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YESHIVAH
FARM
SETTLEMENT**

*Mt. KISCO,
N.Y.*

*Dedicated to
the Memory of*

MICHAEL B. WEISSMANDLER

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*TO HUGO GOLDSTEIN FOR HIS UNTIRING EFFORTS
ON BEHALF OF THIS JOURNAL . . .
OUR SINCEREST THANKS.*



Rabbi M. B. Weissmandl

ה'תרס"ח תר"ע

This Memorial Tablet on the wall of the Bet-Hamidrash contains a "SELICHAH" which Rabbi Weissmandl once wrote—perhaps the only one of its kind in style and poetic power written ever since the great holocaust.

ישיבת נייטרא במאונט קיסקא

ההרגל מעורר עיני האדם וגם דבר שלא עלה על הדעת מעולם; גם שידוד דרך הטבע הוא אחר זמן מועט כעיני האדם כדבר הרגיל ולא ירגיש בה שום פלא; ואולי גם מאוכלי המן היו כאלו שאכלו הלחם מן השמים בהשתוות כזה כמו שאנו הולכים אצל האופה לקנות ככר לחם... אנו הולכים ביערות מאוינט קיסקא ורואים בגין מפואר. בירה אשר בנה אדם עשיר לעצמו עשירות חדרים לתשמישים שונים — הכל עבור משפחה אחת — בית מיוחד עבור המשרתים. בית עבור הגננים. בית עבור המרכבות והמשמשים. הכל נבנה רק לימצות מחיי ההבל כל טפה וטפה של תענוג קראו בשמותם עלי אדמות — אבל יושב בשמים ישחק; יודע מנהיגו של עולם שיבא העת שכל הבנינים וכל החדרים יהיו נצרכים עבור בחורים לומדים תורת ה' ביגיעה וטהרה — במקום אשר אפילו מלה אחת של תפלה לא נשמע מעולם יהי' בי כנישתא לתורה ועבודה ושני מאות והמשים תלמידים גורסים באורייתא תדירא. התנאים והאמוראים הרמב"ם והרשב"א הפני יהושע והחת"ס סופר הקצות והנתיבות מצאו בית שם. עוף השמים יוליך את קול התורה וענפי האילנות הפרחים והעלים נותנים שבה שוכו להיות לצל לאלו המשמשים את קולם.

וכשמדברים בשוק היהודים על אודות מאוינט קיסקא אין המכוון על עיר הגבירה בורעסעטשעסער מושב נגירי ואורחי ארץ; רק על אותה נר תמיד שהדליק מרן מוה"ר היים מיכאל וייסמאנדל זצ"ל בזה המקום.

ורעיונו משוטטות מההנה להעבר ולפני עין השכל מתגלה כפר קטן במדינת סלאוואקיא; א"ן בו לא דרך מתוקן ולא בנינים הגונים; בתים נמוכים מכוסים בקש אבל מאות בתורים סובבים את רבם האהוב איש זקן נמוך הקימה וגדול הרוח הגאון הצדיק מרן מאונצדארף זצ"ל. מרחף לפני עינינו הזמן כשזקן ותופס ישיבה זה מברך את תלמידיו האהוב רבינו מוה"ר שמואל דוד הלוי אונגאר בן הגאון הצדיק מפישטיאן זצ"ל בברכת מול טוב על שנעשה חתן הגאון הצדיק מפרעשאב ומשתדל עבורו שיכחורו אותו לרב בעיר קראמפאך; ואף שהי' או עוד רק בשנים מצוה עליו שיהי' תופס ישיבה ושולח אליו תלמידים משיבתו באמרו אצל הרב מקראמפאך תלמדו תורה ויראת שמים במדה מרובה — או נתיסדה ה י ש י ב ה אשר ממנה נמשך חבל זהב זה ששים שנה ולא פסקה תורה משיבתו זו מאז ועד עתה במאוינט קיסקא; וכן יתן ה' וכן יוסיף עד ביאת ינון אמן.

רבינו מרן ר' שמואל דוד אונגאר זצ"ל הי' תופס ישיבה במלא מוכן המלה; אב הי' לתלמידיו תורה ותפלה מדות טובות יראת שמים ונימוסי דרך ארץ לנטוע בלבם הי' מגמתו. והי' הצליח דרכו. וכשנתעלה להיות רב בטירנוי תלמידים אלו לוו אותו ומה שכתב עליו רבו מאונצדארף בטוח אני שכל קהלה וקהלה גדולה וגאה נחת ינחתו בו נתקיים במילואא ספסלי בית המדרש נתוספו ושמנו של הרבי מטירנוי נתפרסם במדינה והוצה לה כלמדן וצדיק וירא אלקים אמיתי — עשה בטירנוי חמש עשרה שנים. וכשאמר לו הי' עלה ונעשה אב"ד ור"מ בנייטרא כבר היתה ישיבתו אחד מהמפורסמים בהמדינה ונהרו אליו תלמידים מכל עבר ופנה ליקח לקח מפיו ולהתבשם מתורתו ויראתו.

עברו לרבינו שלש עשרה שנים בנייטרא כולם שווים לטובה בהרבצת התורה בישיבתו ובהנהלת קהלתו — בשנת ה'רצ"ז לקח תלמידו האהוב והדבוק אליו בכל נימי נפשו מרן מוה"ר מיכאל ווייסמאנדל זצ"ל לחתן עבור בתו הי"ד. חתנו זה כבר יצאו לו מוניטין בעולם התורה כעילוי מצוין עדיו לגאון ולהפארת; אלוף נעורו הרב הגאון המופלג מוה"ר דוד וועסעלי זצ"ל ראב"ד פערעסבורג ניבא עליו גדולות ונצורות בשחר ילדותו וכבר אז ניכר ה' ככוכב מזהיר עולה בשמי היהדות.

בשנת ת"ש ה"ש"ה כאשר עלה הכורת על בית ישראל ויצא אש ומצא קוצים והתחיל בצדיקים אהינו בני ישראל יושבי מדינת פולין יצא מרן רחמ"ד לרחובה של עיר בשליחות ובכוהו של רבינו מנייטרא: עשה מה שעשה קיבץ כספים לשלוח על כל פנים לאלו אשר הגלו עם הגולה בעירום ובחוסר כל. כתב מכתבים למאות בזעקה גדולה ומרה צעק לידע ולהודיע כי על הכלל כולו יצא וכל אחד מישראל יהי באיזה מדינה שיהי מחויב ליתן כל אשר לו בעד נפשו ונפש אחיו. מי ישכח הדרישות והבכיות התפילות והזעקות אשר הרתיה צדיק זה את המדינה ותוצה לה לעורר את רוחם לבל יהרישו בעת כזאת אשר דם ישראל נשפך כמים. עשרות עצמים הסכינ עצמו וביתו על הוה אמינא קלה לעשות טובה לאלו אשר ברחו ממדינת פולין לסלאוואקיא — העיר נייטרא כונתי על הצר של רבינו אשר שם הישיבה והבית תמתי ושאר מוסדות ציבורים נעשה אז לעיר מקלט לבורחים מכמה מדינות. חדר מיוחד ה' אשר בה עשו והתמו תעודות מזויפות כתחבולות שונות להציל נפשות. העיר אשר בשנים כתקונם לא היו בה יותר משש מאות בעלי בתים ארטהאדאקסים נעשה מטרופולין לאלפים וביניהם גדולי תורה ואנשי שם סוחרים ובעלי מלאכות מכמה עירות מצאו שם מקום מנוחה ופרנסה לפי שעה והכל על ידי פעולת הצדיק ר' מיכאל דוב ובעצת רבינו מנייטרא — בבוקר השכם נסע לפרעסבורג עיר הבירה להשתדל ולעשות צעדים למצוא איזה אפשרות להציל הנשארים ובכל פעם שנשמע אשר עוד חטפו הרשעים איזה חבורות יהודים והובילו אותם למקום הפורעניות ממש חלק מתויו הלך אתם.

וכשהספינה נשברה והכל נאבד, אדם שבור ורצוצ אשר הקריב אשה ובנים וכל אשר לו על מזבח הנורא נוסע ממחנה למחנה מכפר לכפר אולי ימצא עוד איזה שירי שיריים מאחיז האהובים. ובבואו למדינת שווייץ בסוף המלחמה נפל למטה — המחלה אנושה אין תרופה לחולה המואס בהים אשר כל כחשבותיו דבוקים עם אלו שעלו לגנוי מרומים — אבל הגורר היום גור עליו להיות והתחזק עצמו באופן בלתי רגילי. נסע לארצות הברית. רכז ידידים ותלמידיו רבינו מנייטרא יאו התחיל תקופת ישיבת נייטרא בארצות הברית.

שלש נקודות שאמר מרן רבינו מיכאל דוב ווייסמאנדל זצ"ל לדור אחרון ספרו מן המצור כאספקלריא מנצוצי לב. ספר תורת ה' כדוגמא מחריצת שכלו והלקו בתורה, ובה שייב ה' אלפים תלמידים נכנסו ויצאו מישיבת נייטרא מאו בואה לארצות הברית ומהם לומדים מופלגים גדולי תורה אבל כולם מסובלים בתורה ויראת שמים. הזמנים שלמדו בישיבה זו נחקק בעט ברזל כעומק לבם ולא ישכח לעולם כי תלמידיו נייטרא יקראו — קשר של אהבה מקשר אותם שלמדו שם בעבר עם אלו היושבים עכשיו בין כותלי בית המדרש. מחזיקים בגופם ובממונם בני הקדוש הזה.

