture of Germany, and it is not easily discarded. Often, their display of tolerance towards Jews is merely part of the new public image they attempt to project. So they follow this vogue religiously, and all of their intellectual and technological talents are geared to enhance and to intensify this image.

Anti-Semitism in Germany, however, remains a force to be reckoned with.

In 1996, the date of January 27—corresponding to that date in 1944 when Soviet troops liberated the infamous Auschwitz concentration camp—was officially declared as a memorial day by the Leipzig municipal government. It is dedicated to remembrance of the victims of Nazi oppression, both Jew and gentile, and several monuments have been erected throughout the city to depict their suffering. A book, Menschen Ohne Grabstein (People Without a Tombstone) has been authored by Frau Ellen Bertram and published by the *Carlebach Stiftung*, listing the names of 1,998 Jews who were savagely massacred in concentration camps. It should be noted that the *Carlebach Stiftung*, which was organized solely by non-Jews (and is funded and administered by them) has already published numerous works portraying the lives of former Leipzigers of the Jewish faith, listing their positive contributions towards the welfare of the city's citizens, whatever their faith.

Plans have now been formulated by the *Gemeinde* to enlarge the Brodyer Shul and to construct a meeting center of Leipzig's Jews at a cost of eight million mark. The chairman of the newly organized *Förderverein* (committee to promote expansion), Bernd Lutz Lange, who had been favorably involved in Jewish causes in the past, stated that the goal of this committee is to promote and enhance Jewish life within the city. With this motivation, they have accepted the responsibility of raising the financial means to accomplish such an undertaking.

Due to the ever-rising immigration of Russian Jews, the *Gemeinde's* membership has risen from nearly 30 to more than 600 members, according to Rolf Isaacsohn, the chairman of the

Israelitische Religionsgemeinde zu Leipzig. Its Jewish population is now the largest, by far, in all of the province of Saxony, and is expected to shortly reach the number of 850. *Landesrabbiner* Salomon Almekias Siegl maintains that Leipzig's untarnished reputation in all areas of human endeavor has undoubtedly contributed to this rapid increase.

Leipzig's *Oberbürgermeister*, Wolfgang Tiefensee, himself a leading member of the *Förderverein*, has expressed the city's interest in maintaining the *Gemeinde* as an essential part of the city. "We owe it to the Jews," he emphasized. "During the Nazi years, unfortunately, many Leipzigers remained aloof and unconcerned with the plight of the Jews, and some actually participated in their persecution. The time has arrived when we must pay our debt to the Jews."

As a result, the *Oberbürgermeister* pledged that a major portion of the eight million mark allotted for the building expansion program will be funded by city coffers and by the province of Saxony. The remaining sum is to be financed by the *Förderverein*. Five hundred thousand mark will be needed to enlarge the capacity of the *Brodyer Shul* to a total of 320 seats, whereas the proposed *Begegnungszentrum* (meeting center) will cost seven and a half million mark. At the time this is being written, the enlargement of the *Brodyer Shul* is already an accomplished fact.

For the *Begegnungszentrum*, which is scheduled to be completed before the arrival of 2003, a large auditorium with seating for 400 is planned. In addition, the edifice will contain a permanent exhibit depicting the Jewish history of Leipzig, a well-equipped library, classrooms, a *mikvah* (ritualarium), and a restaurant with a *kosher* kitchen. Such a restaurant is a vital necessity for us and for all

Jewish visitors to the city. During past trips, we were forced to pack food we had prepared in the United States to sustain us for the duration of the trip. Chairman Lange envisions a time when all of these newly built facilities will serve Leipzigers of all persuasions.

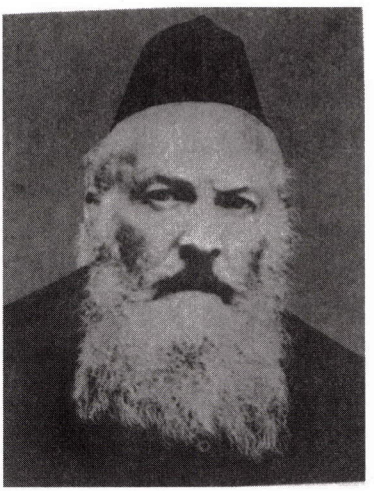
So progress is being made. *Yiddishkeit* appears to be advancing, albeit extremely slowly. Part of this progress should be attributed to the valiant efforts of Rabbi Siegl, who has initiated many programs of a religious nature. Perhaps Jewish Leipzig does have a future.



Unbounded Hatred: Why?

The annihilation of six million Jews, carried out by the German state under Adolf Hitler, has resisted understanding. How could this have happened? How could a highly cultured people like the Germans fall so quickly and easily to the depths of moral depravity? How can one reconcile the idea of genocide with the great scientific advances and philosophical genius produced by German culture?

The question intensifies when we contemplate the great accomplishments achieved by German culture in all fields of human endeavor. Germany was considered the foremost representative of enlightenment and progress. From her midst came forth the greatest minds of Europe—scientists, poets, and philosophers. Immanuel Kant wrote at length to establish the binding force of the moral imperative. A high percentage of Nobel Prize winners were German. It was only Germany's advanced level of technological development that allowed it to wage war against half the world. How was it possible, then, that this people engaged in murder on a



R. Elchanan Wasserman

scale unmatched in the history of mankind?

The *Gaon* R. Elchanan Wasserman quotes the Chofetz Chaim: "If Torah ceases, faith must also cease, and without faith in Hashem, the world cannot exist." The idea is found explicitly in the Torah when Avrohom told Avimelech, the king of *Grar*, "It is only that there is no fear of G-d in this place, that they will kill me because of the matter of my wife" (Bereishit 20:11). The expression "It is only" indicates that nothing in the world has the power to hold back the animal instinct within man, except fear of *Hashem*. In the modern era, when non-belief has spread throughout the world, human beings have become serpents who bite each other, and the most healthy among the nations of the world are those who believe in the Holy Scriptures (Kovetz Ma'amarim, p. 70). It is not by chance that of the few Gentiles who saved Jewish lives during the Holocaust, a high percentage were people of deep religious faith.

It appears that only through the desertion of religion and the separation of religion and philosophy was it possible for the Nazis to produce a philosophical system advocating violence and murder; a system that based itself on citations from the writings of great philosophers. Most notorious are the references in Nazi ideology to the writings of the German philosopher, Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche. In carrying the "enlightenment" theory to its logical extreme, Nietzsche wrote vehemently against the "Judeo-Christian

slave morality" and argued in favor of "superior man," a man who would be "beyond good and evil," as the concepts are defined by conventional morality. The "superman" ideal, the concept of life "beyond good and evil" only could have become reality in a world in which religion was no longer a central force. The Nazis hailed Nietzsche as one of the spiritual progenitors of Nazism. His writings contain anti-Semitic remarks, and his nihilistic critique of liberalism and modern culture contributed to the rise of irrational political movements.

Similarly, William Shirer in The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich writes that the German culture which became dominant in the 19th century and which coincided with the rise of Prussian Germany, continuing from Otto von Bismarck through Adolf Hitler, does not rest on some of the most elevated minds of the Western world—Leibnitz, Kant, Humboldt, Lessing, Goethe, Schiller, Bach and Beethoven. Rather, it rests on a host of lesser spirits such as Nietzsche and the composer Richard Wagner. Disillusioned by the failure of the 1848 revolution, Wagner launched a bitter attack on the Jews, whom he portrayed as the incarnation of the power of money, symbolized by the Rothschilds and commercialism. He denied Jewish cultural creativity in general and, in particular, that the noted composers Felix Mendelssohn and Heinrich Heine could be considered truly creative. In ambiguous terms, under the guise of speaking of their redemption, he conceived the idea of *Untergang* (extinction) of the Jews. Hitler was said to be a great admirer of Wagner's general philosophy and of his music.

However, criminal acts and atrocities also occurred during the predominantly religious Middle Ages. Jews suffered through the Crusades, the Spanish Expulsion, and the Inquisition with its forced

conversions. Heinous persecutions of unfathomed magnitude were committed against Jews, despite the Christian code of divine morality. It should, however, be noted that all the atrocities of the Middle Ages pale in comparison to the infamy committed by modern man. All those killed during the entire span of the Crusades make up only a small percentage of those murdered in the concentration camps. In addition, the goal of medieval persecutions was not murder for its own sake, but forced conversion. Not one of Israel's enemies during the Middle Ages attempted to annihilate her as the Nazis did.

In modern times, the inherent stability of divine morality—with its boundaries protected by fear of G-d—was replaced by the infirmity of man-made morality. Eternal reward or punishment was no longer a matter of great consequence, as the very foundations of morality came under attack. No wonder that moral anarchy was the inevitable result. Genocide became something perfectly permissible, even a high duty, during our more "enlightened" era.

The closest modern equivalent to the Holocaust were the purges of Josef Stalin in the Soviet Union. Communist doctrine opposed all religion and millions of innocent people, including Jews, were brutally murdered. As a matter of fact, many Nazi practices, including concentration camps, were simply imitations of methods used in Russia, although the Nazis performed them on a much larger and more sophisticated scale.

