70th Yahrzeit Gathering



לעלוי נשמת האשה החשובה מרת שרה שנירר ע"ה

Frau Sarah Schenirer ע"ה

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2026

לעלוי נשמת

נאוה ע"ה

בת

ר' יוסף מנחם מענדל הלוי עמר"ש

In memory of

Naava Katlowitz a"h

בית יעקב לכו ונלכה באור ה'



BAUSTEIN

gestiftet von

.....

zur Errichtung eines

BETH JAKOB-HEIMES

in Krakau

BETH JAKOB erstrebt die Heranbildung der jüdischen weiblichen Jugend im Geiste der Thora. Die Bewegung hat in den letzten 6 Jahren großen Aufschwung genommen. Bisher sind 147 Schulen für 18.000 Schülerinnen errichtet worden. Ein Seminar in Krakau dient der Ausbildung der Lehrerinnen. Die bisherigen Räume bilden hygienisch eine Gefahr, die Errichtung eines eigenen Heimes ist deshalb ein unbedingtes Erfordernis.

Des jüdischen Hauses Bestand liegt in der Größe der Frauen

חכמות נשים בנתה ביתה

Wien - Krakau, Nissan 5687/April 1927

RM 50.-

Receipt for donation of a "building brick" towards the new Bais Yaakov Seminary building in Cracow in the amount of 50 Reichsmark (German marks). This receipt was displayed in a Bais Yaakov fundraising journal published in 1930.

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THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED TO THE ARCHITECTS OF

THE BAIS YAAKOV MOVEMENT.

FRAU SARAH SCHENIRER ז"ל

DR. SHMUEL (LEO) DEUTSCHLANDER ז"ל

HARAV YEHUDAH LEIB ORLEAN הי"ד

REBBETZIN DR. YEHUDIS GRUNFELD ז"ל

TO THE BELOVED AND REVERED

REBBETZIN VICHNA KAPLAN ז"ל

AND HER ESTEEMED COLLEAGUES

WHO KINDLED THE TORCH OF TORAH EDUCATION FOR GIRLS,

BROUGHT IT TO THE SHORES OF AMERICA,

AND IGNITED SPARKS IN THE HEARTS OF

THOUSANDS UPON THOUSANDS OF GRATEFUL STUDENTS.

AND TO ALL THOSE WHO DEVOTE THEIR LIVES TO חנוך הבנות.

MAY WE CONTINUE TO SPREAD THE LIGHT OF TORAH

AND ILLUMINATE THE WORLD WITH ITS VALUES.

TODAY, כ"ה אדר ב' תשס"ה, MARKS THE שלושים OF

REBBETZIN ZAHAVA BRAUNSTEIN ע"ה

מחנכת ומנהלת הדגולה

A WOMAN OF REGAL BEARING AND NOBLE DEMEANOR.

MENTOR

ADVISOR

COUNSELOR

ROLE MODEL

AND BELOVED FRIEND TO ALL WHO KNEW HER.

SHE TRULY EMBODIED THE LOFTY IDEALS AND VALUES

OF SARAH SCHENIRER AND THE BAIS YAAKOV MOVEMENT.

ת . נ . צ . ב . ה .

THE SARAH SCHENIRER COMMEMORATIVE COMMITTEE

OF

AGUDAH WOMEN OF AMERICA

IS PROUD TO JOIN THE

BAIS YAAKOV MOVEMENT ZICHRON SARAH SCHENIRER ע"ה

ON THIS AUSPICIOUS OCCASION

THE SEVENTIETH YAHRZEIT GATHERING

MAY WE CONTINUE TO PERPETUATE HER LEGACY

לחנך בנות בדרך ישרא-ל סבא.

SHULAMIS GOLDBERG ALIZA GRUND

WORDS CANNOT EXPRESS OUR GRATITUDE TO

MRS. PEARL ALTSCHULER

MENAHELES, BAIS YAAKOV D'GUR HIGH SCHOOL

FOR ALLOWING US TO REAP THE FRUITS OF HER

"LABOR OF LOVE".

AN EXCELLENT EDUCATOR AND A SCHOLAR OF HISTORY,

SHE HAS EXPERTLY AND PAINSTAKINGLY

COMPILED AND EDITED THIS BOOK.

OUR DEEPEST APPRECIATION TO

MRS. FEIGIE SCHORR

WHO HAS DEVOTED MANY HOURS AND

HER MANIFOLD TALENTS TO HELP

BRING THIS PROJECT TO FRUITION.

...AND TO ALL WHO HAVE GIVEN SO GENEROUSLY

OF THEIR TIME AND SKILLS

הקב"ה ישלם שכרם כגמולם הטוב

THIS BOOK HAS BEEN COMPILED, EDITED, AND PREPARED FOR PUBLICATION BY STAFF AND ALUMNI OF

BAIS YAAKOV D'GUR HIGH SCHOOL,

BROOKLYN, N.Y.