עשרים שנה שרבינו בנייטרא איננו אתנו וגם מרן ר' מיכאל דוב זצ"ל עלה לגנוי מרומים אבל עבודתם ויגיעתם עשה פירות ופירי פירות והישיבה העומדת תחת נשיאות הרה"ג מנייטרא שליט"א בן רבינו זצ"ל הולכת וגדלה באיכות ובכמות כערך שני מאות ושלשים בהורים לומדים כעת בישיבה — בברוקלין נמצאים שני בתי מדרש של תלמידיו נייטרא מקום תורה ותפלה ליוצאי בית המדרש של ישיבת נייטרא.

בזכות שני מאורות הגדולים רבותינו וי"ע הוא יתברך ישמור וינצור את תלמידיהם ותלמידיו תלמידיהם ככל מקומות מושבותיהם ואת כותלי בית המדרש הזה ואת יושביו ואת יוצאיו ואת מחזיקיו בברכה המשולשת בהורה.

*BIOGRAPHICAL FRAGMENTS AND
ASPECTS OF THE LIFE OF
MICHAEL B. WEISSMANDL* 7-21

MICHAEL B. WEISSMANDL

EXTRACTS FROM OSCAR NEUMANN'S
IN THE SHADOW OF DEATH
(IM SCHATTEN DES TODES)
A REPORT OF FACTS.
"OLAMENU," TEL-AVIV, 1956

THE PLACE: NITRA, A SMALL TOWN IN SLOVAKIA.
THE TIME: JUNE 1942

. The ancient provincial town of Nitra, situated picturesquely on the spur of a mountain chain of the same name, was a citadel of faith in a double sense. On the top of a characteristic hill was a thousand year old church which governed the picture of the whole city of Catholic clergy with its Episcopal See, the Theological Seminary, the libraries and the dormitories of the young seminarists.

"But this city was at the same time a center of an important Yeshivah, of eminent Torah learning and a great orthodox community. The old and venerable head of this Yeshivah, the authoritative personality of the Chief Rabbi Ungar was at the same time the real head of orthodox Jewry in Slovakia. The lean and ascetic appearance of this man with the fine spiritual features of the scholar, with his white beard was impressive. He was a strong and eminent personality and a wise man. His particular domain was—the "Vatican," as this citadel of orthodoxy was humorously called. And this Vatican with its expansively complex lay-out of buildings set into one another was at the same time an important bastion as a hiding place for Jews who went there into bunkers in order to escape deportation. There, great numbers of Jews were hiding and in moments of danger it was

possible to cross from there the border into Hungary which was nearby. That point of border crossing was to be completed later on to great effectiveness.

"But the most interesting and for the defense group most important personality emanating from the strictly orthodox milieu of the "Vatican" was to become the Talmudical scholar Michael Ber Weissmandl, the son-in-law of the old Chief Rabbi Ungar.

"In the meantime the orthodox Central Office (Landeskanzlei) in the Capital had lost its leader who died of a natural death and there was no leading personality left in the office. It was then, when this strange man, Weissmandl, began to appear in the capital and take matters into his hands. Whoever met this man for the first time could not possibly imagine what kind of personality was hidden beneath his exterior. His face was not handsome, his black beard was not groomed and his clothes were not neat and tidy. If nothing else but to move around at that time in the populated streets of the capital which were filled with Germans and members of the notorious Hlinka Guards, was by itself heroism. That figure must have acted like a magnet on the instincts of brutality—and it did. Many times was Rabbi Weissmandl physically attacked and insulted and never could he be persuaded to change his appearance or to withdraw from open danger. Nothing in his appearance indicated his genuine modesty and bashfulness, his ardent soul, the sharp intellect, his wisdom and practical philosophy and the basic serene and cheerful temperament of this sparkling mind. Who would have thought that behind that maturity of the heart and mind in the appearance of a fifty-year-old was really a very young man.

"And this man, in the course of his participation in the rescue work in the capital, had to enter into a circle combined of people whose outlook of life was so vastly different; but his judicious prudence, modesty and humaneness won him the hearts of all. Because of the boldness of his plans they called him the "Partisan Rebbe." Though he could not, on account of his appearance, go to government offices and authorities, he was an inexhaustible motor of energy and ideas, a perpetuum mobile untiringly swinging between the orthodox Central Office in which the group was constantly meeting and various other places of his activity. He was the uncontested authority of the strictest orthodoxy, and a close collaboration with him meant at the

same time the closest contact with the people who were at his disposal at his slightest hint. They were people whose assistance was actually indispensable in that situation which became more and more desperate.

"It was still Spring 1942. Deportation trains were rolling, train by train with incessant regularity. The trains carried away parents, brothers and sisters, relatives and friends—they carried away a flourishing upright Jewish community to a fate which certainly was cruel but whose real nature was still unknown.

"In the meantime, messages and reports began to arrive by clandestine routes and the reports were shocking. It had been announced officially that the transported families will stay together (it was a calculated, softening-up propaganda), but immediately after getting off the train, after the fatigue of a journey which lasted 8 to 14 days, the families were separated. The situation was indescribable. There were no cloth, linen, watches and jewelry left which could be bartered for bread and potatoes. What had escaped the eyes of the guards was robbed by the Nazis. We read these reports with deep shock and excitement. The reports did not come from people unknown to us, just a short while ago we lived together with them and we did know each and everyone of them. Something had to be done immediately. At that time the two Rabbis, Weissmandl and Frieder started to work. Reliable messengers who had to be non-Jews and were familiar with the routes and spoke the Polish language were found. These men were to establish clandestine contacts, smuggle valuables and letters and bring back receipts. A vast supply of watches and jewelry was bought and stored and now a very active secret service began its work between Slovakia and our brothers in Poland. Most of the valuables reached their destination and the receipts were signed by the recipients own hands.

"In the midst of all this exhausting work, one day in November it struck like thunder. Pale and shaking with excitement Rabbi Weissmandl appeared in the office, tears covered his eyes and his voice was sobbing. From the terrified group around the table fluttered questions. Weissmandl took a piece of crumpled paper out of his pocket—it looks like torn from a siddur—on it were scrawled with a shaky hand a few words in pencil. It read only 'For Heaven sake, brothers, help us, we are all about to be murdered.'

"'One of the messengers just arrived from Poland,' pants the Rabbi, and with nervous hands he produces more and similar scraps of paper from his pockets. What was there to do? These horrible documents consisting of scraps of paper must immediately be brought to the knowledge of the Chief of State, or the Slovakian people who cooperated in the deportations with the Germans. The Clergy must see them, a report must be sent without delay to the Pope to Rome.

EXCERPTS FROM RABBI WEISSMANDL'S OWN
BIOGRAPHICAL BOOK "MIN HAMETZAR."

"The idea to intervene directly with the Pope, was based on the following assumption. The President of the Slovak Republic, Monsignore Tiso, is still the parson of his parish of Banovce and as such he is under the jurisdiction of his superior Church authorities and therefore the threat of excommunication will at least make him think twice. (He had requested the Germans to deport the Jews and take them over, for payment of 5000 Slovak Crowns per person, to be paid for by the Slovak treasury.)

"Two letters went to Pope Pius XII, to Rome. One was written in the name of the Central Offices of the orthodox as well as the liberal Jewish representations. It was written in the German language. The second letter was a personal petition of the Rabbis, and it fell in my lot to compose it. How many hours I did sit over this piece of paper! The tears and the groans which filled our days and nights formed themselves to letters and words. The letter was signed by many Rabbis—who were still alive. Karol Sidor, the Slovak Ambassador to the Vatican took it over to deliver it—for good money, I think it was 30,000 Crowns. The Minister of Education, Josef Sivak, promised—for 1,000 Crowns, to let us know immediately if and when there will be any reaction to our letters. We did not have to wait too long."

"Ambassador Sidor personally delivered the reply from the Papal Secretariat of State, signed by Cardinal Magliori, March 14, 1942 whose essence was the following paragraph: ' . . . These people, approximately 80,000, according to some 135,000, are allegedly transported to Poland to the district of Lublin, and that men, women and children are separated during these transportations. The Secretariat of State hopes that these reports are not corresponding with the truth, for such measures, painful for so many families, could not be executed by a

State which claims to be guided by the principles of the Catholic Church.'

"On May 8, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Bratislava ordered Ambassador Sidor to inform the Holy See that the Slovak Jews will be permanently settled in the District of Lublin, and their families will remain together. Jews of the Catholic faith will, according to the assurances of the Reich, be settled elsewhere."

Note of the translator: 'The effect of this note can be appreciated properly by the interpretation it was given at the meeting of the Cabinet which was called immediately after its receipt. As it appeared from the note, the Holy See did not object to the deportations per se—it only protested against its form, namely, the separation of the families.—As to baptized Jews, they were already previously subject of repeated interventions by the Slovak Bishops as well as by the Vatican itself, because 'any racial legislation contradicts in several points the principles of the Catholic Church.' (History of Modern Slovakia by Josef Lettrich, F.A. Praeger, New York, 1955)

"On May, 1944," continues Rabbi Weissmandl, "when the Slovak government was busy to deport the last remnant of the Slovak Jews, and the entire world knew already all the details of the extermination process, the following note was sent by the Vatican to the Slovak government: The Holy See was convinced that the Slovak government will take no steps to deport forcibly people of the so-called 'Jewish race'. 'The more painful to the Holy See is the report that such deportations are actually taking place. This pain is increased by the reports which arrive from several sides, that the Slovak government intends to carry these deportations through, completely, regardless of women and children, and even not to exempt those who belong to the Catholic Church. The Church cannot react with indifference to decrees which will cause physical suffering and spiritual distress to so many of the faithful as a result of isolation from their Church.'

"In the town of Nitra lived the Catholic Archbishop Kmetko for whom President Tiso worked several years as private Secretary, when he was still a simple cleric. My father-in-law, Rabbi Ungar, was somehow acquainted with the Archbishop. I was assuming that the old Prelate possibly had no knowledge of all these events, and that a personal petition by the Rabbi might perhaps produce some positive

results. I persuaded my father-in-law to visit with the Archbishop. It was between Purim and Pessach 1942. At that time the public didn't know yet of any systematic extermination of the Jews, and the protestation and ardent entreaty of my father-in-law concerned themselves with the deportations only, there was no mention of Death Camps. This is not just a deportation of the Jews," said the Archbishop. 'there you will not die of hunger and pestilence—there you will be killed, young and old, women and children, and that will be your punishment for your killing of our Saviour."