Abandonment of religious values, however, does not explain why Germany degenerated more rapidly than other nations that had equally abandoned the Christian faith. Yet the departure from religion can explain, at least partially, the apathy of the collective German society toward the wholesale murder of Jews or the

population's passive (and often active) participation in that murder. Once man rejected the divine origin of human life and adopted an ideology of "returning to nature" and of obeying man's animal urges, the prohibition against murder became irrelevant.

Hitler's regime was based on the Nazi racial doctrine, according to which "Aryan" Germans belong to the master race, while Jews are deemed to be Untermenschen; subhumans, not part of the human race. They became part of the non-human universe: the objects of functional exploitation, undifferentiated from other non-human matter in nature and requiring the same detachment. Thus, their total extermination became inevitable for much of the collective German society.

R. Shim'on bar Yochai taught that it is a known *halachah* that Esau hates Jacob (Sifri Beha'alotcha Ch. 24). Many commentaries have questioned the term *halachah* as used in this context. *Halachah* is a generic term for the entire legal system of Judaism, embracing all the detailed laws and observances. *Halachah* mandates guidelines to the Jews. It teaches a system of conduct to which we must adhere. The fact that Esau hates Jacob is, therefore, not in the realm of *halachah*, but rather is sociological in nature, dealing with social relationships and patterns of collective behavior. The term *halachah* in this context therefore appears to be a misnomer.


R. Menachem Ziemba

The great Warsaw *Gaon*, R. Menachem Ziemba, in his classic book

Chidushey Ha'Garmaz (ch. 48) offers a solution to our problem. Let me now attempt to elaborate on it.

R. Chanina ben Dosa teaches: "Anyone whose deeds exceed his wisdom, his wisdom shall endure; but anyone whose wisdom exceeds his deeds, his wisdom shall not endure" (Avot 3:12). The question often raised is, since a person can act only within the scope of his knowledge and intelligence, how can one's deeds exceed one's wisdom?

The Torah informs us that when *Hashem* offered the Torah to the Jewish people, they unanimously replied, "All that *Hashem* has said, we shall do and understand." By placing action prior to comprehension, the Israelites removed their right to selection and discretion. Their faith in *Hashem* was so abundant that they consented to follow his directions blindly, irrespective of their significance and meaning.

This unqualified preparedness to do even that which they did not comprehend was tantamount to performing beyond their knowledge. Hence, their deeds, in the form of their readiness, exceeded their wisdom.

Rabban Gamliel, the son of R. Yehudah *Hanasi*, suggests that this then be the blueprint and guideline to all adherents of the Jewish faith. His instructions are as explicit as they are unqualified. "Negate your own will before the will of the Almighty" (Avot 2:4).

When one discovers that his own will clashes with the views and directives of the Torah, he ought to undo his will and submit to the will of the Torah. Whether or not one can rationally perceive the wisdom of what he is commanded to do, and even when his will clearly and insistently urges him to head in another direction, R.

Gamliel still recommends that we subject ourselves to the Higher Authority in heaven. The Torah must be looked upon as a binding ordinance and not merely as a menu from which one sporadically chooses items of interest to suit his craving or fancy. Ultimately, the test of true faith is its ability to go beyond the rational, the reasonable, and the understood; to move man to do deeds even if they run counter to his will. That is indeed religion in its highest form.

Despite this, many attempts have been made to obtain rational explanations for our Torah laws. For example, reasons have been suggested for our dietary laws. Many have thought that preventive medicine is the logical elucidation for the laws of *kashrut*, and facts seem to bear this out.

Few observant Jews have ever been afflicted with the dread disease trichinosis, which supposedly is a direct result of eating contaminated pork; or with a certain type of hepatitis, which results from the consumption of contaminated oysters. Jews have apparently been protected by their dietary laws from the common and dangerous illness tularemia, transmitted by the hare or hyrax of the rabbit family. Jews abstain from crab and lobster, which are known to be ptomaine generators.

The removal of hard fat from each animal has been lauded by medical science in its struggle to keep man's appetite away from saturated fats. A foremost authority on heart disease, Dr. Paul Dudley White, who served as Dwight D. Eisenhower's personal cardiologist, advised the American Medical Association to heed the biblical command, "Every manner of fat you shall not eat" (Vayikra 7:23).

Tuberculosis, pleurisy, or other respiratory diseases in an animal render it *treifah*. As a matter of fact, many modern United States government regulations are, in essence, no less than a tacit acceptance and general adaptation of the *kosher* meat inspection rules of Judaism.

But can anyone actually assert with any reasonable measure of certainty that preventive medicine is the reason behind our dietary laws? A hog could be raised in an incubator on antibiotics, bathed daily, slaughtered in a hospital operating room, and its carcass sterilized by ultraviolet rays without rendering its meat *kosher*. To dramatize this point, R. Elazar ben Azarya taught: "A person should not say, 'I loathe swine's flesh.' He should rather say, 'I do desire it, but what can I do; my Father in Heaven has decreed against it.'" (Torat Kohanim, Vayikra 20:26).

The Torah rarely discloses reasons for its statutes. This may be due to the limited aptitude of our minds in relation to the depth of the subject. Furthermore, once a reason is revealed, people may rationalize the statutes out of existence by searching for situations where the reason does not apply. In the two statutes for which the Torah did disclose reasons, even the wise king Shlomo rationalized and stumbled (Sanhedrin 21b).

This does not prevent our learned scholars from advancing reasons that expound and explicate various statutes of our Torah. However, we can under no circumstances be certain as to their validity and accuracy. All our inferences derived from these explications must remain inconclusive. Perhaps the rapid advance of modern science and technology will eventually rebut these reasons entirely. Yet the Torah is eternal, and its statutes remain intact regardless of the authenticity of the reasons advanced.

Even if pork is the most wholesome and nutritious food on the market, we may not partake of it. We abstain from it solely because of *Hashem's* directive. Our faith in Him should be so unswerving that we would forsake the directives of our own intelligence and follow His directives blindly.

R. Menachem Ziemba contends that a similar situation exists concerning the sociological fact that Esau (representing the nations of the world) hates Jacob (the Jewish nation). Many reasons for the cause of anti-Semitism have been submitted throughout the ages, yet these causes often appear to be totally inconsistent and contradictory in nature. In one country, the Jews are despised because they are capitalists; in another, they are hated because they are socialists. Here, they are scorned because of their superior intelligence, and there they are detested because, due to their inadequacies, they constantly present a burden upon the community. Some abhor Jews because of their extreme religiosity and others loathe them because they spread doctrines contrary to Christian dogma.

Early German Jewish leaders proclaimed a policy of "Be a Jew at home and a German away from home." They assured us that this would be the panacea that would end anti-Semitism for all time. Yet this policy did not prevent the rise of Nazism.

R. Shim'on bar Yochai suggests that anti-Semitism is in the same category as *halachah*. We know of no specific reason for it. It is a blind hatred and, as such, is impervious to logic. Reason is incapable of affecting a feeling based on, and nourished by, blind hatred. All of Jacob's attempts at appeasement will prove to be futile and ineffective. Some methods may even be counterproductive and increase hatred, as Esau deeply resents Jacob's attempt to climb to his brother's "lofty" status in society.


The Gerer Rebbe

The sainted Gerer Rebbe, R. Avraham Mordechai Alter, once quoted his venerable father, the *S'fat Emet*, saying that when the rebel Korach confronted Moshe *Rabbenu* and told him that "the entire community is holy and *Hashem* is in their midst, so why do you exalt yourself over the congregation of *Hashem*?" (Bamidbar 16:3), he failed to recognize the obvious fact that the skin of Moshe's face had become radiant (Shemot 34:29). This was a most positive sign of unbounded greatness and holiness, a level of holiness not attained by anyone else in the congregation. Korach's obstinacy and hatred was further revealed when he declared, "even if you would gouge out the eyes of those men, we shall not abide by Moshe's request." Simple logic should have deterred Korach from instigating his ill-fated revolt. Yet his blind hatred became the shield that guarded and protected his faulty reasoning and made it impenetrable. As R. Shim'on bar Yochai so aptly put it, anti-Semitism—a form of blind hatred—is in the category of *halachah*. We know of no specific reason for it.

What solution does R. Ziemba offer to assure our survival in a world steeped in anti-Semitism? In chapter 49 of his work, he quotes the verse, "The Egyptians embittered the life of the Israelites with hard work, with mortar (chomer) and with bricks (levanim) and with all manner of labor in the field" (Shemot 1:14). Upon this verse, the *Zohar* comments, "The word 'chomer' (mortar) also refers to a system of a fortiori, which is one of the 13 methods we have at

our disposal to derive statutes pertaining to Torah, and the word 'levanim' (bricks) also refers to the clarification of *halachah*." Through the process of Torah study, concludes R. Ziemba, we gain the spiritual strength and power to withstand the pain and agony of oppression (as symbolized by mortar and bricks) perpetrated upon us during our years in *galut*.

People have often wondered how it has been possible for the Jews, so universally despised, persecuted, and decimated by the nations of the world, to weather the storms of the centuries and survive. How did we manage to outlive our tormentors, the mighty empires with their magnificent armies, who conspired to destroy us but who have long since been consigned to the dustbin of history? How did we emerge with our strength, courage, dignity, and Torah intact? What is the secret of our success?