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Mere words fail to express our feelings of appreciation to

Mrs. Feigie Schorr

who literally devoted days and nights to help create this beautiful book, down to the last detail

ישלם ה' פעלך ותהי משכרתך שלמה מעם ה'

החוברת הזה נערך ונסדר לע"נ

ר' שמואל יוסף בן ר' מרדכי צבי ע"ה

ר' יהודה בן ר' מרדכי דוב ע"ה

מרת רחל בת ר' יעקב משה ע"ה

מרת חי' שרה בת ר' בנימין ע"ה

הילד ישראל ע"ה בן ר' בנימין מרדכי שיחי'

הילדה מינדל גיטל נחמה ע"ה בת ר' בנימין מרדכי שיחי'

הילדה שיינדל פריידא ע"ה בת ר' בנימין מרדכי שיחי'

The פסוק says: שאל אביך ויגדך זקניך ויאמרו לך. Whatever step we take in life, we should always take a look backwards and know our history. Why? In order to understand the reasons why, by השגחה, something came into existence; to know what it teaches us about our own מדריגה and what לימוד we can take from it. We should not take for granted what חסד we receive. Today ב"ה there is a vast network of strong תורה חינוך for girls all over the Jewish world. We see girls who are proud of their Torah heritage, Jewish women who can educate their children and encourage their husbands in Torah - both בלימוד ובמעשה - because they know what Torah is, and their *emunah* and love for Torah are the guarantee of Jewish survival. For us today, this is the norm - we take it as a natural thing - but it's not so very long ago that Bais Yaakov *chinuch* was regarded as a new innovation which had never before existed in Klal Yisroel.

Rav Moshe Schwab ז"ל once explained why חז"ל were opposed to girls learning Torah in a technical fashion such as פלפול and גמרא. This mental exercise sharpens the שכל whereas the עבודה of the woman is בלב. She works with חכמה, which comes from the לב whereas the עבודה of the man is with דעת, which stems from the שכל. He further explained that it is her more receptive heart which is better facilitated to imbibing her children with אמונה פשוטה and a total commitment to אהבת התורה. It is her influence on the developing child, which makes the earliest and most lasting impression.

A woman does not need so many mitzvos or the mitzvah of *limud HaTorah* as a man. She can achieve the same מדריגה as a man with less עבודה, since her heart is softer and by simply encouraging her husband to learn, or waiting for him to come home, and taking her children to cheder - she will earn the same זכויות as her husband does when he learns תורה. So, in fact, we see that the Torah trusts the woman more than the man; that it relies on her strength of *emunah* and that it feels she needs not be given so many mitzvos.

Does this however imply, that for thousands of years the Jewish woman has been left in neglectful ignorance? That the twentieth century introduction of systematic *chinuch* for girls has been the correction of a great historical error? Reb Yehudah Leib Orlean writes that such a claim would be an insult to גדולי ישראל of past generations, and to the great tradition of Jewish education. How can we say that our spiritual giants who understood life so well, and who had such sharp foresight did not care about the spiritual needs of the woman or appreciate her value?

If we take a brief glance at our history, we will see that women of past ages knew possibly more than many men today. How could a woman do her עבודת ה' unless she knows the Torah and Mitzvos that she is מחויב to keep? It says כה תאמר לבית יעקב ותגיד לבני ישראל. As Rashi explains, בית יעקב refers to the women. אין בור ירא חטא ולא עם הארץ חסיד - How can a woman be a ירא חטא if she has never learned?

שרה מגיירת את הנשים - How was this possible if she had no knowledge of Torah? בנות צלפחד and the מרים הנביאה - could they have fulfilled their תפקידים without knowing

Torah? How could דבורה הנביאה have been a שופטת without knowing Torah? It says that in the times of חזקיהו המלך there was not a man, woman, boy or girl who was not בקי in all of the דינים of טומאה וטהרה! Thus, a girl of those times must have known all those *halachos* by heart! How many men of our times can boast of a similar accomplishment? Yet, if the girl was never exposed to a systematic program of technical learning, how could she have achieved all this? Throughout history we find accounts of women who were real מלומדות. Even women who may not have been, had to know all the הלכות they were מחויב to keep.

Modern educators admit that the home has a far superior influence on the child's development than the school. Even more than this - the success of the child's studies at school depends greatly on the attitudes he picks up from his home. Our חכמים, להבדיל, were greater. They always appreciated the great influence of the home, and therefore strove to make it the foundation for the בת ישראל. From here come all the most vital impressions on the child's mind; here the foundations of hashkafa and midos are laid, through the mother's stories and constant care and the very atmosphere of *kedusha* which she creates.

The home is the ideal. From Matan Torah onwards, the Torah commanded us to fulfill the mitzvah of ושננתם לבניך. The חיוב of *chinuch* was on the parents and thus the home was the center of *chinuch*, not only for the girl, but even the boy who was originally taught by his father or a hired מלמד. It was only later, in the times of ר' יהושע בן גמלא that it became apparent that fathers could no longer manage on their own to ensure that their sons received a proper *chinuch*. As a result, ר' יהושע בן גמלא established a system of חדרים for boys. However, the home was still the עיקר and the חדר was only an aid to it. The girl still remained within the פנימיות of the home and drew her Torah from there until the need for a בית ספר of Torah-learning for girls arose. When did this need arise? We could well describe it by using the same words that the great thinker Dr. Nosson Birnbaum used to describe the time when אגודת ישראל was founded. He said:

"The need was crystallized on the day when the notion entered the Jewish mind that outside Judaism there was light and inside there was darkness and it was necessary to admit the outside light to dispel the internal darkness."

This was the day when the great danger of Enlightenment in Western Europe arose and opened the doors of secular culture and learning to all - including the Jewish girl. Now she was forced to leave the shelter of home and was obligated to attend secular schools where she began to study secular culture and was introduced to the literature, science, music and philosophy of the Western World. The Jewish home lost its פנימיות and the vacuum left by it was filled by the "attractive" new חיצוניות.