"In Autumn, 1944 came the last blow against the last remnant of Jews who tried to escape into the surrounding woods.

"At that time I decided to make an attempt to escape from the Concentration Camp Sereth where we all were imprisoned and to reach the capital Bratislava to try to see there the Papal Nuncio. The time seemed to me to be favorable at that particular moment. The Allied armies had already advanced far on the one side, and the Russians on the other. The war was already in its last stages. Simultaneously, warnings had been issued to the Hungarian Government by President Roosevelt and the King of Sweden to stop the deportation of the Jews. The Hungarian Cardinal Seredi also made efforts in the same direction. All this gave me the impression that perhaps the Vatican might also have some positive interest behind these efforts.

"For these reasons, an attempt to intervene with the Nuncio seemed to hold some prospect for the small remnant of Jews for whose lives I wanted to plead. I succeeded to advance straight to the Nuncio's office, where I told him of my escape from the Camp, and that I came to him to plead for his help to save the lives of 20,000 Jews, who are about to be transported to the slaughterhouse. I also mentioned as an example the intervention of the Hungarian Cardinal Seredi with the Hungarian Regent Horthy whom he threatened with excommunication if the deportations are not put to an end. Why should that not be possible with Tiso?"

" 'First of all, today is Sunday and on Sunday we do not deal with profane matters,' said the Nuncio. I could not believe my ears. In my delusion and the folly of my heart, I still tried not to believe. Could it be possible that he doesn't know about Auschwitz? 'Your Eminence,' I said, 'we are all going to be slaughtered; is the blood

of thousands of innocent children a 'profane matter?' I beg of you, Your Eminence, go immediately, the Almighty will bless you for it'—and I cried before him—I cried very much. My wife and my children, my entire family, and so many, many people were in that camp and they all knew just as I what was awaiting them. And that man, the personal representative of the Pope, stood there with his face distorted from rage and eyes sparkling with hate and he said: 'There is no such thing as blood of innocent Jewish children—all Jewish blood is guilty. That Seredi threatened Horthy with excommunication? Seredi himself should be excommunicated. Who gave him the right to intervene on your behalf? As to you, I shall call the Gestapo immediately to arrest you.' I hurried to the door and fled with great difficulties."

CONTINUATION OF THE EXCERPTS FROM
OSCAR NEUMANN'S BOOK.

"After a long discussion with our friends in Camp Sereth, Rabbi Weissmandl decided to make a renewed attempt with Brunner in order to stop deportation and to take up again the plan of 'merchandise for lives.' Brunner received the Rabbi as was his habit, with satanic-cynical friendliness and the Rabbi spent almost two hours in the office of that beastly man. He must have pleaded there in his courageous and convincing manner, because he himself told us later that in the course of the discussion he knocked several times at the table in his excitement — which was entirely within the temperament of the Rabbi. But the discussion ended, as was expected, without any results. The fourth transport was arranged and with it went, to our unspeakable grief, also Rabbi Weissmandl with his young wife and his many small children. His friends insistently suggested to him to make an attempt to jump from the train because he could not help his family by staying on and they are lost anyway. And this deeply religious man was fighting then the greatest struggle of his life. He, who knew exactly the meaning of Auschwitz, should he let his family roll towards death and save himself? Should he, before the eyes of his wife and children jump out of the train and leave them to their bitter fate?

"Can anyone imagine the thoughts of this man who devoted his life, which meant nothing to him, entirely to the rescue of his

people; can anyone imagine this tragedy of an inner conflict? He knew on the other hand exactly that immediately after arrival he would be separated from his family and each of them will have to go a separate way to death. But his friends did not give up their attempts to persuade the Rabbi to save himself. His mission was not yet at an end, he might succeed to reach Bratislava and alarm in some way the outside world and send an S.O.S. wherever possible. After a horrible inner struggle, Rabbi Weissmandl decided to jump from the train. And the miracle happened. His flight succeeded and he escaped and reached Bratislava and hid himself there in a bunker. We in the camp, soon heard the news about his escape, and this news also told us that the man almost went insane with grief, and that he cries and laments day and night. But we knew that he did the right thing, because sacrificing himself would have been senseless. Many months later, shortly before the Russians entered the Slovak capital, he arrived with a few others in Switzerland. But this noble Jewish life was completely broken."

EXCERPTS FROM THE PROCEEDINGS AT THE TRIAL
GRUENWALD-KASTNER. "CRIMINAL FILE NO. 124,"
BY SHALOM ROSENFELD, KARNI, TEL-AVIV, 1955

"The prosecutor had ended his statement and after pausing a few moments he takes from his file a piece of paper, he raises his voice as he comes now to the final moment of his long speech. An ending, which was as strong as it was dramatic and it electrified all who were present in the court room.

"In the course of this trial, Your Honor, the name of that Zaddik, Rabbi Weissmandl, was mentioned not infrequently—a name which even the accused will revere. I am now taking the liberty to end my speech by reading a letter of Rabbi Weissmandl:

"Brothers, children of Israel, have you all become insane? Don't you know in what hell we are living? For whom do you keep your money. Do you really want to wait until we send a special messenger to plead with you, to give us what is coming to us? To you, all our pleas don't even seem to have the effect as that of a beggar at the door, after so much urging you have thrown pennies at our feet. You're murderers! You madmen! Who is the one who gives? You who are throwing pennies, looking at us from the heights of your eminence, or we, who give blood and tears from the depths of our hearts?

"Who gave you the right to ask us for an account and a budget, as if we were in business of clothes and other articles, before you even give us one percent of the millions we need? There is only one excuse we can find for you: You just don't understand. This is possible, because even the majority of the Jews here still don't understand. They think they are being transported to work somewhere. The criminals are doing their work with cunning and in utmost secrecy. Only a few individuals know about it and it is impossible for them to contact masses because they have no contacts. It has been ordered that those in the extermination camps of Auschwitz, Birkenau and Lublin have to write letters home telling how fine they feel and how happy they are. These letters are fooling our Jews here, and that is why they enter the trains feebly and exhausted after five years of pain."

"There was deadly silence in the courtroom."

Here is another letter read in the courtroom, this time by the Defense Attorney, who spoke about a conspiracy of silence against the repeated pleas for money or goods which at a certain stage in the drama could have helped immeasurably to avert disaster:

"And you, our Jewish brothers in all the free countries; and you, leaders of nations: How could you be silent in the face of this great murder? In it, about 600,000 Jews have already been put to death, and every day now, tens of thousands are being murdered. With their devastated hearts those murdered Jews cry to you: 'You are cruel murderers yourselves, because of your cruel silence. You have the means in your hands to avert and to stop these happenings at this very moment. For the sake of the blood of millions and the tears of hundreds of thousands, we ask you, we beg you, we demand, that you should act right now!'"

No action was forthcoming

THESE fragmentary extracts of facts and impressions are intended to serve as an introduction to a study of the personality of Michael Ber Weissmandl זצ"ל.

Biographies are moving increasingly into the forefront of literature today. The reason for this seems to be, the lateness in age of our culture

and the complexity of our civilization. The immensity of the problems of today's world has lessened the opportunity of the average man to play a part in it. Overwhelmed by anxieties, he has apathetically handed over his problems to the professional in order to be relieved from a responsibility he can no longer endure. Hence, man has become disabled to confront the steadily widening periphery of his dilemma and to react to it as an individual. Our media of communication, unprecedented in scope and intensity, spread manufactured, ready-made opinion, conditioning man to an "outer-directed" massproduct.

Man has lost significance in his own eyes and that is why biographical literature has become so interesting and important to us. Our time is hungry for the individual it cannot produce anymore and she has to search for him and to dig him out of the past. The biographical hero in literature has to be isolated from his time and disjoined from the world around him, his experiences and conflicts with life are set into a sharp contour of individualization, and the more this is the case, the more fascinating and interesting is the esthetic enjoyment.

It is however not in a biographical sense in which a study of the personality of Michael Ber Weissmandl is attempted here. In the world of authentic Jewish ideas, biography as an artistic literary exercise has no place. Here, the aim is not the isolation of the hero from his time and people; on the contrary, the interest in a hero is proportionate to the degree of intensity in which his life demonstrates and reflects the very essence of his people. His experience with life is of our concern only insofar as it widens the scope of our own confrontation with the world. Our biographical dealing with a man of extraordinary caliber is therefore, not an esthetic but rather an eminently religious experience.

It is a peculiar fact in the relationship of people to one another, that respect increases in proportion to distance. That reserve and impatience which come natural to the uncommon man, whose atmosphere is loneliness and indomitable boredom with the affairs of smaller people, was completely unknown to Michael Ber Weissmandl. He moved around and gave himself to everybody and as a result, everybody saw himself as his equal. Everyone found his interested and listening ear, everyone "knew" him. It is this, that makes it so difficult to speak about Michael Ber Weissmandl as a singularly great man. The collective retailers and wholesalers of opinion will instinctively ask: "Weissmandl?, but *him* we *knew*!" As if this fact by itself creates already an equality of human caliber.