In his parting words to his people, Moshe told us: "Happy are you, Israel; who is like unto you? A people saved by *Hashem*, the shield of your help and the sword of your excellency" (Devarim 33:29). *Hashem* and the Torah are the source of our strength, the source of the miracle of our survival and our perpetual rebirth and rejuvenation in all generations.

King David taught: "Some of our foes rely on chariots and others on cavalry, but we trust in *Hashem* (Tehillim 20:8). *Hashem* is our key to survival. This key has sustained us for thousands of years. We are still here, we live, and we have a future.

We constantly hope and pray that *Hashem* will swiftly redeem us from the dreadful ordeal of *galut* with the homecoming of our brethren from the far-flung corners of the Diaspora and with the coming of *Moshiach* speedily, in our days.

Appendix A: **List of Leipzig's Synagogues**

Synagogue	Address
Gemeinde Synagogue	Gottschedstrasse 3
Eitz Chaim Synagogue	Otto Schill Strasse 8 (Apels Garten)
Talmud Torah Synagogue	Keilstrasse 4 (Brodyer Shul)
Ohel Yaakov Synagogue	Pfaffendorfer Strasse 4
Ahavat Torah Synagogue	Färberstrasse 6
Beth Yehudah Synagogue	Färberstrasse 11
Chevrah Mishnayot Synagogue	Humboldtstrasse 24 (The Vierundzwanzig)
Tiferet Yehudah Synagogue	Eberhardtstrasse 11 (Bernstein Shul)
Tiktiner Synagogue	Brühl 71 (later Richard Wagner Strasse 3)
Boyaner Synagogue	Liebnitzstrasse 24
Altersheim Synagogue	Auenstrasse 14
Bochnier Synagogue	Gerberstrasse 48-50
Yassyer Synagogue	Gerberstrasse 48-50
Krakauer Synagogue	Berliner Strasse 10
Lemberger Synagogue	Schützenstrasse 7
Kolomeaer Synagogue	Berliner Strasse 4
Bikur Cholim Synagogue	Eisenbahnstrasse 9
Sha'arey Zedek Synagogue	Schillerweg 31
Krochsiedlung Synagogue	Wilhelmshavener Strasse 2 (Leipzig Gohlis)
Auralienstrasse Synagogue	Aurelianstrasse 14

Appendix B: Deportations From Leipzig Since 1942

From Menschen Ohne Grabstein, by Ellen Bertram

Date	Destination	People	Men	Women	Children	Survivors
01/21/42	Riga	559	127	346	86	19
05/05/42	Belźyce	287	69	172	46	1
07/13/42	Auschwitz	170	44	76	50	0
09/19/42	Theresienstadt	440	154	280	6	53
02/17/43	Theresienstadt	22	8	14	0	4
	Auschwitz	115	29	77	9	2
02/27/43	Hellerberg	0	0	0	0	0
	Theresienstadt	6	4	2	0	2
	Auschwitz	15	7	8	0	1
06/18/43	Theresienstadt	12	5	7	0	4
	Auschwitz	18	7	11	0	0
06/20/43	Theresienstadt	2	1	1	0	0
01/13/44	Theresienstadt	36	11	25	0	20
11/08/44	Theresienstadt	1	1	0	0	0
02/14/45	Theresienstadt	148	71	72	5	147
TOTALS		1831	538	1091	202	253
			(29%)	(60%)	(11%)	(14%)

Appendix C: Remember the Kedoshim

Reb Pinchos Herzka, a highly conscientious Jew and a survivor of the Holocaust, has undertaken a project for the recital of a special *kinah* (lamentation) dedicated to the memory of the many victims who were massacred under the yoke of Nazism. It is to be recited on *Tish'ah B'av*, the ninth day of Av. It was his inspired mission to motivate others to join him in his endeavors to mourn the six million who died *al kiddush Hashem* at the hands of a nation of savages.

He strongly felt that the recital of such a *kinah* would be a fitting memorial for those who were so brutally annihilated, and that a constant reminder of this tragedy would serve to implant the reality of this genocide firmly in the minds and hearts of the young generation.

Reb Pinchos succeeded in obtaining many approbations for his worthy project from some of our greatest *Gaonim*, who enthusiastically embraced his undertaking. An abridged list contains the names of several of these eminent *gedolim*:

- Horav Moshe Feinstein, z"tl
- Horav Yaakov Kaminetsky, z"tl
- Horav Yisroel Schapira, the Rebbe of Bluzóv, z"tl
- Horav Yosef Yitzchok Ruderman, z"tl
- Horav Shlomo Halberstam, the Rebbe of Bobov, z"tl
- Horav Mordechai Gifter, z"tl

This *kinah* is to be recited near the end of the *Tish'ah B'av kinot*, before the concluding *kinah* of *Eli Tzion*.

Four proposed texts of such a *kinah* are included here:

קינה מאת הגאב"ד דקהל עדת ישורון, נוא יארק, מוה"ר שמעון שוואב שליט"א

הַזּוֹכֵר מַזְכִּירָיו, הוֹר הוֹר וְקִדּוּשָׁיו, מֵעֵת אֲשֶׁר אָז בְּחַרְתָּנוּ,
יְזְכּוֹר דֵּרָאוֹן, שֶׁל הוֹר אַחֲרוֹן, אוֹיֶה מֶה הָיָה לָנוּ . . .
שְׁטוּפֵי מַבּוּל־דָּם, שֶׁמָּסְרוּ נַפְשׁוֹתָם, כָּל שְׁקוּעֵי עִמְקֵי־הַבָּכָא,
יִפְקֹדֵם אֱ־לֹהִים, בְּאַרְצוֹת הַחַיִּים, וַעֲדֵי עַד זִכְרָם לִבְרָכָה.

שְׂאוּ אֵלָיו כַּפַּיִם, אֲהָהּ, אֵי שָׁמַיִם, הוֹי עַל מֵיטַב שִׁבְטֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל,
עֲדוֹת וְקְהִלּוֹת, עָרִים וּגְלִילוֹת, חֲבוּרוֹת, מוֹסָדוֹת, כָּל מוֹעֲדֵי אֵ־ל,
מִי יִתֵּן פַּלְגֵי מַיִם, תֵּרַדְנָה עֵינַיִם, אֶל אַשְׁדּוֹת נַחֲלֵי הַדְּמָעוֹת,
עֲלֵי אַלְפֵי אֲלָפִים, גּוּפִים נִשְׂרָפִים, בְּמוֹ־אֵשׁ הַחֹרְבָּן וּזְוָעוֹת.

וְעַל שָׂרֵי־הַתּוֹרָה, וּמַחֲזִיקֵי מָסוֹרָה, וְעַל פִּרְחֵי הַכְּהוּנָה הַצְּעִירִים,
וְעַל חוֹבְשֵׁי מִדְרָשׁוֹת, וּמוֹרִים וּמוֹרוֹת, תִּינוֹקוֹת בֵּית־רַבָּן יַקִּירִים,
עַל בָּנוֹת בּוֹטְחוֹת, וְסָבִים וְסָבוֹת, וְעַל זֶרַע וְטַפָּם שֶׁיָּלָדוּ,
וְגַם, לְרַבּוֹת, רִבְבוֹת נֶאֱהָבִים בַּחַיִּים, בְּמוֹתָם לֹא נִפְרָדוּ.

אֶת דָּמָם דְּרוֹשׁ, כִּי תִשָּׂא אֶת רֹאשׁ, שֶׁל כָּל נִדָּף לֶעָלִים הַטְּרוּפִים,
כָּל נַפְשׁוֹת־מֶת, בִּימֵי שֶׁבֶר וָשֵׁאת, שִׁשָּׁה אַלְפֵי פְּעָמִים אֲלָפִים,
שְׁלִישִׁיָּה לְבָעֵר, בְּבֶרֶק וָעֵם סוֹעֵר, מִבַּרְמֵי הַחֶמֶד אָהָבְתָּ,
גּוֹאֵל הַדָּם, נָא זָכֵר צַעֲרָם, אַל תִּמְחֶה מִסֵּפֶר כָּתָבְתָּ.

זְכוֹר הַנְּאָקוֹת, וְרַעַשׁ צְעָקוֹת, אָז יוּבְלוּ לָרֶצַח,
יְאוֹרֵי דְמֵיהֶם, וְדִמְעוֹת פְּנֵיהֶם, לֹא תִשְׁכַּחְנָה לָנֶצַח,
כָּל חִיל וּגְנִיחָה, וּנְהִי צְרִיחָה, מִשְׁרוּדֵי לַהֲקוֹת הַכְּלָבִים,
זְכוֹר וּסְפוֹר, בְּנֹאדְךָ צְרוֹר, עַד עֵת נָקָם עֶלְבּוֹן עֲלוּבִים.

בְּמַחֲנוֹת הַפְּרָאִים, כְּאֵב וּנְגָעִים, וּפַחֵי נְפָשׁוֹת עֲגוּמוֹת,
חֲרָפוֹת וּצְחוֹק, כְּלִימוֹת וָרוֹק, פִּצְעֵי הַכָּאוֹת אֲיֻמוֹת,
וְרָעָבוֹן, צְמָאוֹן, שִׁגָּעוֹן, עֶצֶבוֹן, וְכִשְׁלוֹן נֶחְשָׁלִים בְּלִי־כֹחַ,
וְכָל נַאֲקוֹת־חָלָל, מִכָּל יָחִיד אֻמְלָל, חָלִילָה לְךָ מִלִּשְׁכֹּחַ.