A breach began to develop between the mothers who clung to their אמונה and the daughters who longed for the "truth" as they imagined it to lie in the secular schools. For them, אידישקייט meant restraint, a string of meaningless religious traditions, ignorance, misery and hunger at home, a father and brother who did not

understand them, a mother who was old-fashioned and behind the times, a Yom Tov that was lonely when their father and brother traveled to the Rebbe, a ghetto life where Jews were downtrodden...

At first the breach was tiny, but it grew rapidly, though unnoticed by too many- until it reached a state where young Jewish wives would sit and read the German novelists, while their husbands learned גמרא...

Sara Schenierer was a dressmaker in Cracow, who, from early childhood, had a thirst for ספרים and a burning love for אידישקייט. She was greatly saddened by this situation. She concluded that the only way to restore the בת ישראל to the Torah was by teaching her Torah, teaching her to know what the beauty of Torah is and the טעמי המצוות. She dreamed of creating a network of schools filled with קדושת התורה; blessed by the גדולי ישראל, which would restore the פנימיות and meaningfulness of אידישקייט that was once supplied by the home.

Although she met with constant opposition and her early attempts encountered many obstacles, she finally succeeded when she turned to Agudas Yisroel where she received the support of the גדולים and was later joined in her project by Dr. Leo Deutschlander זצ"ל, who, with his sophisticated genius helped to construct a seminary run on the most efficient educational lines. He brought teachers from Germany including Dr. Judith Grunfeld nee Rosenbaum ע"ה. Later, his team was joined by ר' יהודה לייב אורליאן הי"ד -an educator whom the אמרי אמת sent to help Sara Schenierer and it was he who became the principal of the seminary after her פטירה.

We must never forget that the ultimate aim of our modern high standard of Torah learning and *hashkafa* is to restore the בת ישראל to the בחינה of כל כבודה בת מלך פנימה. The תכלית of our learning is לא המדרש העיקר אלא המעשה. The best way to remember this is to always keep a picture of Sara Schenierer in our minds - a woman whose burning fire was the *neshama* and the flame that gave חיות to all the efforts of her supporters and who was the example of the אם בישראל.

שמע בני מוסר אביך ואל תטוש תורת אמך. What is תורת אמך? R' Yehuda Leib Orlean writes:

בטח לא תורה של מלול דברים, רעיונות ושיטות. זוהי תורה חיה, תורה תמונה, תורה סמל. זוהי התורה לראות את האם כשהיא מברכת על נרות השבת, התורה לשאת את העינים לשמים, התורה של פחד וחרדה מפני עבירה -- התורה של אמת, עדינות וקדושה. אין אומר ואין דברים בלי נשמע קולם.

This is not the Torah of words, thoughts or philosophies. It is the living Torah, the picture of Torah, the example of Torah. This is the Torah of seeing how the mother blesses the נרות שבת, the Torah of raising one's eyes to שמים - the Torah of Yiras Cheit, the Torah of Truth, Refinement, and Holiness.

אין אומר ואין דברים בלי נשמע קולם - *There is no speech and there are no words; their sound is not heard.*

This is what Sara Schenierer strove for. Let us all try to emulate her as much as we can.

מכתב חזוק ת"ת יסודי התורה וביה יעקב (משנת תרפ"ט)

2 letters from the Imrei Emes urging people to send their children to Agudas Yisroel chadarim and Bais Yaakov schools

ב"ה ג' בהעלותך

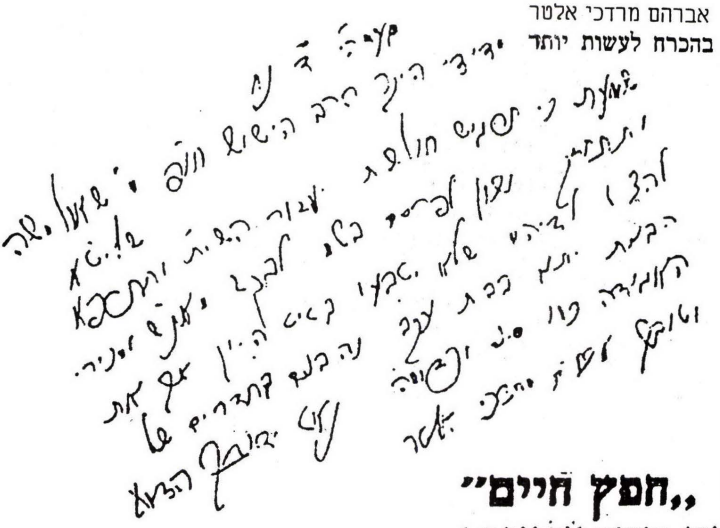
אהובי אנ"ש בק"ק יאנאווי ה' עליכם יחי'

באתי לבקש שתשתדלו לגמור החדר יסודי התורה לסייע לזה הן בכסף והן בגוף אצל אחרים וכן נחוץ התייסדות בית יעקב כי כל אלה הם חזוק הדת אבטח כי מה שביכלתכם תעשו.

אקצר ואו"ש ידידכם

אברהם מרדכי אלטר

הגם שידעתי מצוק העת עכ"ז בהכרח לעשות יותר מהכח.



אַ גייער בריף פון „חפץ חיים" וועגן דער בית-יעקב דערציאונג

ב"ה, יום כ"ג לחודש שבט תרצ"ג.

אל כבוד הגלופים הנכבדים חיבבי ומוקירי תורה החרדים לדבר ד' אשר בעיר פריסטיק יצ"ו.