With the growing distance of time, Michael Ber Weissmandl is emerging with increasing clarity as a unique historical figure. In the post-war literature dealing with the fate of Central European, especially the Slovakian and Hungarian Jews, as well as in the major war-crime trials, the name of Michael Ber Weissmandl appears again and again. Especially the Kasztner and Eichmann trials in Jerusalem in 1955 and 1961, during which letters, telegrams, and memoranda written by Rabbi Weissmandl and sent to the free world between 1942 and 1945, have been read in court. The sensational testimonies have revealed as a fact that Rabbi Weissmandl opened possibilities to rescue hundreds of thousands of Jews. Michael Ber Weissmandl was the one who got into contact with two Slovakian Jews who escaped from Auschwitz, and gave the first eyewitness description of the systematic extermination which was until then only a vague rumor and not really believed by anyone. Michael Ber Weissmandl was the one who sent a detailed map of the camp together with the sworn testimony of the two men to the outside world. Michael Ber Weissmandl was the one who probed the Nazi mind with a point blank offer of money. Nobody would have believed it—for \$50,000 Wisliceny, Eichmann's deputy, stopped the deportations for a long period of time. This was what encouraged Rabbi Weissmandl to suggest a bold proposition—the so-called "Europa Plan," which provided to bring to a halt all deportations from all of Europe for the payment of a huge sum of money. Wisliceny himself went to Berlin and personally submitted the plan.

EICHMANN TRIAL IN JERUSALEM:
THE PROSECUTOR EXAMINES WITNESS
DR. ERNEST ABELES. (p. 701 of the official
report of proceedings)

Q. I like to ask you another question in this connection: Was there any attempt to bribe Wisliceny in order to stop deportations?

A. Rabbi Weissmandl used an official named Uzo (?) who enjoyed the confidence of Wisliceny as a go-between, to offer money for halting the deportations and Wisliceny agreed for a down payment of \$50,000.

(p. 702)

Q. Can you tell the court what you know about the so-called "Europa Plan?"

A. Part of the people in the camps had been shipped to the East and nothing has been heard anymore about their fate. In the course

of negotiations with Wisliceny, Rabbi Weissmandl submitted a proposal to stop deportations from all Europe for payment of a large sum of money.

Wisliceny went to Germany with this plan and returned with the answer that there are positive possibilities for the plan for all of Europe except Poland because the fate of Polish Jewry is already sealed. Wisliceny also mentioned the amount of 2-3 million Dollars to be paid in monthly installments, not cash but in merchandise.

The failure of those negotiations, Michael Ber Weissmandl was convinced, rests upon the assimilated Jews in the West who contended themselves with public speeches and demonstrations. He recalled, that after such a demonstration in New York, Wisliceny told him that Hitler was incensed and determined to intensify the persecution. Above all, Michael Ber Weissmandl accused the Zionist Jewish Agency in Palestine and Turkey, to have frustrated his efforts. There are letters Weissmandl had opportunity to see after the war, which give evidence, undisputable historical evidence, not only of a fatal blunder, but of deliberate and cynical frustration of his frantic appeals for money. One such letter decried his constant asking for money, with the argument that one cannot ask the Western Powers to accede to the transfer of money to the Nazis, when allied blood was being shed in the struggle against them. "We also have to shed blood," the letter argues, "because it is necessary for the establishment of the Jewish Homeland—'Only with blood will the Land be redeemed.' " "One cow in Palestine is worth more than all the Jews in Europe"—was the immortal statement of Yitzhak Gruenbaum, one of the leading figures in the Jewish Agency at that time. It was through blindness and delusion that the Jewish Agency as well as the Joint Distribution Committee, whose representative in Switzerland, an assimilated Jew, Sally Meyer, have heaped inextinguishable guilt upon their heads.

Rabbi Weissmandl's book *MIN HAMETZAR* contains a wealth of letters and documents which by themselves tell the story of Jewry in Slovakia and of their frantic attempts to wrestle themselves out of the iron clamp of destruction. There is nothing written by a Jew during that time which is comparable to these letters.

One has to try and picture in ones mind the ghastly situation in which those letters were written, the intricate and round-about ways—and the danger involved in hiring diplomatic couriers to deliver them and the large sums of money to be paid to the messengers. These attempts to arouse the

free world, were repeated again and again with increased anxiety and despair. One also has to imagine the consternation, and the abyss which opened itself before the eyes when the messengers came back empty handed and later on with short notices from which it became clear that the reports simply have not been believed and besides, that no money is available anyway.

There appear names like Sally Meyer of the JDC and Nathan Schwab of the Jewish Agency as the agents of a conspiracy of unbelievable stupidity combined with criminal delusion.

One fact emerges clearly and without doubt—it is the theme which occurs again and again during the entire period before the fate of European Jewry was finally sealed, that there was at a time a real possibility to save the remainder of European Jews. The Nazis wanted to negotiate with the representatives of "World Jewry," they were even willing to let those representatives in and discuss matters with them personally. (MIN HAMETZAR, p. 76, note 33.) Contacts were established with Sally Meyer, with Silberstein of the AJC and with Schwab of the JA. Eichman was willing at the end of 1943 to open a "Travel Office" in Budapest and to transmit 1000 people daily to the Spanish border via Germany and via occupied France. (p. 78, note 39) A detailed letter was sent in four copies to Dr. Stephen Wise, Dr. Nahum Goldmann, Dr. Perlzweig and Dr. Kubowitzky.

These facts and many more are contained in Michael Ber Weissmandl's book *MIN HAMETZAR*. These facts are read with consternation and unbearable shame. How can it be explained that at a time during the last phase of the war, when the Nazis were willing to barter Jews for money, partly because of personal greed, partly because of their desire to establish contact with the Western powers which, they believed, were under Jewish influence, how was it possible, one asks, that the Jewish leaders did not move heaven and earth to save the last remnant of their brothers?

Weissmandl gives us the answer. And the answer does not deal with missed opportunities, errors of judgement etc. as the main keys to the question. The entire wrong approach, the delusions, the horrible failure, are only results. Results of the un-Jewish mentality of those Jews who had the money, the power and the apparatus in their hands. They have shunned the "oldfashioned" methods of clandestine operations and bribes as not glamorous and heroic. Demonstrations and rallies in Madison Square Garden yield incomparably more publicity—and of course there is the aim of the "Jewish Homeland" which must not be compromised by undue demands from the Allies. Now, after years have passed, books have

been written and witnesses have been heard, it is difficult to deafen the voice of Michael Ber Weissmandl which has become louder and penetrating after he is dead.

In the Sunday issue of the *Yiddish Forward* of October 2, 1960, in the Literature Section appeared a review of Weissmandl's book by Eliezer Weisel. He concludes there with the following words:

"Why did World-Jewry find it so difficult to send money for the rescue of Jews when it was possible to rescue with money? And why did World-Jewry not find it possible to send even one messenger to those Jews in a hell and to find out what happens? The free Poles have sent their agents into Poland, free Belgians have sent agents into Belgium and the free French have sent agents into occupied France. Only the free Jews did not send anybody to their desperate brethren in a Gehennah. Only once was an agent sent to Slovakia—and he turned out to be a German spy and he caused a series of catastrophies. These are heavy and hard questions. If one thinks about them one is liable to lose one's belief in many things and in man. One wants to creep into a hole and hide there, hide from one's own thoughts."

Many studies have been made of Himmler's diary, documents were presented at the Nuremberg Trials and at the Kasztner Trial, testimony was given by Dr. Ernst Abeles at the Eichmann Trial. All were dealing with the tragic attempts of Michael Ber Weissmandl. Matters cannot be ignored and hushed up anymore.

It is interesting to note the cautious manner with which the subject is approached when it comes to evaluate Weissmandl's book. On the one hand there is the mantle of historical objectivity and then on the other hand there are some very unpopular conclusions which one does not want to follow up because in their final analysis they would reach too deeply into the "either-or" realm of Jewishness itself. And so we read in a review of *MIN HAMETZAR* in "Jewish Social Studies," p. 119, by Bernard Klein, Brooklyn College, as follows in excerpts:

"There is some substance to Rabbi Weissmandl's contention that some possibilities existed to save European Jewry through negotiations and bribes. It is, however, questionable whether the number of Jews rescued would have amounted to hundreds of thousands."

"There is ample evidence that Eichmann and Kaltenbrunner did everything to obstruct the negotiations. In 1944, Kaltenbrunner com-

plained to Hitler himself, with the result that the latter ordered Himmler to stop the negotiations immediately. Eichmann's cynicism is evidenced by the fact that in 1944 he deported 12,000 Jews daily to Auschwitz despite his promise to Brandt that no Jews would be exterminated while he was in Istanbul. It seems, that even Himmler who authorized the negotiations, did not have large numbers in mind. Furthermore, the conflicts within the Nazi hierarchy would have been an adequate deterrent to the successful culmination of these negotiations.

While Rabbi Weissmandl's basic supposition is questionable, leaders of western Jewry and Zionism cannot be absolved of their guilt in refusing to heed his pleas and make the necessary efforts to comply with his financial requests . . . "

The reviewer concludes: "Even if only a handful of Jews had been saved—and there is no doubt that some might have been—such efforts should have been made."

This review is characteristic for that attitude of mind and that outlook which cannot bear the thought that this orthodox Rabbi who threw a terrible accusation into the face of modern-minded Jewish leaders, representatives of world wide organizations, should be right. In the form of an objectively cool historical evaluation, an element of doubt is injected, entirely based upon conjecture, as to the effectiveness of the rescue plan. Where is the evidence that Eichmann "did everything to obstruct the negotiations"? Yet, it was Eichmann himself who carried on these negotiations with Brandt, whom he sent to Istanbul. How does the reviewer know what numbers Himmler who authorized the negotiations, had in mind? That the conflicts within the Nazi hierarchy would anyway have been a deterrent, is pure conjecture which prepares the reader's mind for the conclusion that the entire matter would only have amounted to the rescue of only a "handful of Jews." As to the cynicism and the duplicity of Eichmann who deported 12,000 Jews daily contrary to his promise, we quote what Brandt told at the Eichmann Trial about his last meeting with Eichmann on May 15, 1944.