וְתִימְרוֹת־עָשָׁן וְקִיטוֹר מִבְּכָשָׁן, תִּלֵּי־תִלִּים עֲצָמוֹת וְגִידִים,
וְחַדְרֵי הָרֶעַל, קוֹל שְׁאָגוֹת מִקְהַל־הַנֶּחָנָקִים תּוֹךְ תָּאֵי הָאֵדִים,
וְסַרְחוֹן גּוּפוֹת, וּגְוִיּוֹת סְגוּפוֹת, גַּלַּל־דֹּמֶן אַדְמַת נוֹאָצִים,
אֵיךְ הָפְכוּ טוּרְפֵיהֶם, לְבְרִית חֶלְבֵּיהֶם, וְעוֹר־אִישׁ לְקִשּׁוּטֵי הַנָּשִׁים.

וּקְרִיצַת אֶצְבָּעוֹת, שֶׁל רָאשֵׁי־הַפְּרָעוֹת, לִימִין שִׁעְבּוּד־פֶּרֶךְ,
צַלְמָוֶת לִשְׁמוֹאל
וְאֵיךְ יָרוּ יְרִיּוֹת עַל חוֹפְרֵי הַבּוֹרוֹת, בִּיסוּרֵי חִבּוּט־קֶבֶר
הוֹרְדוּם שְׁאוֹל
אֵיךְ עִנּוּ אַחְיוֹתֵינוּ, וְסָרְסוּ בְּנוֹתֵינוּ, כּוֹסוֹת־תַּרְעֵלָה מִיְּדֵי רוֹפְאִים
אַכְזָרִים
וּפְלִיטֵי הַשְּׁרִידִים בְּמַחֲלוֹת וּסְתָרִים, וְטִמְיוֹן יְלָדִים בְּבָתֵּי
שְׁמַר־כְּמָרִים

שֶׁה־תָּמִים לָעוֹלָה, דַּם בְּנֵי הַגּוֹלָה, הוֹי אֲרִיאֵל מִנְּבֵלַת חֲסִידֶיךָ
צאן־קָדָשִׁים מִי יִמְנֶה, אֲשֶׁר אִשָּׁם לֹא תִכְבֶּה, בְּחוּנֶיךָ הָיוּ
מְקֻדָּשֵׁי שְׁמֶךָ.
בְּקוֹל שְׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל מָסְרוּ נֶפֶשׁ לָאֵ־ל, שֶׁהוּא יַאַסְפֵם, וְעַד יוֹם אַחֲרוֹן
הִצְדִּיקוּ דִּין, וְאַף אֲנִי מַאֲמִין עָנוּ, וְשָׁרוּ שִׁירַת בִּטָּחוֹן.

וּבְבֶן נִשְׁאַר עָם, כְּיָתוֹם נִדְהָם, בְּלִי קְבָרִים לְהִשְׁתַּטֵּחַ,
וְלֹא מַצֵּבוֹת, אֵיפֹה לִבְכּוֹת, יְבָבוֹת לֵב רוֹתֵחַ,
רַק נִסְכֵּי־הַדָּם, אַזְכָּרוֹתָם, תּוֹסְסִים בְּלִי שׁוֹכֵחַ,
וְהָרֵי אֶפְרֵי עֲקֵדָתָם, תְּרוּמוֹת דִּשְׁנֵי מִזְבֵּחַ.

מִי יְמַלֵּל, צַעַר יִשְׂרָאֵל, אֲשֶׁר דַּעְתּוֹ מִכְּאֵב נִטְרָפָת,
וּשְׁאֵרִית הַפְּאֵר, כְּמַעַט מִזְעִיר, וְאֵיךְ קוֹמָתָה הַיּוֹם נִכְפָּפָת,
אֵ־ל חַי מְרַחֵם, עֲדָתְךָ נֶחֱם, אֲשֶׁר לְךָ מְאֹד נִכְסֶפֶת,
אוֹר־חָדָשׁ תַּזְרִיחַ, קַרְנֵי־הוֹד תַּצְמִיחַ, וְרוּחַ אֱ־לֹהִים מְרַחֶפֶת.

קינה מאת הגאב"ד דגאלדערס גרין, לאנדאן, מוה"ר אלחנן היילפרין שליט"א

אֵשׁ תּוּקַד בְּקִרְבִּי, עֵת אֶעֱלֶה עַל זִכְרוֹנִי,
אֶת הַצָּרוֹת אֲשֶׁר מְצָאוּנִי, עַם בְּלִיעַל בְּעָנוֹת אוֹתִי.
נֵצֶר זָדוֹן מִזֶּרַע עֲמָלֵק, הִתְנָאָה בְּלִבּוֹ, זֶרַע עַם קוֹדֶשׁ כּוּלּוֹ לְהַשְׁמִידוֹ.
לְעַמּוֹ אָמַר לְכוּ וְנַכְחִידוֹ, וְלֹא יִזָּכֵר יִשְׂרָאֵל עוֹד בְּשִׁמוֹ.
מִיהֵר וּבִיצַע אֶת אֲשֶׁר זָמַם לַעֲשׂוֹת, חִידֵּשׁ עִנּוּיִים קָשׁוֹת וּמִיתוֹת מְשׁוּנּוֹת.
מִשְׁנַת ה'תרצ"ט שֵׁשׁ שָׁנִים הָיָה הַמַּלְאָךְ הַמָּוֶת בְּעַצְמוֹ
פִּי עָשֶׂר עַל יוֹצְאֵי מִצְרַיִם הִשְׁמִיד בְּחַמָּתוֹ.

אָז לְעֵינֵי הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ נַעֲשׂוּ מוֹרָאוֹת, צֹאן קָדָשִׁים נִשְׁחֲטוּ לְאֲלָפִים וּלְרִבָּבוֹת.
בְּחַנִּיקָה וּשְׂרֵיפָה וּכָל מִינָהּ חֲמוּרָה, יְשִׁישִׁים עִם טַפִּים הוּמְתוּ בְּחַבּוּרָה.
רִבָּבוֹת מִזְבָּחוֹת וּרְבָבוֹת עֲקֵידוֹת, וְאֵין דַּי לְאֵשִׁים וְאֵין דַּי לְעוֹלוֹת.
אֵשׁ תָּמִיד תּוּקַד בְּלִבּוֹ שֶׁל עַם, אֵשׁ שֶׁל אוֹשְׁוִויץ לֹא תִּכְבֶּה לְעוֹלָם.
יְשִׁינִי מַכְפֵּלָה אַיֵּיכֶם? וּמֹשֶׁה צִיר נֶאֱמָן,
לְחַלּוֹת פְּנֵי אָיוֹם עַל אֲשֶׁר קָרַנִי, וְאַיֵּה הַבְטָחָה יִשְׂרָאֵל לֹא אַלְמָן?
קָלַנִי מֵרֹאשִׁי מִזְרוֹעִי קָלַנִי.

הַעַל אֵלֶּה תִּתְאַפָּק, א־ל נוֹרָא בָּאִלְמִים. וְלֹא תָקוּם לַמִּשְׁפָּט, וְיַעֲלוּ מוֹשִׁיעִים.
וְתָקוּם דַּם טָהוֹר אֵ־ל מָלֵא רַחֲמִים, הַתּוֹסֵס כְּדַם הַנָּבִיא בְּיוֹם הַכִּפּוּרִים.
תּוֹרָה תּוֹרָה אַל תֶּחְשִׁי מִיגוֹנֵךְ, עַל נְפָשׁוֹת צַדִּיקִים וְחַסִידִים זַעֲקִי לִפְנֵי קוֹנֵךְ,
בַּעֲלֵי תְּרִיסִין אֲדִירֵיךְ אָבְדוּ מִיִּשְׂרָאֵל, עֵת הַפֹּךְ לְמִדְּוֹרוֹת אֵשׁ גּוֹלַת אַרִיאֵל.
הַעוֹד לֹא רִוְּחָמָה אוֹם אֲנִי חוֹמָה, הַלְשָׁכֵר בַּת עַמִּי עוֹד דַּי לֹא אָמַרְתְּ.
הַנִּשָּׂא שׁוֹפֵט הָאָרֶץ, הָשֵׁב גְּמוּל עַל גַּאִים,
שִׁבְעָתַיִם אֶל חֵיק מְעַנֵּינוּ תָּשִׁיב כַּאֲשֶׁר דִּבַּרְתָּ.

שְׁפֹךְ עֲלֵיהֶם זַעֲמֶךָ וְחָרוֹן אַפְּךָ יַשִּׂיגֵם, וְכִנָּה אַחֲרֵיךָ מְשׁוּבָה תְּנָחֵם בְּכִפְלַיִם,
בְּנֵה מִקְדָּשְׁךָ הַשָּׁמֵם, וְאָז אֲנָחֵם. בְּשׁוּבְךָ אֶת שִׁבּוּתֵינוּ לְעִיר דָּוִד לִירוּשָׁלָיִם.