כאשר שמעתי שהתנדבו אנשים יראים וחרדים לדבר ד' ליסד בעירם בי"ס „בית יעקב" ללמוד בו תורה ויר"ש, מדות ודרך ארץ

זו תורה לילדות אחב"י, אמרתי לפעלם הטוב ישר ד' חילם ומעשה ידיהם יכתן כי ענין גדול ונתון הוא בימינו אלה אשר ורם הכפירה ר"ל שורר בכל תקפו והחפשים מכל המינים אורבים וצודים לנפשות אחב"י, וכל מי שנעשה יראת ד' בלבבו הכוזה ליתן את בתו ללמוד בבי"ס זה, וכל החפשות והפקפוקים מאיסור ללמוד את בתו תורה אין שום בית מיחוש לזה בימינו אלה, ואין כאן המקום לבאר באריכות, כי לא כדורות הראשונים דורותינו אשר בדורות הקודמים הי' לכל בית ישראל מסורת אבות ואמהות לילך בדרך התורה והדת ולקרות בס' בזינה ורגינה בכל ש"ק, משא"כ בעה"ר בדורותינו אלה. ת"כ בכל עת רוחנו ונפשנו עלינו להשתדל להרבות בתי ספר כאלו ולהביל כל מה שיש בידינו ואפשרותינו להציל.

הכותב למען כבוד התורה והדת

ישראל מאיר הכהן

Letter from the Chofetz Chaim in support of the Bais Yaakov Movement

ישראל מאיר הכהן מראדין
בעהמ"ח ס'
חפץ חיים ומשנה ברורה

(קאר סמפמפל)

די גדולי הרבנים פאר'ן בית־יעקב

די בית־יעקב צענטראלע אין וואר־
שא האָט זיך נעוועדעט צו דער אנ־
הה־הרבנים און צו אנדערע גדולי
התיקי הדור מיט דער בקשה צו לא־
זן הערען זייער מיינע און זייער מיי־
נג וועגן דעם חנוך־הבנות פראבלעם
בלל און וועגן די בית־יעקב בעוע־
נג, וועלכע דארף יעצט א גרויסען
צוק צוליב דעם קאמפאסטראפאלען
מאנאפוישען מצב אויף דער יודישער
סם.

אלם תשובה אויף דער דאזיגער
חנוגג האָט די אונדזערע־הרבנים ארוים
מגעבען מאלנעדען אויפרוף:
„דערמים וועגדען סיב זיך צו אייך
מיט א היסטען רוף פון אונזער מיפען
האָרץ, אזא חעהמאנט אויף דעם נדו־
סען הירום אין דער ערציהונג פון די
יודישע מעכטער, וועלכע מאלען ארין
אין דער נעץ פון כפירה און אפיק־
לאציע דורך די פערשידענע נישט־
דישע און פרייַ יודישע שולען, ווי
אזוי ווערט מקויים די קללה רפ"ל
„דיינע זיהן און מעכטער זענען איבער
נעגעבען צו פרעמדע און דיינע אויגען
זעהען עס צרי".

מיר בעטען אייך דערייבער פיירע
ברידער, פערזונדרינס אייך נישט אין
אייערע קינדער, זיי איבערצונעמען
צום טויל פון די פערשידענע שקא־
לעס און פרייַע שולען פון וועלכע מען
קומט טעהער נישט צוריק. האָט רח־
כמות אויף זיך און אויף אייערע מעכ־
פער און ניט זיי איבער נור אין די
ערציהונגס־אינסטיטוציעס וואָס רו־
מען זיך „בית־יעקב" אין וועלכע איי־
ערע קינדער וועלען ערציונען וועלען
אויף דער שוים פון דער אמונה און
מון דער פראָדיציאָנעלער יודישקייט
און וועלען זיין בעזהשי"ת נעפרייע
מעכטער צו זייער תורה און אמונה.

די אינסטיטוציעס „בית־יעקב" האָ
בען זיך שוין ערוואָרבען א נמטן און
אייבינען נאָמען טיט זייער ערהאבע־
נער מעפינקייט לכובת דער רעליגיע־
זער ערציהונג פון די יודישע מעכ־
פער. דערביבער לינט אויף אייך א הי
ליגער חוב זיי אונטערצושטיצען מים
אלערלאָנ אונטערשטיצונג און מים־
הילף און אין דער ערשטער רייהע צו
שיקען אהין אייערע מעכטער.

מיר זענען זיכער, אז אונזער דאזי־
נער רוף וועט אריינדרינגען אין אייער
האַרץ און וועט אייך דערוועקען צו
נעבען א רעליגיעזו • פראָדיציאָנעלער
ערציהונג אייערע מעכטער אין די
„בית־יעקב"־שולען און צוליב דעם
וועט אויבר זוכה זיין צו זהען פון זיי
א נעבענשפשט און א נערעכט דור.

כעתידת החותמים בכרכת התורה ומצפים עמנו והרבת קרן תות"ק —

בשם אגודת הרבנים בפולין".
חברי המועצה: הנשיאים:
(—) חיים עזר גראָדזענסקי,
(—) אהרן לעווין אבדק"ק רישא
ציר לסיים;

הסגנים:
(—) יצחק וועלוו סקאָצק אבדק"ק סאָקאָלוב;
(—) יהודא ליב פיין רב דסלאָנים;
(—) חופל יוסף מישקובסקי, אבדק"ק קרונקי

חברי הועה"ב:
הנשיא (—) סנחם מענדל אלמער, אבדק"ק באָבראָוויץ;
הסגנים: (—) רוב בעזר אבדק"ק אוזאָרקוב;
(—) יצחק מאיר ברט"א קאָנאָל;
(—) מאיר הכהן וואַרשאָווער.
המזכיר: (—) ראובן יהודא נייפעלד אבדק"ק גאָווידוואָר.