EICHMANN TRIAL: JOE BRANDT ON THE
WITNESS STAND, QUESTIONED BY
DR. SERVATIUS (p. 887)

Q. If I understood you correctly yesterday, Eichmann told you that he could not stop deportations for longer than two weeks and

that you would have to hurry because otherwise he (Eichmann) would have to feel the strong arm of his superiors. Did he tell you that?

A. He told me, "Today I am starting with the deportations and you have to travel immediately." I told him: But this is a tragedy, nobody in the neutral countries will believe that there is a genuine proposition if deportations will start just at this time. Nevertheless, Eichmann said that he will start now, but he promised—and his promise unfortunately was not kept, not to start with deportations to Auschwitz, but to keep people for two weeks in Czechoslovakia or Vienna. He cannot "put them on ice" longer than two weeks.

What appears from this testimony is not the duplicity of Eichmann as to the deal itself, but rather that he was unable to stop deportations before the deal was concluded to the satisfaction of his superiors. The deal did not come to a conclusion and the trains kept on rolling because Mr. Brandt did not come back—he was interned by the British. Why all this happened is still a mystery. It is suspected that Mr. Sharett and other members of the Jewish Agency could be very helpful in its solution.

MICHAEL B. WEISSMANDL came to the U.S.A., after the war, completely broken in body and in spirit, and the establishment of the State of Israel was on the agenda of the United Nations. M.B.W. saw in the entire Jewish national movement, in all its cultural and political formulations one consistent line of thought, according to which, all political actions of Jewish leadership had to be directed, namely, the establishment of the Jewish State.

All problems, including that of saving Jewish lives had to be subordinated under that one and only goal. It was M.B.W.'s unshakable belief, for which he claimed to have tenfold proof, that the few avenues of rescue which opened themselves during the holocaust, were deliberately ignored by the Zionist leadership, because those avenues of rescue were leading to places other than Palestine, and any undertaking on that line might thwart the expectations towards the establishment of the Jewish State. This attitude of a multitude of arrogant busybodies, the self-appointed leaders and spokesman for world Jewry during the most tragic time in our history, had put into focus the great dilemma in which the Jewish people finds itself *even today*. It is the fact that an intelligentsia which has become estranged from historical and authentic Judaism, has formed itself into a latter-day secular-

istic national-political movement, which is interpreting Judaism and has usurped its representation with skill and effectiveness, utilizing Jewish suffering and persecution to intensify the notion, that only a Jewish State will "normalize" the Jewish people and solve the "Jewish Question," once and for all.

What a fallacy of thinking, even naïveté it is to believe today that a mere concept of nationhood can provide a medium of historical-political development! Even the newly awakened nations have found it necessary to adjust their national consciousness to the great movements of our time which embrace and penetrate the thinking of the masses within their national structures, which have become too narrow as sustaining motives for national existence.

How far this unbelievable conspiracy has captured the Jewish masses, and how impossible it is for any different thought to penetrate their minds, even to the point of mere evaluation, can be seen in the starry-eyed vehemence of the reaction to any reproach. With blinded eyes and closed ears, any voice raised in protest and accusation is immediately suppressed and defended by the thousandfold cry: "Traitor," "Enemy of the Jewish People." In 1961 there appeared a publication "*Torah-Judaism and the State of Israel*," by an eminent Jewish thinker and writer, the late Uriel Zimmer, in which he, with insight and eloquence analyzed the philosophical and political implications of Jewish Nationalism which he characterized as a gigantic attempt to change the identity of the Jewish People. It is important to quote here from this publication—one of those voices which characteristically have never been taken cognizance of:

"Never throughout the Nazi holocaust and thereafter, have Zionist leaders ceased their string-pulling manoeuvres. When the entire Jewish people was stunned with agony by the terrible fate of their brethren—which had penetrated the Zionist-wrought curtain of silence when it was already too late to help—the time was considered ripe for continuing the process of "wholesale surgery" whereby the Jewish People was to be transformed into a "normal" nation, for forcibly putting "an end to Galuth" through the establishment of the Jewish State. "This string-pulling throughout the era of massacre and thereafter, contains various chapters which should have been, and undoubtedly will one day be, recorded and discussed. Some of the facts emerged during the Kasztner Trial which was held in Jerusalem several years ago. It might be worthwhile to relate here one "small" but typical example which I

have heard myself from the late Rabbi Michael B. Weissmandl. The reliable witness of this entire tragedy (a man who was called "Zaddik," the righteous one, even by the Attorney General of Israel, Mr. Chaim Cohen—see "Criminal File 124" Ed. Yediot Aharonot, Tel Aviv). "Rabbi Weissmandl told me the following story: The first piece of information about the existence and nature of the extermination camps of Auschwitz-Birkenau was received early in 1942, through two young Slovak Jews who had miraculously managed to escape back to Slovakia. They presented detailed testimony, figures, maps, diagrams and all records which were taken to a neutral Consular official (the document has already in part been published in several periodicals and has now been published in its entirety in the memoirs of Rabbi Weissmandl). Through various devices, at the risk of his own life and safety, Rabbi Weissmandl managed to send this document to the representatives of "World Jewry" (the Jewish Agency, the JDC, etc.) in Switzerland. And answer was finally received after long waiting: 'I have handed your letter over to Chayim (Weizmann) and he will greatly enjoy it. It will help us get the State' . . .

"In his memoirs Rabbi Weissmandl quoted the original text of a letter received from the same Zionist representation in Switzerland, in reply to a plea for help, addressed to them by Mrs. Gisela Fleischman, a veteran Zionist and an active rescue worker during the war. Her plea also contained explicit directions as how help could be given, etc. The answer was "All Allied nations shed the blood of their sons in the war effort. What we want is a Jewish State and ('rak b'dam tih'ye lanu ha'aretz') only blood will get us the land' . . . Those who eloquently accuse others of 'blood-libel' for mentioning these facts, are advised to read Rabbi Weissmandl's book and the documentation contained therein."

After the war, shortly after his arrival in the U.S.A., M.B.W. issued a flaming J'accuse in which he put ten yes-or-no questions to the leaders of the Jewish Agency.

One must understand the motive and the nature of M. B. Weissmandl's statements and vehement accusations. Though he addressed himself to a political group, dealing with practical issues, though of enormous dimensions, his motivation was not "political"—it was basically religious, because M.B.W. was a religious man par excellence. He conceived Jewish Nationalism as the great sin of assimilation in a national disguise, as a

substitution for a universal religion which, like all religions has the purpose to give sense to one's life and solve the personal and collective dilemma of man in this world. One has to understand what went on in the mind of this man who stood in the midst of the fire, waiting day after day, month after month with terrible anxiety for that answer to his hundreds of frantic letters, telegrams and messages. He could not comprehend what had happened only until after all was over. It was only after the war when crushing realization dawned upon him that a group of people, having lost their roots, in possession of power and influence, commanding publicity, journalists, politicians and professional pulpiteers, with almost irrational delusion have substituted an ideal after their own image, for the most basic, the most elementary and vital Jewish command at that hour—to save Jewish lives.

With incessant compulsion, M.B.W. was hunting for documents and rummaging in libraries and archives among the huge material which has been collected after the war. He was tracing his own letters and communications, some of which found their way to the highest authorities, like his proposal to bomb the rails leading to Auschwitz. Allied bombers did successfully strafe the oilfields of Ploesti, Rumania but they let the trains to Auschwitz roll undisturbed until the last minute, a fact which the Nazis amusedly interpreted in their own way.

M. B. Weissmandl was a restless and brooding man. He became ever more restless and brooding with the passing of time as the process of oblivion had set in. People wanted to forget what had happened, and they succeeded astonishingly. The realities and necessities of life are overwhelmingly powerful, and have reestablished an order which cannot tolerate a mystery within their frame of mind. It is as if people are trying to immunize themselves against a metaphysical threat. It is astonishing to note the consensus of a shallow rationalism which has embraced the minds of people in their desperate flight from the mystery and a desire "to explain" at all costs the phenomenon of Hitler and what it represented. It is an attitude of mind typical for the philistine or the escapist, which is rooted in the optimistic philosophy of the 19th Century which maintains that the world is a beautiful place, human beings are essentially good and evil is an interlude. These ideas, surprisingly enough, are still working today when it comes to explain Hitler. Antisemitism is a product of political-economical—and if one adheres to a psychological school, of individual or collective psychological circumstances. In the case of Hitler, Antisemitism was a calculated device, shrewdly used for political purposes and injected

into the masses by means of incessant propaganda. It is all very simple. In the course of progress and the process of general humanization of the world our peace of mind need not be disturbed. All will lead to a Happy Ending. On the other hand — if one reads the extensive literature describing the beginning and the development of the National Socialist movement created by a man whose evil genius and daemonic power fascinated millions and induced them to commit the greatest crime in human history, one is deeply dissatisfied with "common sense" rationalism. One comes to conclusions which lie outside the dimensions of a commonly accepted historical perspective. If one reads for instance the testament of Hitler which he wrote a few hours before his death in the bunker of the Reichs-Chancellor in Berlin when the heavy guns of Russian artillery were pounding upon the roof, even at that moment his thoughts were concentrated on the Jews,—the Jews, the Archenemy. The fanatical hatred of the Jews which dominated that man from the very beginning when he wrote *Mein Kampf* until the last moments of his life when he wrote his testament cannot have been a strategic means for political ends. It is, significantly enough, the Jewish writer who excels all others in his frantic attempts for superficiality. It takes a Catholic thinker like Jacques Maritain for instance, to say that Jews are hated because the others feel that the Jews are a *metaphysical people*. It is Herman Rauschning who has grasped more deeply than others the significance of the Paganism and Nihilism inherent in the "Bewegung" (movement for the sake of movement).

"Anti-Semitism is not a fringe problem of our crisis, a symptom. It is at the very center, and its importance is expressed by the fact that it is the center of the National Socialist doctrine as well . . .