קינה מאת הרב הגאון מו"ה שמואל הלוי וואזנר שליט"א
אב"ד ור"מ זכרון מאיר, בני ברק ת"ו

אֵשׁ תּוּקַד בְּקִרְבִּי / בְּהַעֲלוֹתִי עַל רוּחִי / חֶרְפַּן עֲדָתִי
קִינִים אַגִּידָה / בְּזָכְרִי קְדוֹשַׁי / עֲרֻבָה שִׂמְחָתִי
קְהִלּוֹת קֹדֶשׁ / לוֹמְדֵי תּוֹרָתִי / מַחֲזִיקִים בִּבְרִיתִי
נֶחְרְבוּ וְנִשְׂרְפוּ / נֶחְנְקוּ וְנֶהֱרְגוּ / אוֹי לִי כִּי חָטָאתִי
כִּוְּבָחִים וְעוֹלוֹת / עָלוּ מִזִּבְחָה / לְכַפֵּר מְשׁוּבָתִי
בְּנֵי צִיּוֹן הַיְקָרִים / בַּחוּרֵי חֶמֶד / לוֹמְדֵי תּוֹרָתִי
אֵיכָה נִשְׁמְדוּ / לְעֵינַי בְּנֵי עַמִּי / אֲבָדָה תִּקְוָתִי
אַלְפֵי רְבָבוֹת / עָלוּ עַל מוֹקְדָהּ / מִי יִתֵּן תְּמוּרָתִי
חֲתָנִים וְכַלּוֹת / זְקֵנִים וּזְקֵנוֹת / מִי יִתֵּן חֲלִיפָתִי
חִשָּׁמֵר לְךָ / פֶּן תִּשְׁבַּח מַעַשׂ עֲמָלֵק / מַחֲרִיב כְּנֶסְתִּי
עֲדֵי יִנָּקֵם ה' / נִקְמַת עַמּוֹ / יִבְנֶה אֶת בֵּיתִי
אָנָּא ה' נְקֹם / נִקְמַת עֲבָדֶיךָ / וְהָשֵׁב אֶת שְׁבוּתִי
יְקוּמוּן מֵחֶיךָ / וְיִחְיוּן צַדִּיקֶיךָ / וְאָז אָסִיר אֶבְלָתִי

קינה מאת הגאב"ד דקאשוי מוה"ר רפאל בלום שליט"א

עַפְעַפֵּינוּ יִזְלוּ מָיִם, וְעֵינֵינוּ מְקוֹר דִּמְעָה, עַל זִבְחֵי קוֹדֶשׁ כְּעוֹלָה תְּמִימָה.
עָלוּ עַל מוֹקָדָה, בְּגוּפָם, וְנִשְׁמוֹתֵיהֶם תַּחַת כִּסֵּא כָּבוֹד קַיְימָה.
קָהָלוֹתֵינוּ הַקְּדוֹשִׁים שֵׁשׁ מֵאוֹת פְּעָמִים רְבָבָה,
בִּשְׁנוֹת הַזַּעַם וּמְבוּסָה, הַשּׁוֹנֵא צָרוֹת רִיבָה, מִתרצ"ט עַד תש"ה הָאֵשׁ לִיבָּה.
גְּזֵירוֹת הַגֶּרְמָנִים הָאֲרוּרִים וּמְקוֹלָלִים, וְכָל הָאוּמוֹת אֲשֶׁר עִמָּהֶם הָיוּ מְשׁוּתָּפִים.
שְׁפָלִים וְנִבְזִים, מַלְאֲכֵי חַבָּלָה מִשְׁאוֹל תַּחְתִּיִים.
מַזִּיקִים וְרוּחוֹת, בְּצוּרַת אָדָם מְלוּבָּשׁוֹת.
יִמָּחֶה שְׁמָם וְזִכְרָם לְדוֹרֵי דוֹרוֹת, ה' הַטּוֹב יִנְקוֹם נְקָמוֹת.
טָבְחוּ בְּלֹא חֶמְלָה נְפָשׁוֹת הַטְּהוֹרוֹת, בְּנֵי אֵל חַי הוֹלְכֵי בְּדֶרֶךְ הָאֱמוּנוֹת.
אַדִּירֵי הַתּוֹרָה מְאִירִים כַּכּוֹכָבִים, תַּלְמִידֵיהֶם כְּנֹפֶךְ סַפִּיר וְיָהֲלוֹמִים.
תַּלְמִידֵי חֲכָמִים, אַנְשֵׁי מַעֲשֶׂה חֲסִידִים וְיְשָׁרִים,
זְקֵנִים וְגַם נְעָרִים, לְאָבִינוּ שֶׁבַּשָּׁמַיִם קְרוּיִים בָּנִים.
תְּמִימֵי לֵב רָצוֹן קוֹנֵיהֶם עוֹשִׂים, כּוּלָּם אֲהוּבִים כּוּלָּם בְּרוּרִים כּוּלָּם גִּבּוֹרִים.
וּבְנוֹת יִשְׂרָאֵל הַקְּדוֹשׁוֹת וְהַטְּהוֹרוֹת, זְקֵנוֹת וּצְעִירוֹת.
גְּדוֹלוֹת וּקְטַנּוֹת, יְדֵי אִמָּהֶן אוֹחֲזוֹת, יְלָדִים הַיְנָקִים הָרַכִּים, עֲלֵי תוֹלַע אִמּוֹתָם.
אִמּוֹת וְאָבוֹת עַל בָּנִים נִטּוּשִׁים וּרְטוּשִׁים, יוֹנְקֵי שַׁדַּיִם עוֹלְלִים וְיוֹנְקִים

בְּמִיתוֹת מְשׁוּנוֹת בְּאַכְזָרִיוּת נוֹרָאוֹת,
הִכָּה וְפָצוֹעַ עַל יְדֵי הָרוֹצְחִים דִּין אַרְבַּע מִיתוֹת.
עֲנוּם בְּעִנּוּיִים קָשִׁים וּמָרִים, יָמִים גַּם שָׁנִים, טֶרֶם כִּילּוּם וְהָרְגוּם.
הֻגְלוּם מִמָּקוֹם לְמָקוֹם לְרַבּוֹת הַצָּרוֹת וּפְחָדִים,
בַּבֹּקֶר מִי יִתֵּן עֶרֶב וּבָעֶרֶב מִי יִתֵּן בֹּקֶר אוֹמְרִים.
אָבְלוּ אֶת יַעֲקֹב וְאֶת נָוֵהוּ הֵשַׁמּוּ וְהִשְׁפִּילוּ,
בָּתֵּי כְּנֵסִיּוֹת וּמִדְרָשׁוֹת הֵיכָלֵי קוֹדֶשׁ הִפִּילוּ.
סִפְרֵי תּוֹרוֹת קָרְעוּ וּבִיזּוּ עַד לֶעָפָר, מַחֲמַדֵּיהֶם פָּשְׁטוּ גָּזְלוּ וְחָמְסוּ הַכֹּל נִשְׁבָּר.
בִּיסּוּרֵי אֵיּוֹב מַכְאוֹבִים וּמַכָּאוֹבוֹת, בִּרְדִיפוֹת שׁוֹנוֹת, יוֹם וָיוֹם בִּבְוּשׁוֹת וּכְלִימוֹת.
צָרוֹת צְרוּרוֹת בְּכָל אַרְבַּע פִּינוֹת,
בִּמְדִינוֹת אַייראפּ"א אַרְצוֹת הַדָּמִים בִּרְצִיחוֹת דָּם מְלֵאוֹת.
אֶרֶץ אֶרֶץ אַל תְּכַסִּי דָּמָם, עַד יַשְׁקִיף ה' וְיִרְחַם עַל שְׁאֵרִית פְּלֵיטָתָם.
יָדַעְנוּ כִּי חָטָאנוּ וְיָשָׁר הֵעֱוִינוּ, לַה' הַצְּדָקָה וְאָנָה נָשָׂא פָּנֵינוּ.
ה' הַטּוֹב יָחוּס עָלֵינוּ, וְנִזְכֶּה לָשׁוּב בִּתְשׁוּבָה שְׁלֵימָה לְפָנָיו וְיִקַּבֵּל תְּפִלּוֹתֵינוּ.
וְיָשׁוּב שְׁכִינַת עִזּוֹ לִמְקוֹם מִקְדָּשֵׁנוּ, וְיָשִׁיב שִׁבוּתֵינוּ בְּקָרוֹב בְּיָמֵינוּ.
וְנִזְכֶּה כֻּלָּנוּ יַחַד לִרְאוֹת בִּנְיַן בֵּית תִּפְאַרְתֵּנוּ,
בְּקֶרֶב כָּל בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל בִּנְחָמָה בְּכִפְלַיִם לְנַחֲמֵנוּ. אָמֵן כֵּן יְהִי רָצוֹן.