הנזבר: (—) שלמה דוד כהנא.
(—) אלי' ליפשיץ אבדק"ק ריצא;
(—) יצחק קאָסטאָמסקי אבדק"ק וואָל קאָוויסק; (—) זלמן סאָראָצקין אבדק"ק לוצק; (—) יוסף יוסלביץ אבדק"ק סובלק; (—) משה מנחם יוסף הלוי סג"ל בוער הרבנים דק"ק לאָדז. (—) אהרן מאלקין אבדק"ק פינסק; (—) צבי חנוך הכהן לעווין אבדק"ק בענדין; (—) צבי יחזקאל מיכעלזאָהן — בוער הרבנים דק"ק מארשא; (—) אברהם אבא הכהן רא־ פופורט אבדק"ק קיעלץ; (—) ירח־ מיאל משה נח ראפופורט אבדק"ק רוואַ־מאַז.; (—) משה פרוך מאַ־ נענשטערן אבדק"ק וולאָדאָוויץ;
(—) יצחק יהודא פרונק אבדק"ק קופנא; (—) יצחק הלוי שוכצער האבדק"ק סאָקאָלקא; (—) מאיר קא־ רעליץ אבדק"ק לעבעזיץ; (—) שלמה יעקב שליפא אבדק"ק וולאָדימירץ;
(—) ליבוש ראָזענבערג בוער הרבנים דק"ק לאָדושי; (—) ישראל איסר שמחה לאנדא החובק"ק איוביצא לוב.
(—) ראובן סנ"ל זעהסאן אבדק"ק אָסטראָצק; (—) חיים מרדכי פרענ־ ראָהם אבדק"ק פשעדבאָרוו; (—) נחום פעצענע אבדק"ק דאָמבראָווין, (—) שמחה הירש מה־יפית החובק"ק ראָונא; (—) יצחק דוד הכהן החובק ועליחוב; (—) שלמה ליב הכהן אבדק"ק וגיערוש; (—) יעקב שליפא החובק"ק מאָנאָסטראָל; (—) יצחק מאי זענמשעוסקי אבדק"ק מראָשיץ, (—) אברהם קאָלמאָנאָוויץ מראָאָוו; (—) יהושע העשיל דוב נאָדעלסלאָק אבדק"ק שעפעס; (—) מרדכי דוב איידעלבערג אבדק"ק פלאָצק; (—) אליעזר שמחה וויינגאָט אבדק"ק יאָרוב.

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Letter from the Gedolei Yisroel in support of the Bais Yaakov Movement 5690/1930

Rabbi Israel Meir Hakohen („Chofez Chaim")

Man darf jüdische Töchter nicht weiterhin so erziehen, daß sie alle anderen Wissenschaften und fremde Lehren studieren, dafegen keinerlei jüdisches Wissen erwerben. In unserer Zeit ist es Pflicht, mit den jüdischen Töchtern Chumesch und Dinim zu lernen und ihnen jüdisches Wissen beizubringen.

Großrabbiner A. M. Alter, Gerer Rabbi

Aus einem Gespräch

In unserer Zeit ist die Arbeit für die Beth Jakob-Schulen heilige Pflicht, weil das Töchtererziehungsproblem gegenwärtig aktueller ist als das der Heranbildung der Jünglinge, für welche weitaus besser gesorgt ist . . .

Großrabbiner Israel Friedmann, Czortkower Rabbi

Aus der Ansprache im Rabbinischen Rat

(Übersetzung aus dem Jiddischen)

Das Beth Jakob-Werk für die religiöse Erziehung der jüdischen Töchter in Osteuropa ist genau so wichtig, wie das Talmud Thora-Werk für Jünglinge, weil wir auch echt jüdische Mütter haben müssen, damit das jüdische Haus ganz bleibt und Frieden in der Familie herrscht . . .

Statements from the Gedolei Yisroel about Bais Yaakov, translated into German for the fundraising journal of 1928 – 1929.

Rabbi Chaim Oiser Grodzenski, Wilna, Präsident der Exekutive des Rabbinischen Rates der Agudas Jisroel

(Übersetzt aus dem Hebräischen)

Die Gründung der Beth Jakob-Schulen zur Erziehung jüdischer Töchter in der Tradition der Väter, im Glauben der Mütter, in Liebe zum Judentum und seinen heiligsten Gütern, ist eine Angelegenheit von allergrößter Bedeutung für das Gesamtjudentum. Die bisher geschaffenen Beth Jakob-Schulen bilden eine Zierde der Judenheit! Jüdische Kinder, welche vor Bestehen von Beth Jakob der nicht-jüdischen Schule, nicht-jüdischen Einflüssen ausgesetzt waren, erhalten jetzt ihre Ausbildung durch vorbildliche Erzieherinnen, die auf dem Boden der Gesetzestreue stehen

Es ist überflüssig, die ungeheure Wichtigkeit der Beth Jakob-Schulen in einer Zeit darzutun, in der alle religiösen und ethischen Bindungen zerrissen sind. Wenn heute selbst die Söhne, die doch eine jüdische Erziehung in Chedarim und Jeschiwoth genossen haben, weiterhin im jüdischen Milieu verwurzelt bleiben müssen, um nicht vom Wege der Religion abzukommen, in wieviel höherem Maße gilt dies von den Töchtern, die nicht jenen aus Wissen und Kenntnis erwachsenen Halt haben!