Hatred of Jews is something like a subconscious reaction against the author of the Tablets of the Law in which good was distinguished from evil, and the division based upon a divine will. (*The Redemption of Democracy*, 1941, p. 221)

The basis of Anti-Semitism is metaphysical and it appeared more clearly and unmistakably in our time, then ever before, erupting suddenly and vehemently in an unimaginable proportion in the midst of a cultural tradition and civilisatory progress. The first atomic explosion in the course of the war initiated by Hitler, introduced a new era of cosmic extension, world-shaking tension and spiritually — existential frustration. What an enormous lack of sensitivity is required, not to see a development in its totality! It was the embodiment of Anti-Sinai which has set forces in motion

which clearly point to a new perspective and a complete metamorphosis of the hitherto conceived structure of and forces within this civilization.

M.B.W. was restless and he could not find a place in the new order of realities, because he was possessed by the mystery of the great catastrophe he had experienced, and which had not vanished into the past of a historical accident. As a mystery, it had its own reality, whose dimensions collided with the other reality of a seeming order. M.B.W. was a deeply religious man and to him the reality of a mystery with which one has to live, must have a purpose—not necessarily the purpose of a solution, but rather the purpose of an eternal sting, the dissatisfaction of an incongruity which leads along the line between man and God. Moving along this line, it would be a fatal slip to concentrate upon the perpetrators of a crime and the enormity of their sin. The uniqueness of the catastrophe which befell the Jewish people is not explained by descriptions of the motives of the criminal, the circumstances of the crime and the neglected opportunities to help the victims, and the matter is not ended in courts of justice.

The more the condemning evidence mounted, that the free world stood idly by while the Jews were systematically slaughtered, the more the mystery took shape with impressive contours. When it became clear that the few diplomatic and military gestures which were made before the very end of the war by the Pope and President Roosevelt to the Regent of Hungary, could have saved untold lives if they were made earlier and also to Tiso of Slovakia, in addition to the fatal stupidities of the Jewish leaders, the phenomenon widens to a dimension which reaches beyond ordinary comprehension. Blames and recriminations become pedestrian and somehow meaningless.

To M. B. Weissmandl, the entire catastrophe represented a phenomenon of the highest religious validity. It is precisely this reaction of M.B.W. as he emerged after the war and which marked his personality, which is of importance to us in a biographical study because it is a *religious* experience of singular significance.

We have to put M.B. Weissmandl against the background of the catastrophic years 1941-1945, as this was the turning point in his life, and regard his remaining years in the U.S.A. as the framework of his reaction to the war experience. The personality of M.B.W. as he emerged after the war, appears under a twofold aspect. One is the aspect of his personal tragedy which he shared with many who had lost like he. The second aspect is the collective tragedy which was so emphatically pronounced

by his total personality, an aspect which he shared with nobody. *He could not forget.* Particularly this is what interests us here. *Is this reaction to a tragedy an incidental matter of an individual temperament, or does it have significance of a higher order of eminently Jewish religious validity?*

The question implies more than the investigation of a theoretical concept; it reaches deep into the "either-or" realms of our lives.

THE reaction of the Jewish people to their collective sufferings has become in their own historical perspective, an almost natural ingredient of their existence and there is an automatic inclination to link a catastrophe which eliminated one third of a people, to a chain of perpetual sufferings. Does not the principle apply here, that quantity changes into quality? If this is so, and an event of such magnitude carries a different spiritual quality (and spiritual quality it must carry, otherwise it would be senseless), what is that quality and what are the revisions which we undertake as a result of our new and widened experience? What are our conclusions and in what way are they different from before? What cathartic change have we undergone?

Here lies perhaps one of the most baffling phenomena in the history of Jews. It is the fact that they have entirely forgotten to ask the question "WHY?" Speaking about Jews in this context, does not mean individuals or groups who have come to conclusions and solutions which lie outside the authentic mainstream of the Jewish people, like assimilation in its liberalistic-humanitarian, or nationalistic manifestations. What we mean here is *the Jew* as the homo religiosus par excellence. How was it possible for him to forget so completely what had happened? The trials which are occasionally held, still force the evading memory into some form of historical consciousness, just as the plays performed and the books written, have added to art and literature. But what has all this to do with the question, "WHY?" which was not asked. How could we so surefootedly step back into a reality which not long ago vanished into a phantastic nightmare? Where is the restlessness of our soul and mind? Are we not afraid anymore? To be afraid where there is no reason for fear is a commonly accepted sign of insanity—*not* to be afraid where there *is* reason, is no less insanity.

The question "WHY?" presupposes an eminently religious outlook. It presupposes a given order in the world and sense in life: it implies want

for moral justification, and it creates an intimate mutuality and reciprocity between man and event, man and nature and ultimately man and God. Seen with the eyes of the religious, man is not a product of nature, but nature is a product of man. The question "WHY" is basically different from the question "HOW?" The question "HOW?" is the question of the scientist whose interest lies not in the event but rather in the law which is either confirmed or upset by it. The answer to the question "HOW?" is always mechanistic and causal, it does not take human consciousness into account and is therefore basically amoral. The scientific approach, since it has shrunk from universalism to specialization, is today less capable than ever, to grasp a phenomenon in its totality.

The question "WHY?" is a profoundly religious question and *the Jewish Question* par excellence. It establishes relationship between the event and man's consciousness—and that is what counts—not the answer. When מֹלֵךְ asked the question about the מִדְבָּר, they did not find *the* answer. And when מֹשֶׁה רַבֵּנוּ at one moment in his lifetime was facing the glory of the Almighty in the most direct confrontation possible for mortal man, at this one occasion which was a singular, never repeated moment in the Universe, the greatest of all men—asked a question (בְּרַכּוֹת ד'). What the answer was, if any, is still open to Talmudic discussion.

There is a cosmic rapport between nature and man and nature is the entire complex of phenomena man is confronted with. Just as it is not possible for man to solve the problem of his physical existence in isolation, it is impossible for him to solve the problem of his spiritual existence in isolation. In fact, the situation of the whole of mankind, even the Universe itself are of our concern, we even pray for the light of the Moon which is unredeemed. The unique relationship between Jew and world has deteriorated into בְּטָל, which has backfired on our character. It has become a mode of our self-preservation, to see ourselves as mere victims of circumstances which we have not created and for which we carry no responsibility. Our parochial self-righteousness permits us to point with smugness and disdain to the errors of our fallen brothers, to the emptiness of modern man and his futilities. It is easy today to regard the entire civilization as a byproduct of Sin, but the question still remains: How much better has this realization made us? Perhaps it is the most crucial symptom of our petit bourgeois mentality that it is possessed by the notion that it has to know all the answers to all the issues and where there is no answer at hand, the problem does not exist. At any rate, if there is a crisis in the

world, it is *theirs*, and not our crisis. But the crisis nevertheless exists and if we drive it out the front door, it returns by the back door. In reality, in the dialogue between man and God, it is not man who has the answer—because if he had, there would be no need for *אמנה*.

THE way M.B.W. considered himself a perpetual student, one is reminded of the words of the Chavas Daas in his *הקדמה* where he says that the wise man in Torah is called *הלמיד חכם* and not just *חכם*, because the genuine wise man is always a *תלמיד*. M.B.W. once said to a chassidic leader whose somewhat self-assured and pontifical manners irritated him: "You will always be a Rebbe and I will always remain a Talmid." Behind his vehemence of thought and his occasional emotional outbursts, was that passionate search for truth which cannot avoid contradiction. There are so many facets of a thing and of a thought and only one can be expounded at a time, and that many-sidedness of thought had a prismatic effect on his deep and crystal-hard *אמנה*. Nothing is more adequate to intensify such basic elements of the soul, than the shaking experience of a great catastrophe.

M.B.W. was restless and deep down dissatisfied because he knew that something must have gone wrong with us, and somewhere and somehow we have to start anew. He did not know where and how. *И/И* did things go wrong? That was the question he incessantly asked himself, and he did not know the answer.

M.B.W. was possessed by the restlessness of the seeker and he was always on the spiritual move. Once,—he was at that time a very young man, he bought himself a railway ticket which enabled him to travel over the length and width of Poland, the largest and most colorful Jewish community. He came to know all Jewish leaders of importance. He spoke with R. Chaim Oizer and with the Chofetz Chaim, he saw how people lived in Warsaw and in Lodz. In Erez Israel he spoke to Sefardim and in Oxford to English Jews and non-Jews. He liked to listen to other people, regardless of whether they were Rabbonim or porters, taxi drivers or Doctors. Generally, he was fascinated by people. He was especially attracted by the "outsiders" of society because he was tired of the self-righteous philistine.

M. B. Weissmandl was the typical anti-Philistine and a revolutionary

against order. Everything which was in a way outside of order attracted him. And what represents order more than society itself? A society which has conditioned and brainwashed the individual and exposed him to a set of values as the established order of "common sense." This "establishment" is the crux of our present day perplexity. The question is simply this: If we are an eternal people and above and beyond transitory civilizations, if the purpose of our existence is to produce Saints—and this is what it all amounts to, then we must be basically divorced from the affairs of the world and intrinsically protest against its order. This awareness should have been tremendously enforced by the impact of the breakdown of an order and the dissolution of its binding forces.

Rabbi Weissmandl was deeply possessed by this dilemma which seems to be the main theme within the changing patterns of Jewish survival but has come to the foreground with ever increasing clarity. Since the destruction of the great Torah centers in Eastern Europe which were the reservoir for Jewish continuity, concentrated mostly in small villages and towns where it was somehow possible to find a *modus vivendi* for "disengagement," the remnants have now been put into the very centers of a disintegrating civilization in which we are involved and whose symptoms affect us. However purposeful our attempts to maintain our identity, the inherent necessity to gear our spiritual existence to the wheels of social function and participation, there remains a gap of two irreconcilable worlds.