Glossary

Adar Sheni—the second month of Adar during a leap year

Agudat Yisrael—political organization to promote religion

Al Kiddush Hashem—for the sanctification of G-d's name; martyrdom

Alef Bet—the Hebrew alphabet

Aliyah—honor of being called up for the reading of the Torah; the act of settling in Israel

Altersheim—home for the aged

Amah—a measurement

Amen—used to express solemn ratification or hearty approval

Ashkenazic—of European origin

Auf wiedersehn—goodbye

Avinu—our father

B'rit Milah—circumcision

Ba'al Korei—one who reads the Torah during services

Ba'al Midot—one who possesses excellent character traits

Ba'al Tefiloh—amateur cantor

Ba'al Teshuvah—one who has repented for his sins

Ba'alei Batim—laymen

Bar Mitzvah—celebration of a boy who has reached the age of thirteen

Bat Mitzvah—celebration of a girl who has reached the age of twelve

Beit Din—religious court

Beit Midrash—house of worship or study

Beit Mikdash—Holy Temple in Jerusalem

Ben Torah—one who studies and adheres to the teachings of the Torah

Berachah Acharonah—blessing recited after the consumption of food

Berachah—blessing
Betstube—room used for prayer
Bimah—podium for the Torah reading
Blatt—two-sided folio of the Talmud
Blitzkrieg—lightning war; war fought with great speed
Chalaphim—knives used for the purpose of kosher slaughtering
Challot—loaves of bread eaten on Shabbat
Chas V'shalom—Heaven forbid
Chassidei Umot Haolam—the righteous among the nations of the world
Chassidim—pious followers of the movement founded by R. Yisrael Ba'al Shem Tov
Chazzan—cantor
Chessed—act of kindness
Chevrah Mishnayot—society of studying chapters of the Mishnah
Chidushei Torah—original analyses and interpretations of difficult points of Torah
Chol Hamoed—intermediary days of Passover and Sukkot
Chumash—the five books of the Torah
Churban—destruction
Daf Hayomi—systematic study of the entire Talmud, one blatt per day
Daven—pray
Dayan—judge
Deena D'malchuta—in monetary matters, Jewish law requires the observance of government regulations
Denkmal—monument
Deutschland—Germany
Dolchstoss—stab in the back
Dreckisch—dirty

Eretz Yisrael—the land of Israel
Erev Shabbat—Friday
Ezra—youth group under Agudat Yisrael auspices
Frau—Mrs.
Friedhof—cemetery
Führer—leader
Gabbai—synagogue official; beadle
Gadol—prime Torah leader
Galut—exile
Gaon—brilliant Torah scholar
Gemarah/Talmud—elaborates on the Mishnah
Gemeindeblatt—community newspaper
Gestapo—German secret police
Geulah—redemption
Gottesdienst—religious services
Guten tag—good day
Halachah—the body of Torah law
Hashem—G-d
Hashkafah—Torah perspective on life
Haskamah—approbation
Hatmadah—diligence
Hauptbahnhof—main railroad station
Herr—Mr.; sir
Hillula—a festive party on the anniversary of an individual's death
Hinterhaus—part of the house not facing the street
Judenburg—castle of Jews
Judenland—land of the Jews
Judenrein—place empty (devoid) of Jews
Judenstat—city of Jews
Judenwoche—week when Jews are invited to their former hometown

Jüdisch—Jewish
K'lal Yisrael—the Jewish nation
Kaffiah—a scarf worn by Palestinian nationalists
Kammerpässe—passports
Kapotte—long jacket; robe
Kappie—skullcap; yarmulke
Kaufhaus—department store
Kedoshim—holy people
Kehillah—community
Kehillat Y'reim—religious community
Kiddush—sanctification said over wine on Shabbat and holidays
Kinah—lamentation
Kittel—white robe worn during High Holiday services
Kitzur Shulchan Aruch—abridged form of the code of Jewish law
Kloiz—a small house for the purpose of worship and study
Knesset—Israeli congress
Kohen—priest
Kol Torah—the sound emanating from the study of Torah
Kongresshalle—meeting hall
König—king
Kosher—food ritually permitted for consumption
Krankenhaus—hospital
Kristallnacht—night of broken glass
Kurfürst—a prince; a sovereign
Kvitlach—written prayers
Lamdan—Torah scholar
Landsleit—people who originate from the same community
Leider—unfortunately
Limudei Kodesh—Jewish or Torah subjects
Ma'ariv—evening prayer service

Makom Kadosh—a holy place
Markgraf—a military governor of a German province; a member of the nobility
Mashiach—Messiah
Mechitzah—partition
Meister Rasse—master race
Mesirat Nefesh—the act of risking one's life for a purpose
Messe—business fair
Midrash—a haggadic exposition of the underlying significance of a Biblical text
Mikvah—ritualarium
Minchah—afternoon prayer service
Minhag—custom
Minyan—quorum of ten men required for public prayer services
Mishnah—the codification of the oral law
Mitnagdim—non-Chassidim; those who do not follow teachings of the Ba'al Shem Tov
Mitzvot—commandments
Mohel—one who is ordained to perform ritual circumcisions
Moreinu—our teacher
Mussaf—additional prayer service for Shabbat and holidays
Nachat—joy and satisfaction of attaining a certain goal or achievement
Nasi—prince
Navi—prophet
Ne'ilah—closing service on Yom Kippur
Oberbürgermeister—mayor
Oberkantor—chief cantor
Ohev Yisrael—one who loves Jews
Ostjuden—Jews from the east

Parshah—portion of the Torah
Pesach—Passover
Pikuach Nefesh—a situation when a life is in danger
Pirkei Avot—Ethics of our Fathers; name of a book
Posek—one who renders a p'sak, a halachic decision
Prediger—preacher
Purim—the Festival of Lots
Rabbeinu—our teacher
Rabbinatassessor—Rabbinic judge
Rabbiner—rabbi
Rashi—commentator on the Bible and Talmud
Rat—government
Rathaus—city hall
Rav—rabbi
Rebbe—Chassidic rabbi; teacher of religion
Rebetzin—rabbi's wife
Reb—title usually given to a layman
Reichspräsident—president of Germany
Reichstag—building where the Nazi party was founded
Religionslehrer—teacher of religion
Rosental—a park
Rosh Hashanah—Jewish New Year
Sa'ah—a liquid measurement
Sabra—a Jew born in Israel
Sandek—individual who holds the baby during circumcision
Schule—school
Schutzgeld—money paid for protection
Sefer—book
Sh'moneh Esrei—the eighteen blessings; the main body of every prayer service

Sha'a lot—questions
Shabbat—the Sabbath
Shalom—Hebrew greeting; peace
Shalosh Seudot—usually referred to the third meal eaten on the Shabbat
Shammes—sexton
Shechinah—the spirit of G-d
Shechitah—ritual slaughter
Shechunah—neighborhood
Shochet—ritual slaughterer who performs the act of Shechitah
Shtetl—small town
Shtiebel—small synagogue
Shulchan Aruch—code of Jewish law
Shul—synagogue
Siddur—prayer book
Simchah—joy
Simchat Torah—holiday of rejoicing upon the completion of a cycle of Torah reading
Strassenbahn—streetcar
Succot—Holiday of Tabernacles
Tageblatt—daily newspaper
Taharat Hamishpachah—family purity
Taleisim—prayer shawls
Talmid Chacham—an outstanding Torah scholar
Talmud—the oral law
Tefach—a measurement
Third Reich—government founded by the Nazis
Tischler—carpenter
Tish'ah B'av—ninth day of the month of Av; a day of fasting and mourning

Torah—five books of the Bible
Traif—food, not ritually permitted for consumption
Tu Bishvat—15th day of the month of Shevat; New Year for trees
Tzaddik—a pious and righteous person
Untergang—extinction
Verein—organization
Verfluchter—cursed one
Vierundzwanzig—number 24, the name of a synagogue located at that address
Völkerschlacht—battle of nations
Vorsitzender—chairman
Vorstand—board of directors
Ware—merchandise
Yamim Noraim—High Holidays
Yecke—Jew originating from Germany
Yemach Shemo—may his name be erased
Yeshivah Gedolah—advanced Torah academy
Yeshivah—academy where Torah is taught
Yiddish—Jewish
Yohrzeit—anniversary of an individual's death
Yom Kippur—Day of Atonement
Yom Tov—holiday
Z'chut—merit
Zohar—book of mysticism

דברים אחדים
לזכרו של ר' אליעזר סילוואר זצ"ל

מו"ר הרב הגאון מוהר"ר אליעזר סילבער זצ"ל נולד בשנת תרמ"א לאביו הגאון ר' בונם צמח והיה נין ונכד של הגאון ר' משה רבקש בעל באר הגולה על ד' חלקי שו"ע ולאמו הרבנית מלכה נינה של הגאון יחזקאל קאצנלנבוגן בעל שו"ת כנסת יחזקאל.

בימי ילדותו למד אצל אביו ששימש אז ברבנות בערים קאמאי ודוסט. בשנת תרנ"ז, בהיותו בן שש עשרה שלחו אביו, כדי לקיים בו "והוי גולה למקום תורה", להעיר דווינסק לשמש בקודש גאוני הדור באותה תקופה, ר' מאיר שמחה בעל אור שמח ור' יוסף רוזין בעל צפנת פענח המפורסם בשם עיר מולדתו ה"ראגאצ'ובר". משם נסע לבריסק ללמוד אצל רשכבה"ג ר' חיים סולוביצ'יק. אח"כ למד בווילנא בקיבוץ של הגאון האמיתי ר' חיים עזר גרודז'נסקי. באותן השנים נתפרסם בהתמדתו הנפלאה וכן בבקיאותו המפליאה ובחריפותו המופלגה. בשנת תרס"ז נסע לארצות הברית ובחודש כסלו תרס"ח נתקבל לרב בעיר הריסבורג. בשנת תרפ"ה כיהן כרב בעיר ספרינגפילד ובשנת תרצ"א קיבל משרת הרבנות בסינסינטי שם כיהן עד יום פטירתו, ט' שבט תשכ"ח.