In früherer Zeit, da die Masse noch religiös und jedes jüdische Haus ein Heiligtum war, die Töchter nach dem Willen und unter der Aufsicht der Eltern

aufwuchsen, war die Notwendigkeit solcher Schulen nicht ganz so groß. Heute aber, da die Atmosphäre von Unglauben und Abtrünnigkeit erfüllt ist, bildet Beth Jakob eine Lebensnotwendigkeit, nicht bloß für die Erziehung unserer Töchter, sondern für die Heranbildung der ganzen kommenden Generation, die ja in den Händen der künftigen Mütter liegt.

Den Begründern von Beth Jakob gebührt für die Erfüllung dieser schweren, hohen Mission der größte Dank. Und ich rufe alle Brüder von nah und fern dazu auf, das große Werk, welches großer Mittel bedarf, zu fördern und zu unterstützen. Der Segen des Allmächtigen ruhe auf allen, die beitragen wollen zum Aufbau und zur Erhaltung dieses heiligen Werkes.

Großrabbiner Mordechai Friedmann, Sadagorer Rabbi

Aus einem Schreiben

Durch meine mehrjährige Mitarbeit beim Ausbau des „Keren Hathora"-Hilfswerkes für jüdisch-religiöse Lehre und Erziehung, hatte ich auch Gelegenheit, Schaffung und Werdegang der „Beth Jakob"-Schulorganisation für jüdische Töchtererziehung zu beobachten und mitzufördern.

Ich kann also aus eigener Wahrnehmung die eminente Bedeutung bestätigen und hervorheben, die das „Beth Jakob"-Schulwerk für die Wiedererstarkung und Erhaltung des echten traditionell-jüdischen Hauses und der jüdischen Familie besitzt.

Es ist Pflicht eines Jeden, dieser großen Institution wärmste Sympathie und tatkräftige Mithilfe entgegenzubringen. Segen Allen, die dieses Werk fördern! . . .

Chief Rabbi Dr. J. H. Hertz

Aus einem Schreiben

Office of the Chief Rabbi,
4, St. James Place, Aldgate

The Beth Jacob Organisation is doing an immessurable amount of good for the religions education of Jewish girls throughout Poland. Over one hundred schools are now in operation, together with an excellent training school for teachers . . .

J. H. Hertz

Haham Dr. Gaster, Mizpah

Aus einem Schreiben

Mizpah, 193, Maida Vale, W

One of the gravest problems which the Jews of the world are bound to face is the future of the womanhood in the East of Europe. War and pogroms have created a situation of unparalleled gravity. The economic alleviation of distress is of only temporary value. The only possible solution is a sound and good Jewish education. Happily the Jews of Poland and other parts have realized the importance of such education, and thanks to the Beth Jacob Movement no less than one hundred schools have now been established, and what is of higher value still a training college has now been created for teachers in those schools. The highest interests of Jewish womanhood, both from a moral and religious point of view are thereby served . . .

Rabbi Dr. Leo Jung, New York

The Beth Jacob Movement is the most hopeful indication of a religious re-awakening in Eastern Europe. It is the one constructive effort to re-assert the authority of the Thora; the one substantial endeavor to safeguard the moral and physical welfare of our womanhood.

Lat summer, in Krakow, I saw the type of Jewish girl graduating from these schools. It is a type utterly unheard of before, filled with a misionary zeal to spread Judaism among Jews, to uplift the level of individual and communal life. These young women will write their names in golden letters into the records of contemporary Israel. The House of Jacob (in the words of our sages) is the Jewish womanhood. With our women loyal to the Thora, the better half of our problem is solved. I can imagine no claim more resistless, more inspiring, more promising than that of Beth Jacob, the House of Jacob to the sons and daughters of Israel.

Dr. Nathan Birnbaum, Berlin

Nichts charakterisiert die völlige Ahnungslosigkeit, mit welcher die dem überlieferten Judentum Ergebenen den von allen Seiten drohenden Gefahren bis vor kurzem gegenüberstanden, mehr, als die Tatsache, daß sie im Osten Generationen von Frauen zu Hasserinnen und Verächterinnen des Judentums werden ließen. Hätte man diese Erscheinung irgend einem Fremden erklären wollen, es wäre nicht möglich gewesen. Wie hätte ein Außenstehender es fassen sollen, daß Menschen, die sich durch beispielhafte Treue gegenüber ihrer Religion auszeichnen, es zugleich in Ordnung finden, wenn die Frauen, dem frommen Wesen ihrer Männer zuinnerst abgeneigt, fremd wie aus einer anderen Welt, neben ihnen hergehen, die Atmosphäre der jüdischen Familie fälschen, den jüdischen Geist in ihr zersetzen?