M. B. Weissmandl looked with amazement and sometimes with irritation and anger at that frequent matter-of-fact type who self-righteously has stepped back into the system, eagerly grasping for the conveniences it offers and at the same time posing as an unconcerned bystander as if this whole shaking globe would not be his. Whatever possibilities remained for genuine religious experience, today they are inseparably connected with the fate of the world and the totality of mankind. We are neither like the Prophet Jonah who went to the people of Ninveh nor are we like our father Abraham who bargained with God about the fate of Sodom. We are in a defensive position and concerned with preservation of our identity which by itself should demonstrate a sanctification of the name of God. But isolation does not mean *Bittul*. Sanctification of the Name of God presupposes the existence of an outside and a reciprocal relationship with it. How is it possible not to be deeply disturbed by the veneer of religious respectability which has lost that unrest of the soul which, in our time more than ever,

should have produced that soberness which usually occurs after the shock has vanished.

To a great extent our religious impulses are marred by irrelevant outlets, narrowness of mind and heart do not permit us to see the totality of a situation whose cause-and-effect mechanisms reach into the depth of our own being. An astonishing lack of that passionate generosity of heart which is so elementary for genuine religious feeling is at the root of our incomprehension.

The deepest and central problem of Jewish existence insofar and to the degree it is conscious of itself, is the confrontation with the world. In the last analysis, the meaning of that existence can only be one, namely, *Kiddush Hashem*. If all this is seen *sub specie aeternitatis*, is it wrong to assume that we might have failed and that therefore the *Kiddush Hashem* had to take place in its most radical and extreme meaning?

Our total lack of comprehension is also exemplified in the lack of respect—or at least bewilderment with regard to the achievements of man on the one hand, and his, behind a facade of lighthearted escape, rapidly growing unrest and misery.

And so we see M.B.W. as he came back after the War into a world which he could not accept anymore as it appeared. He had seen reality breaking into pieces and displaying in horrible inconceivability its content of an unfathomable mystery. Reality could not serve anymore as a pretext for a life of "normality"—he saw it as the fragile and brittle layer it is and was from now on possessed by the potential danger of a terrible eruption of its content. Of course, M.B.W. did what his Jewish instinct almost automatically compelled him to do—he grasped at Torah, which appeared now, more than ever, to be the only constant in the vanishing illusion of reality. He built a Yeshiva which was the elementary and natural thing to do, and the few remaining years of his life were filled with agony and torment. He went around begging for his Yeshiva though he knew that his heart was failing. Perhaps, that also was the elementary and natural thing for him to do—and then the flickering light went out.

WHAT makes the life of Michael Ber Weissmandl significant and important for us? In what way does it reach beyond the personal and enters the wide scope of norm-giving Jewish authenticity? To put it in the most simple and unmistakable terms—*was Michael Ber Weissmandl as he came*

out after the tragedy, acting "normally?" Or is it we, who have reconciled ourselves with the order of things, who represent "normality?" This radical question, as simple as it is, is eminently decisive for our lives.

In a way the Yeshiva in Mt. Kisco is a remarkable symbol for the man M. B. Weissmandel and his life. One remembers the time when he brought over some sixty odd young boys, all orphans, wretched remnants fallen off the overflowing heaps of human hecatombs. For a short time they settled in a place in New Jersey, from there they came to Mt. Kisco, New York. That place belonged to an industrialist who wanted to sell it. Rabbi Leo Jung of New York succeeded to interest a well meaning philanthropist, Israel Rogosin, to buy the estate and donate it to the Yeshiva. All seemed well and then—trouble started. First it was zoning trouble initiated by real-estate interests who feared a devaluation of their properties in that residential area in which the Yeshiva and its inhabitants were an unusual and strange looking sight. The Westchester County Jews did not feel too happy either about the sudden emergence of that group which proved to be stubbornly resistant to all friendly attempts to be educated in the "American Way of Life," of which the Westchester County Jews felt themselves to be the chosen experts. When the zoning debate became a public issue with some antisemitic undercurrents and some non-Jews became interested, the big Jewish Organizations came to the support of the Yeshiva which finally assured her right to stay. And with that the interest of the Westchester County Jewish Community, which found it fashionable at the beginning to take with shamefacedness sides with the Yeshiva, came to an end. During the following years the Yeshiva went from one crisis to another. There was no money to pay the food bills, no money for oil, telephone and electricity. Rabbi Weissmandel was at that time already a very sick man. He had no days of peace and no nights of rest. The man who at a time was disposing of hundreds of thousands of Dollars, money and jewelry, collected by the underground resistance in Slovakia and Hungary, was spending sleepless nights in agony how to pay the butcher's bill of the Yeshiva. He completely—perhaps deliberately—forgot about himself. He possessed nothing but the shabby clothes he was wearing and the wooden cane with which he was supporting his tired body. One remembers that cane. One remembers also M.B.W. dragging himself through the hot streets in summer and the cold slush in winter, borrowing money here, to pay a debt there. There was first that slight impatient annoyance and then that shrug with the shoulder, that slighting movement of the head pointing knowingly

towards him: Oh yes, that's Weissmandl! After the first heart attack, the pains in the chest became more frequent and the body more frail and exhausted—but there was still no rest.

One remembers the kindness of his eyes which rested lovingly on simple piety wherever he found it. He admired simplicity, straightforwardness of character, even naïveté which, he felt, is somehow related to saintliness and he had an instinctive dislike of the artful, the oversophisticated and especially of the showy, even if all these came under the mantle of Torah. He admired and he was impressed by the Scholar, but it was the Saintly who would move him lastingly and genuinely. There were probably very few in this post-war generation who were so deeply concerned about the Torah. What is meant here, is not Torah learning in its usual quantitative sense, but rather the entire complex of Torah itself in a qualitative meaning. That incessant and gnawing concern was, of course, a natural reaction inseparably linked with the great WHY, which had appeared once on a blood-red horizon. It has left its glow to stay on and ever since, a new light strangely illuminated everything around, shaping it with sudden, uncertain and stunning contours. What appeared hitherto as natural and directly connected in a familiar perspective, became oddly oblique.

M.B.W.'s closeness to the Torah was original, unique and highly sensitive. He sensed that something must have happened, somehow and somewhere with our handling of the Torah which is the instrument given to man as an extension of a divine dimension. Inherent in that instrument, must be unimaginable power potentials of a terrible magnitude and sensitivity of an accumulative nature which erupts in destructive explosions if it was failed or disturbed. Perhaps it is a matter of simple logical deduction: If the certainty is assumed, that the Torah is the life-giving sustenance of the Jewish People, thereby forming that people into a metaphysical and metahistorical phenomenon—if then a terrific catastrophe of unprecedented dimensions threatens to uproot the spiritual existence of that people by concentrating itself on its most vital biological centers, it follows, that something went wrong with the sustaining lifeline. In such a case, the searching mind is not completely satisfied with the traditional scheme of individual—or even collective sin and punishment. Room has opened itself for speculation whether we have not failed and gone astray to a far-reaching extent, thereby compromising and injuring the very centre of sustenance itself. Feelings of that kind and on that level of responsibility, are not new in Jewish history, and have been expressed by great men at various times and

they always led to attempts to start anew. Those attempts were always linked with a desire for more directness, more simplicity and spiritual purity. That holds true for the observations at various periods of history in the times of the Maharshah, the Sheloh and also of the Baal Shem Tov. (ענין שו"ת חת יואל ס"ז קכ"ד.)

It was necessary to make these remarks in order to try to understand R.M.B.W. and his concept of a Yeshiva. The idea to establish a Yeshiva "Farm Settlement" was primarily, and contrary to its apparently practical concepts and features, a pure spiritual undertaking. To introduce the Yeshiva boy to farming and manual work and to create a new type of "Yeshiva man" who sustains himself—not in the corruptive atmosphere of the Big City, but surrounded by hills and tree, cows and chickens, was R.M.B.W.'s attempt towards regeneration, directness, simplicity and spiritual purity. It was probably also his idea that even the "professional" should be enabled to provide for himself. (He was always drawn to the Rambam, Avoth IV.5). If this whole scheme of production and self-sufficiency is contrasted with even the elementary methods of any modern production and profit system, it appears clearly that it involves an entirely new and revolutionary way of life. The mere idea of turning away from the City and the mentality of "affluence" and "compulsive consumption," is by itself an eminently Jewish way of revolt against the great "melting pot" and its "order," and it has since M.B.W.'s time been taken up by various groups. The idea of the rural settlement involves so much more than a withdrawal in a geographical sense, in the instance of the Yeshiva and its students, it aimed at the concept of Torah itself. As far fetched as it might seem from the surface, nevertheless there is an intrinsic link between R.M.B.W.'s scheme of the Yeshiva Farm Settlement and his insistence for a methodical learning of the "Rishonim." Both approaches seemingly so far apart from one another, have the same spiritual motivation as their root.

Michael Ber Weissmandl is not anymore among us but his Yeshiva stands on its grounds more firm than ever. New buildings have been added and new students came in. There are now more than 200 besides a staff of devoted Rabbis. A number of young men of the finest caliber who used to be close to M.B.W. and deeply influenced by him for all their lives, have moved out and settled there with their families around the Yeshiva. More will come—the Settlement will grow and with it the Yeshiva. The Yeshiva is still beset with troubles and pains, but as a living organism of Torah which steadily grows, it is in growing pains. In the meantime, the

great hall of the Beth Hamidrash echoes the hum of Torah which never ceases and the lights shine brightly during the night.

There was once a great light which emerged on the sky like a meteor consuming itself in its vehement rapidity. On its way it warmed and unforgettably inspired many Jewish hearts and also kindled the light in his Yeshiva Farm Settlement.