הרב סילבער היה רב גדול ומנהיג גדול גם יחד. מבורך היה בראש גאוני עצום, במוח חריף וחד, ובכח זכרון גאוני ונפלא מצד אחד ובכח התמדה ושקידה מצד שני. וכבר בראשית הופעתו על אדמת אמריקה, נסגר בתוך ד' אמות של הלכה, התבודד ולמד בהתמדה נפלאה. נשאר ברשות היחיד של בית המדרש אשר בהריסבורג, עד שגדל ועלה הענק.

היה לו כח של משיכה רוחניות מיוחדת. מברו היה נראה לפעמים קשה כארז אבל בתוכו היה רך כקנה ובעל לב טוב רחום וחנון לסבלו של המדוכא והמעונה. מדתו בעשיית הטוב ינקה שרשיה ממידתו באהבת ישראל שהיתה ללא גבול וללא שיעור. את כל יהודי ראה כשארו ואת כל לומד תורה כאחד מבני משפחתו הקרובים ביותר. הרב סילבער, יותר משהיה מנהיגם של הרבים, היה בעיקרו מנהיגו של היחיד, של אלפים ורבבות של יחידים שהרגיש את צערם. ואת מי לא היה עוזר?

הקוו האופייני העיקרי בדיוקנו של מנהיג, הוא אי־תלות, רבונות ועצמאות. הרב היה מנהיג בעל השקפה מוצקה ועצמאית.הוא היה מנהיג ולא מונהג, כמנהג המדינה שמנהיגיה מונהגים על ידי המנהיגים הקטנים דוחפי עגלת הצבור. לא היו מלחנים מקריאים להודותו היאך ידבר, היאך להתנהג והאיך לכלכל את הענינים. שיטתו יסודתה תמיד בהררי קודש. הנהגת הרב היתה כמו שראה אצל גדולי הדור. ר' חיים עזר לקח לו לדוגמא וככה התנהג כל ימיו. דעתו היתה המכריע בלי שום פניות ופשרות.

חונן היה הרב סילבער בכשרון התמצאות מהירה וידע למצא את דרכו בכל מצב שהוא וללכת בה בעוז־רוח בלי חת. נהג את נשיאותו בתור רב ביד רמה. אם משוכנע היה שהצדק אתו שוב לא ידע הרכנת ראש מהי ולא היה איכפת לו מה יאמרו מתנגדיו ויריביו. כל ימיו לחם בעוז וללא שום פשרות נגד השמרנים והריפורמים שביהדות ויותר במנהיגיהם נושא דגלם. וזכורני שפעם הזמינו אותו לסדר קידושין במקום שהיה מרחק רב מסינסינטי וכשהגיע לשדה התעופה שבאותה העיר אמרו לו שגם מנהיג קונסרבטיבי יתכבד באחד משבע הברכות שתחת החופה, תיכף ומיד עזב את העיר ושב לסינסינטי באמרו כי הוא לא משתתף בשום טקס ביחד עם מחריבי תורה.

מגדולי עסקני הדור היה ובחסדיו הפליא לעשות לכלל ולפרט. היה ממנהיגי אגודת הרבנים ואגודת ישראל ועמד בראש מועצת גדולי תורה שלה. היה ממייסדי מוסדי תורה וחסד — "תורה ומסורה", "חינוך עצמאי", ו"עזרת תורה" ופעל הרבה לטובתם.

גולת הכותרת של עבודתו הפורי' בעד עם ישראל, היו מעשיו הכבירים במשך מלחמת העולם השני'. בכ"ח כסלו ת"ש יסד את "ועד ההצלה" ביחד עם ראשי אגוה"ד והיה רוח החי' של כל עבודת הועד. הטילו עליו את העול להיות נשיאו וקברניטו של הועד. בכל גופו ובכל נפשו עסק בעניני הועד יומם ולילה ומי שלא ראהו בתוך העבודה הזאת קשה לו להבין ולהאמין איך איש אחד בכחו לעבוד בלי הרף וללא ליאות עד מסירת נפש ממש. כל זמנו ומרצו הקדיש להציל אותם שניתנו להצלה ולעזור לשיקומם.

פעם זכיתי לשבת בצוותא חדא עם הגאונים האמיתיים, ר' אהרן קוטלר, ר' יעקב קמינצקי, ור' משה פיינשטיין זצ"ל, הצעתי לפניהם חידו"ת ששמעתי ממו"ר זצ"ל. אז פתח ר' יעקב ואמר, חילי' לאורייתא. ר' אהרן הסכים להוסיף שהוא באמת גדול שבגדולים ועל זה הוסיף ר' משה שהוא גאון אדיר לא רק בתורה אלא שהוא גם גאון אדיר בחסד ובמס"נ עכ"ל הטהור.

מעשיו הכבירים וחסדיו הבלתי מוגבלים נמשכו עד שנחלה שנה לפני פטירתו. במשך שנות עבודתו המטרידה לא הפסיק שיעוריו ולימודו ועסק בכתיבת חדו"ת גם בישבו במטוס או ברכבת ובכל מקום נסעו ובואו ולכל הפונים אליו בשאלות ובחדו"ת השיב בזריזות וללא דחיה ובא אתם במשא ומתן של הלכה. בחייו הוציא לאור עולם שלשה חלקי ענפי אר"ז — פלפולי דאורייתא בסדר זרעים, מועד, קדשים, וטהרות ולאחר פטירתו הוציא בנו הרה"ג ר' דוד שליט"א לאור עולם את הספר צמח אר"ז — חידושים וביאורים בכמה מסכתות מתלמוד בבלי וירושלמי.

עם פטירתו נפלה עטרת ראשם של חובבי תורה ומוקירי רבנן שבדור. פנה הדרה של היהדות החרדית דאמריקה. נתיתמה הרבנות המסורתית בהלקח ממנה ראש משביר. נתיתמו מוסדות של תורה וצדקה והאנשים הרבים מכל שכבות העם שמצאו בו אומץ וחיזוק יותר מששים שנה ששימש ברבנות באמריקה. תנצב"ה.

לזכרון עולם בהיכל ה'

לעילוי נשמת

אבי מורי

ר' יוסף ב"ר שלמה הלוי ז"ל

שהלך לעולמו ביום ראשון לחודש מרחשון תשל"ב לפ"ק

ולעילוי נשמת

אמי מורתי

מרת רבקה בת ר' ישראל הלוי ז"ל

שהלכה לעולמה ביום שני לחודש שבט תשל"ט לפ"ק

ת נ צ ב "ה



לזכר נשמת

דודתי המהוללה והצנועה

מרת הינדא לאה הי"ד בת ר' **ישראל הלוי** הי"ד

שנהרגה על קידוש השם

ע"י הנאצים הארורים ימ"ש

לזכר נשמת

זקני מצד אבי, גדול בתורה ובחסידות המופלג והמושלם

מוהר"ר שלמה בהרה"ח מוהר"ר יונה אהרן הלוי

(אמו היתה הצדקנית מרת רבקה רחל אשר אם אמה מרים
היתה אחות הגאון רשכבה"ג מוהר"ר שלמה קלוגער מבראדי)

שהלך לעולמו ביום כ"ד לחודש שבט שנת תר"פ לפ"ק

ת נ צ ב " ה

מי יתן ראשי מים ועיני מקור דמעה ואבכה
יומם ולילה את חללי בת עמי (ירמיהו ח)

לזכר עולם יחקק בספר ששת המליונים קדושים וטהורים
שנהרגו על קידוש השם בשנות תרצ"ג-תש"ה על ידי צורר
היהודים הידוע ומריעיו המשחיתים ימ"ש. ביניהם קרובי
הנאהבים והנעימים בחייהם ובמותם לא נפרדו

זקני מצד אמי הרה"ח המופלג בתוי"ש
מוהר"ר ישראל ב"ר מיכאל הלוי

זקנתי מצד אבי האשה הצדקנית
מרת אסתר מלכה בת ר' אברהם יוסף

זקנתי מצד אמי האשה הצדקנית
מרת רוילה רעכיל בת ר' שמעון

שנהרגו עם משפחתם על קידוש השם

ארץ אל תכסי דמם עד אשר ישקיף ה' ממרום וינקום את דמם
ויקבץ נדחי עמו ישראל בשמחה לארצנו הקדושה והבנויה בב"א

זה הספר מוקדש לזכר נשמת אבי מורי
הרב החסיד המהולל בתשבחות
מוהר״ר יעקב אלימלך זצ״ל
ולז״נ אמי מורתי האשה הצדקנית
מרת פריידל ע״ה
ולז״נ אחי המופלג פאר המעלות והמדות
אברהם ז״ל
ולז״נ אחי הילד היניק וחכים
משה שמואל ז״ל
ולז״נ אחותי הנחמדה
מינדל ע״ה
שכולם נהרגו על קידוש השם במחנה השמדה
על ידי הנאצים הארורים

ארץ אל תכסי דמם עד אשר
ישקיף ה׳ ממרום ויקום את דמם
ויקבץ נדחי עמו ישראל בשמחה
לארצנו הקדושה הבנויה בב״א

Dedicated to the memory of my father
HaRav Yaakov Elimelech זצ״ל
my mother, Freidel ע״ה
my brothers, Avrohom ע״ה
and Moshe Shmuel ע״ה
my sister Mindel ע״ה
who died על קידוש ה׳ in the concentration camp
at the hands of the accursed Nazis

May the earth not cover their blood until G-d looks down from on high and avenges their blood — and gathers the dispersed of His nation Israel, in joy, to our holy, rebuilt land speedily in our days. Amen.