Um so erfreulicher ist es, daß diese einzig dastehende Passivität nun doch einem aktiveren Verhalten Platz zu machen beginnt. Und am erfreulichsten, weil hoffnungsreichsten, daß dieser Umschwung auf eine Initiative aus der ostjüdischen Frauenwelt zurückzuführen ist. Zuerst war es Frau Schenierer in Krakau, die einen Kreis jüdischer Mädchen schulmäßig um sich zu sammeln, für das Judentum zu erhalten und zu begeistern verstand. Dann nahm sich der Keren Hathora der Sache an. Und heute hat das Beth Jakob-Schulwerk einen achtunggebietenden Umfang angenommen, ist nach verschiedenen Richtungen ausgebaut und hat ansehnliche Erziehungserfolge erzielt. Natürlich ist noch viel bis zum vollen Erfolge zu tun. Es gibt noch viele Hemmungen und Schwierigkeiten zu überwinden. Aber sie werden zu überwinden sein, wenn das Verständnis für die epochale Bedeutung des Beth Jakob-Schulwerkes allgemein geworden sein wird. Daß dies sobald als möglich geschehe, wünsche ich von ganzem Herzen.

Jacob Rosenheim, Frankfurt a. M.

Aus einem Schreiben

Sie wünschen von mir eine Äußerung über Beth Jakob, die diesem, Ihrem großen Werke, Sympathien werben soll. Da ich überzeugt bin, daß es Ihnen an solchen Sympathieerklärungen angesichts der Werbekraft, die dem Werke selbst

Statements from the Gedolim and Rabbanim in German and English which appeared in the fundraising journal of 1928 – 1929.


From The
Writings Of Frau
Sara Schenirer ע"ה

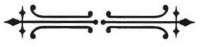
In honor of the 70th *yartzeit* of the Mother of Bais Yaakov.
Translated with permission from "Dos Yiddishe Vort" 5730 by Y. L. Perkal

נדמ"י

~ בלעטער פון מיין לעבן ~

From the Pages of My Life

פון: שרה שנירער ע"ה



Editor's Note:
This Adar marks thirty-five years since the passing of the mother of the Bais Yaakov movement, Sara Schenierer, a"h. We are therefore presenting a few chapters of her memoirs that record the first steps of the now-famous movement. The memoirs were published not long before her passing in her Gesammelte Schriften, printed in 5694/1934.

פון דער רעדאקציע:
היינט חודש אדר, פאלט אויס די 35טע יאר זינט די פטירה פון די מאמע פון דער בית יעקב באוועגונג, שרה שנירער, ע"ה. אין שייכות דערמיט פארעפענטליכען מיר דא א פאר קאפיטלן פון אירע זכרונות פון די ערשטע שריט פון דער בית יעקב באוועגונג. די דאזיגע זכרונות זיינען פארעפענטליך געווארן נישט לאנג פאר איר פטירה אין "די געזאמלטע געשריפטן" וואס זיינען דערשינען געווארן אין יאר תרצ"ד.

My Childhood:

I was born in Krakow in Tamuz 5643/1883. My father, *zichrono livracha*, was Reb Betzalel Hakohen from Tarnow, and he traced his lineage to the Shach.

My father's mother, Shaina Faiga, *a"h*, was a very righteous woman. Many tales are still told about her today - about her piety, goodness and modesty. She used to pay large sums of money for the privilege of being able to serve the court of the holy Sanzer Tzaddik, *zy"a*. In general, she was a big *baalas middos*.

My mother, may she live and be well, is from Krakow. She is a granddaughter of Rav Avraham Lok, *z"l*. His wife, my grandmother Chaya, nee Carmel, could list her *yichus* generation after generation back to the Bach.

Many good deeds have been told about my parents. They owned a large fabric store and distributed a lot of their merchandise among the needy. Every *Rosh Chodesh* my grandmother, *a"h*, too would distribute clothing to the poor. My father invested all his energy into the *chinuch* of his children, determined to raise them as proud Jews. He was an ardent Belzer chassid and a *ben bayis* of the previous Belzer Rebbe, *zy"a*.

I went to public school for eight years and learned together with non-Jewish children. Already in my sixth year I was nicknamed "*chassidka*" (*chassidiste*), pious one. I

קינדער יאָרן:

איך בין געבוירן געווארן אין קראָקע, אין חודש תמוז תרמ"ג. מיין טאַטע, זכרונו לברכה, האָט געהייסן ר' בצלאל הכהן פון טאַרנע, וועלכער האָט געשטאַמט פון ש"ך'ס משפחה.

מיין טאַטעס מאַמע, שיינע פייגא ע"ה, איז געווען גאָר אַ גרויסע צדיקת. פון איר פרומקייט, גוטסקייט און צניעות דערציילט מען זיך נאָך היינט אַ סך אָן. זי פלעגט זיך לאָזן קאָסטן אַ סך געלט צו קענען משמש זיין דעם הייליגן סאַנדזער צדיק זי"ע, און זי איז בכלל געווען אַ גרויסע בעלת מדות טובות.

מיין מאַמע, זאָל לעבן, שטאַמט פון קראָקע. זי איז אַן אייניקעל פון ר' אברהם לאַק ז"ל. זיין ווייב, מיין באָבע חי', פון דער היים קאַרמעל, איז זיך מתיחס דור נאך דור צום ב"ח.

פון מיינע עלטערן דערציילט מען זיך אָן זייער פיל גוטס. זיי האָבן געהאַט אַ גרויסע שניט-קראָם און זייער פיל סחורות צעטיילט צווישן אָרימע לייט. די באָבע ע"ה האָט יעדן ראש חודש זיך גלאַזאָ אויפנייען פרישע וועש און די אַלטע צעטיילט צווישן אָרימע.

מיין טאַטע ע"ה האָט אַריינגעלייגט זיין גאַנצן כח אין דעם חינוך פון זיינע קינדער, זיי צו דערציען אידיש און פרום. ער איז געווען אַ הייסער בעלזער חסיד און טאַקע אַ בן בית ביים אַלטן בעלזער רבי'ן זי"ע.