SIGMUND FORST

ר' נתן אדלער ע"ה

הקונטרס הנוכחי אשר מטרת הפצה לספר מהשתלשלות והתפתחות ישיבת גייטרא יהי' חסר השלימות אם יעבור בשתיקה על האי גברא וקירא גזבר הראשון של הישיבה — אוהב נאמן למרן ר' חיים מיכאל דוב ווייסמאנדל זצ"ל עמד לימינו בכל כחו בגופו ובממונו.

כמה נפיש זכותא דהאי גברא אשר טרה זיגע להמציא מזון וטרף לאלו פליטי חרב אודים מוצלים מאש הנורא שעלו מן הגולה לארץ נכרי' — גם כמה מהידידים אז היו מסופקים אם יזכה הישיבה להכות שרשים בארצות הברית — אם אויר הנכרי' של מדינה זו מסוגלת לגדל חניכי ישיבות הונגאריא וסלאוואקיא — אם יספיקו הכוחות לחרוש קרקע בתולה זו — ברם זכור לטוב ר' נתן זצ"ל כשבא לבית המדרש לסאמערווילל, אכסני' הראשונה של הישיבה ושמע קול התורה משבעים בחורים בחדר אשר שימש הן לאכילה הן לתפלה והן ללימוד דבר שנדמה להלום לעת הזאת, שכה כל הדאגות וכל היגיעות וכלכ מלא שמחה אמר, «בעבור בחורים כאלו הכל כדאי».

לדאכונינו לא האריך ימים אבל זכה עוד לראות את הישיבה בבנין מפואר כמאונט קיסקא.

מצוין הי' במדת אמונת חכמים. וכמה פעמים ביטל רצונו כדי לעשות נחת רוח לר' מיכאל דוב זצ"ל הי' רחיס ומוקיר רבנן באופן נעלה ונשגב והקב"ה שילם לו כהבטחת חז"ל בגין והתנין מופלגי תורה ויראה השומרים אהבתם ועומדים לימין הישיבה בכל עת הצורך ועושים בזה נחת רוח לאביהם ז"ל בגן עדן.

ברכתינו שלושה לאלמנותו דהי' ולכל משפחתו שי' לראות נחת של תורה מכל צאצאיהם שר'.

תורה וגדולה יהיו מיתאמים לעושי רצונו והולכי תמים.

יזכו לברכה כל הימים.

HARRY HERSHKOWITZ ע"ה

Our thoughts go back to the years when Torah Jewry was so much richer in גדולים and "Zadikim", when we tell our children that not so long ago we had in our midst such גאונים as the "Chofetz Chaim", "Rabbi Chaim Oser", the "Shevet Sofer" and more of such high caliber. But, does it ever occur to us to recall the years when there was greatness and even "Gadles" among "Baale Batim"? Among these who looked so simple and were usually unnoticed, until something great was done and built by them. Only then were we able to recognize their deep and real greatness.

One of those "Baale Batim" who we still remember, and that lives in our hearts, was the most unforgettable "Harry Hershkowitz" ע"ה.

It would be a most daring undertaking to give the full כבוד and proper description of this great builder of Torah in this country.

He was a man raised in this country with but one deep conviction, namely: he knew and felt that the honest and good hearted American boy could become the best medium to carry on what was lost during the terrible "Chorbon" years in Europe.

He met Rabbi Feivel Mendlowitz ז"ל and recognized in him that warm and dynamic person that Torah needed in this country and Rabbi Mendlowitz saw in Harry Hershkowitz this full heart and restless drive that was needed in order to build something great in this country; a Yeshiva that would not only stand by itself, not only be the center of Torah and Yiddishkeit, but much more than that. "Torah Vodaath" was built with the idea to be of no "competition" to other Yeshivos, but rather to help other Yeshivos. Torah Vodaath, under the leadership of Rabbi Mendlowitz and Harry Hershkowitz, took upon itself to make it possible for the other old Yeshivos of Europe to come over here and settle anew in this country. It was thanks to the unselfish and true Yiddish thinking of those two great leaders,

that our own "Yeshiva of Nitra" was transplanted in this country. This is greatness. What happened afterwards, we all remember. Our own Rabbi M. D. Weissmandl זצ"ל met Harry Herschkowitz ז"ה and from that very moment on, a deep friendship developed. Harry Herschkowitz was a man who recognized a personality. He knew what Rabbi Weissmandl was. He looked for אמת and it was there where he found it. He stated in public that he must have a big share in a Yeshiva that calls Rabbi Weissmandl, its dean.

And so our thoughts wonder back to the last מלכה מלכה of Nitra Yeshiva when Harry Herschkowitz in spite of his poor health and against the advice of his doctors, said, that he just had to come to this affair and be able to sit next to this great man and also say a few words. We still see him in front of our eyes. That evening, standing up there when the chairman, the late Rabbi J. Goldberger ז"ה, stood between those two close friends and called out the words that we say on יום כפור — מנחה מימין — מיכאל מימין — and afterwards Harry Herschkowitz arose, his face at first appeared pale and drawn. Suddenly with great inspiration stated, "I had to be here with you tonight. This Yeshiva and its leader, my friend Rabbi Weissmandl, is in second place of all the Torah institutions that I am working for: how could I miss this."

Everybody present was electrified. This was true מסירת נפש of a Jew who participated in this gathering against medical advice. "But, what good is my life if I cannot work for Torah," were his words.

This was Harry Herschkowitz. This was a man who did more than any "one" person for Torah and Yiddishkeit in this country in the last 30 years.

We of the Yeshiva will never forget him, and let us tell our Talmidim and our children that this great נשמה only left us 10 years ago.

הרב דוד יצחק זאב סאטמאר

ר' משה יהודא לעדערער ע"ה

לכל זמן ועת לכל חפץ. הוצאת דפים אלו היו עוד פרי עשתונותיו של מרן הגה"צ ר' מיכאל דוב ווייסמאנדל זצ"ל ואמר אז שבדעתו להנציח בה את ידיו בית רבינו מנייסרא זצ"ל היקר באנשים איש אמונים ר' משה יהודה זצ"ל. ואם כי לא עלתה בידו אז להגשים מחשבתו אבל מדה טובה אינה חוזרת ריקם ובאנו בזה למלאות רצון צדיק וליתן בזה אינה רשימות אודותיו.

ג' שנים למד בישיבת הסבא קדישא מרן הק' מאונצדארף זצ"ל ואם כי עברו עליו כמה צער ויסורים לא פג טעמו וריחו לא נמר וכשנעשה חתן הגה"צ מוה"ר יוסף בוימגארטען זצ"ל שהי' ראב"ד דק"ק שיפשוהל בוויען ועמוד התוך של היהדות הארטדאקסית בעיר הבירה ווינא כבר הי' מפורסם במדות התרומיות תורה ויראת שמים יחדיו משולבים.

רצונו החזק לבנות בית מצוין בישראל עמד לו גם כשגלה עם הגולה לארצות הברית. הקדיש כוחו וזמנו לעניי ארץ ישראל ופעולותיו הכבירים כגבאי כולל שומרי החומות שנתסד על ידי תלמידי רבינו החת"ם סופר נרשמים באותיות מזהבות ולא ישכח לנצח.

גם כשעשה ישיבת גייטרא הצעדים הראשונים כאן עמד לימין מרן הגה"צ מוה"ר חיים מיכאל דוב זצ"ל לאמצו ולחזקו בגופו ומאודו.

כשעלתה נשמתו למעלה לפני עשר שנים בשנת ששים ושש לימי חייו היתה זה עבור כל אוהביו אסון נורא.

ברוך שומר הברית והחסד שלא עזב את חסידיו — בנו היקר הוא מעמודי התוך של ישיבתנו וחתנו מתלמידי הישיבה מופלגי תורה ויראת שמים ורודפי צדקה וחסד וכל משפחתו שומרים אהבתם לישיבת גייטרא.

וזכותו יעמוד לאלמנותו לראות נחת של תורה עושר וכבוד מכל צאצאיהם ש' ולא יבוש המעיין ולא יקצץ האילן עד ביאת גואל צדק במהרה בימינו אמן.

JOSEPH SHAPIRO ע"ה

Let us pause for a moment in this fast moving world and look around us, observe, and think. Is it really the way we see it? Has everyone become part of this gigantic "Jet Ship" which we call America, or are there still people that have deeper ideas, different ways of living, though they have grown into this atmosphere?

We orthodox Jews are very fortunate that many of us have not adopted this way of living—Torah and Yiddishkeit are still out front and the main concern of our lives.

And so we look into this surrounding and still see a great Jewish נשמה who did so much for Torah in the past 25 years in this country.

"Joe Shapiro" whose name alone tells everything and doesn't need much to describe his personality. So simple and so modest in his ways, so scholarly in his looks and such a deep feeling Jewish heart. What a wonderful combination!

It is almost impossible to think in other terms, than Joe Shapiro is still fully alive and with us. Was it his personality, his patience and understanding for everyone who came to him for help and sympathy, or is it something else?

What is it that tells us that Joe Shapiro has not gone from us? It must be what our חז"ל mean when they say that the מצות ומעשים טובים are living for all דורות.

It would be impossible to point out which was the greatest deed of the late Joe Shapiro. Something big was created that only a man of great vision and רוח חברה could conceive. Of course his personal participation in every Torah institution, his financial contribution with the warm touch of his always understanding wife and children.

But more so his גמילות חסדים in such a wonderful and natural way, where most was accomplished with the least of fanfare.

We of Nitra Yeshiva pay our tribute to this "Prince of Israel" whose interests in our Yeshiva was almost without parallel.

He paid several visits to "Nitra in Mount Kisco" and was proud to be counted among the closest friends of our Yeshiva.

He took an active part in building our new Beth Hamedrash and indeed he did more than just his share.

His name will forever be associated with Yeshiva of Nitra and his activities will always be continued by his beloved wife and worthy children, the heirs to such a great husband and father.

Our deepest thanks go out to his family.

Blessed be the memory of Joe Shapiro. יהי זכרו ברוך!



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