לזכרון בהיכל ה'

לזכר נשמת מורי ורבי

הרב הגאון האדיר

נזר ישראל ותפארתו

שר התורה

מוהר"ר אליעזר זילבער זצ"ל

תרמ"א-תשכ"ח

יהא זכרו ברוך

ת נ צ ב " ה



Rabbi & Mrs. Shlomo Levy

לזכר נשמת אביו

ר' אברהם ב"ר אליעזר הלוי

שהלך לעולמו ביום י"ד לחודש אלול

שנת תשנ"א לפ"ק

יהא זכרו ברוך

ת נ צ ב " ה

לזכרון בהיכל ה'

האשה הנכבדה ואצילת הנפש

מרת אסתר דבורה בת ר' וואלף

Mrs. Edith Zahavy

שהלכה לעולמה ביום ד' לחודש תמוז

שנת תש"ם לפ"ק



הונצח על ידי בעלה הנכבד הר"ר **זאב**

בנה הר"ר **צבי**

בנה ר' **ראובן**

בתה מרת **מרים**

יהא זכרה ברוך

ת נ צ ב " ה

לזכרון בהיכל ה'

Mr. & Mrs. Aaron Dovid Blobstein

לזכר נשמת אחיו

ר' אברהם בן ר' ישראל הלוי

שהלך לעולמו ביום ששי לחודש מנחם אב

שנת תשנ"ח לפ"ק

יהא זכרו ברוך

ת נ צ ב " ה



לזכרון בהיכל ה'

Mr. & Mrs. Chaim Rosenberg

לזכר נשמת אמה

מרת עטיל בת ר' יהושע

שהלכה לעולמה ביום שמיני לחודש אדר

שנת תש"ם לפ"ק

יהא זכרה ברוך

ת נ צ ב " ה

בס"ד

Thank you to my friends,

Rabbi Shlomo Wahrman

And

Rabbi Moshe Gottesman,

Who have helped introduce our family

To a Torah life.

Our prayers are that they and their families will be blessed with long life, good health, much happiness and continued success in building a Torah nation.

The Schwartz Family
Henry & Pari
Cyrus, Sarah, Darius, Esther,
Max, Moshe, Avraham & Aaron

Rabbi & Mrs. Moshe Gottesman & Family

לזכר נשמת

אביו ר' אשר זעליג ב"ר אברהם

אמו **מרת פרידה מלכה ב"ר שמואל ארי**

(עוז והדר לבושה)

אביה ר' ישעי' יצחק ב"ר שלמה

(לב טהור ברא לי אלקים)

דודה **ר' איתמר ב"ר ישראל הכהן**

דודתה **מרת עלקה ב"ר יהודה ליב**

דודתה **מרת עטיל ב"ר יוסף מאיר הלוי**

(פיה פתחה בחכמה ותורת חסד על לשונה)

זקנה **ר' יוסף מאיר ב"ר אברהם**

זקנתה **מרת שלימה ב"ר מנחם מענדל**

יהא זכרם ברוך

ת נ צ ב " ה

לזכרון בהיכל ה'

Rabbi & Mrs. Binyomin Schubert

לזכר נשמות

ר' ישראל בן ר' קלמן הכהן

ר' אליהו בן ר' מאיר יעקב

מרת אסתר בריינדל בת ר' אהרן

ר' יחזקאל דוד בן ר' לייבל ירמיהו

יהא זכרם ברוך

ת נ צ ב "ה

לזכרון בהיכל ה'

Mr. & Mrs. Moshe Williams

לזכר נשמות

ר' יוסף ב"ר שמעון

מרת בילה בת ר' אליעזר גדליה

ר' אליהו ב"ר אליעזר

מרת יעמא בת ר' משה הכהן

הילד אליהו צבי בן ר' יוסף שמעון

רחל בת ר' יעקב

יהא זכרם ברוך

ת נ צ ב " ה

לזכרון בהיכל ה׳

Mrs. Stella Orlofsky and Children

לזכר נשמות

בעלה ואביהם

ר׳ משה יהודה הכהן ב״ר צבי מאיר ז״ל

Mr. Martin Orlofsky

מרת מרים בת בנדיט

ר׳ יהושע ניסן ב״ר מאיר

מורת פרידא חישה בת ר׳ אברהם פישעל

הירשנהארט

ר׳ מרדכי ב״ר משה יהודה הכהן

יהי זכרם ברוך

ת נ צ ב ״ ה



Mr. & Mrs. Herb Wallenstein

לזכר נשמות

משה בן אורי שרגא

Morris Wallenstein

דינה בת שלמה

Dinah Wallenstein

שמואל יצחק בן אברהם ליב הלוי

Samuel Flatow

יהא זכרם ברוך

ת נ צ ב " ה



לזכר נשמת

האשה הנכבדה והצנועה במעשיה

מרת

חוה בת ר' פנחס ע"ה

יהא זכרה ברוך

ת נ צ ב " ה

Mr. & Mrs. Evan Torczyner

In Honor of our grandchildren

פנינה יהודית טורטשינר

עמרם יקותיאל טורטשינר

יעל חנה טורטשינר

מאירה טורטשינר

משה אליהו טורטשינר

Mr. & Mrs. Herbert Mehl

In Honor of

Their Children and Grandchildren



ירע רעוא שיזכו לרוות רב נחת דקדושה

מכל צאצאיהם בחיי אושר ובריאות הגוף איתנה

ובשמחה ובכל טוב

Rabbi Yaakov & Chanie Schwartz

And

The Young Israel of Oceanside

מזל טוב

To **Rabbi Shlomo Wahrman**

On

His latest Publication



Mr. Moses Dodeles and Family

Congratulations

To **Rabbi Shlomo Wahrman**

On His

Valuable Contribution

To Jewish History

Mr. & Mrs. David Welner

With gratitude to Hashem

In honor of the forthcoming marriage of our son

Ari Welner to **Sara Mandel**

May those two wonderful and very special young people

Build a בית נאמן בישראל

And in honor of

Horav Moshe Gottesman

Their מסדר קידושין and his wonderful אשת חיל

Sondra

Who have been our dear friend and role models

For many years.

Rivki and **David Welner**

נוסח לתפילה

שירחם ה' יתברך על עגונות

מחובר על-ידי הרב מרדכי טנדלר שליט"א

מִי שֶׁבֵּרַךְ אֲבוֹתֵינוּ אַבְרָהָם, יִצְחָק וְיַעֲקֹב,
מֹשֶׁה וְאַהֲרֹן, דָּוִד וּשְׁלֹמֹה וְאִמּוֹתֵינוּ שָׂרָה,
רִבְקָה, רָחֵל וְלֵאָה, הוּא יַתִּיר וְיַצִּיל מֵחֻבְלֵי
עֲגוּן אֶת כָּל הָעֲגוּנוֹת:

תחת החופה על ידי הכלה בַּעֲבוּר שֶׁכָּעֵת תַּחַת חוּפָּתִי
אֲנִי מְקֻבֶּלֶת בְּלִי נֶדֶר לִיתֵּן צְדָקָה בַּעֲבוּרָן
וְהֵרִינִי מִתְפַּלֶּלֶת בַּעֲבוּרָן:

בזכות תהילים שאומרים בַּעֲבוּר שֶׁאָנוּ אוֹמְרִים כָּעֵת
תְּהִילִים:

בבית הכנסת שֶׁאֲנַחְנוּ מִתְפַּלְלִין בַּעֲבוּרָן:
בְּשָׂכַר זֶה הַקב"ה יְמַלֵּא רַחֲמִים עֲלֵיהֶן,
לְהַחֲזִיקָן וּלְהַצִּילָן וּלְאַפְשָׁרָן לְהִתְחַתֵּן
וּלְהָבִיא תַּחַת חוּפָּתָן וְלִבְנוֹת בָּתִּים נֶאֱמָנִים
בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל עִם שְׁאָר נְשֵׁי יִשְׂרָאֵל שֶׁמְּבַקְּשׁוֹת
לְהִתְחַתֵּן וְנִזְכֶּה כֻּלָּנוּ לִגְאוּלָה הַשְּׁלֵמָה
הַשְׁתָּא בַּעֲנָלָה וּבִזְמַן קָרִיב. אָמֵן:

Special words of thanks and appreciation

Are hereby extended to

MORIAH OFFSET

Reb Elimelech Rosenblatt

And

Reb Moshe Weiss

Who have worked diligently

To produce this publication

May *Hashem* shower them with his

blessings for many more years

השי"ת ירים את קרנם ברב ברכה והצלחה

Before the Storm:



MEMORIES OF A LOST WORLD