אַכט יאָר בין איך געגאַנגען אין א פאָוושעכנער שול, וואו ס'האָבן אויך געלערנט קריסליכע קינדער. שוין צו 6 יאָר פלעגט מען מיך רופן אין שול מיטן צונאָמן "חוסעטקאַ" (חסידית'טע). איך

also remember that in school I especially excelled in the study of religion.

My Love for Jewish Sefarim:

Time passed, and my older sister got married. I now had to take over kitchen duties. I wasn't very happy about this since I really longed to continue learning. But although I was busy with housework, I did not give up my studying and reading.

I spent my Shabbosos pleasantly on my own with the *Tze'na U'rena*. Every Shabbos I read through the whole *parasha*, the *haftora* and the sefer *Nachalas Tzvi* on the *parsha* of the week; otherwise it wouldn't have been Shabbos for me.

And while I was sitting and reading, my sisters' friends would come over and spend the day singing and dancing together. They used to look at me and say that the whole house could have been robbed and I wouldn't have been aware of it as long as I was buried in my books. I, however, found my greatest pleasure in Jewish *sefarim*.

Already then it hurt me when I saw my Jewish sisters barely interested in *Yiddishkeit* or in a Jewish word. Sometimes I would rebuke a Jewish girl, but she would only laugh at me and tell me that I was a "*chassidiste*." This didn't faze me at all, and I continued on in my own ways.

In the meantime I was growing older, and when my parents' store didn't prove sufficiently profitable, I was expected to contribute to the family income by finding a job such as a shop assistant and the like. I had to help out, of course, but I grew quite anxious when I thought of working for just anyone. I was afraid that I would not be able to fulfill my obligations as an Orthodox Jewish girl. I therefore tried to find a way to work but to stay at home at the same time, and I taught myself to knit.

One time I sewed a dress for my sister's friend, and then a second and a third friend asked me to sew for them as well. That's how I became a seamstress even though I had not learned this skill professionally. My customers were happy with my work; many of them used to say that I put my soul into my work.

For me the work became a constant learning experience. As I watched how my customers were so careful with

גענדענק אויך, אַז כ'האָב זיך אין שול ספּעציעל שטאַרק אויסגעצייכנט ביים לימוד פון רעליגיע.

ליבשאפט צו אידישע ספרים:

אין דער צייט האט מיין עלטסטע שוועסטער חתונה געהאַט און איך האָב זיך געמוזט שטעלן צו דער אַרבעט ביי דער קיך, וואָס דערפון בין איך נישט אַזוי שטאַרק צופרידן געווען, ווייל ס'האָט זיך מיר שטאַרק געגלוסט וויטער צו לערנען. כאָטש איך בין געווען פאַרנומען מיט שטוב-אַרבעט, האָב איך דאָך נישט וויטער אויפגעגעבן מיין לערנען און לייענען.

גאָר באַזונדער האָב איך אַנגענעם פאַרבראַכט דעם שבת'דיגען טאָג ביים "צאינה וראינה". איך האָב יעדער שבת דורגעלייענט די גאַנצע סדרה, די הפטורה און "נחלת צבי". אָן דעם וואָלט ביי מיר קיין שבת נישט געווען.

ביי אונז אין שטוב פלעגן שבת זיך צוזאַמענקומען חבר'טעס פון מיין שוועסטער און פאַרברענגען מיט געזאַנג און טענץ, און איך בין מיר געזעסן אין אַ זייט און געלייענט די סדרה. מען פלעגט זאָגן, אַז מען האָט דאָן די גאַנצע שטוב געקענט אַרויס'גנב'נען און איך זאָל דערפון נישט וויסן. איך האָב אָבער פאָרט געפונען מיין בעסט פאַרגעניגן נאָר אין די אידישע ספרים.

ס'האָט מיר שוין דעמאָלט ווי געטוהן, ווען כ'האָב געזען מיינע אידישע שוועסטער פירן זיך גאָר קנאַפּ אידיש און ווי זיי האָבן גאָרנישט קיין אינטערעס פאַר אַ אידיש וואָרט. פלעג איך אַמאָל אויס מוסר'ן אַ אידיש מיידעל, האָט זי זיך אויסגעלאַכט און מיר פאָרגעוואָרפן, אַז איך בין אַ "חסידית'טע". נאָר איך בין דערפון נישט נתפּעל געווארן און וויטער זיך נוהג געווען אויף מיין שטייגער.

אינצווישן בין איך אַ ביסעל עלטער געוואָרן, און ווען די געשעפטן ביי מיינע עלטערן זענען נישט געגאַנגען אזוי פויגעלדיג, האָט מען אין דער היים פון מיר פאַרלאַנגט, איך זאָל זוכן אַ פּאָסטן אַלס צוהעלפערין אין אַ געשעפט וכדומה. איך האָב זיך נישט געקענט אָפּזאָגן פון זוכן חיונה, נאָר ווערן צוגעבונדן צו וועמען ס'זאָל נישט זיין האָב איך זיך דערשראָקן. איך האָב מורא געהאַט, אַז איך וועל נישט קענען דערפילן מיינע התחייבות'ן אַלס אידיש-רעליגיעז מיידעל און האָב מיר געזוכט פאַרדינסטן צו קענען בלייבן אין דער היים, און האָב זיך אויסגעלערנט זיין אַ שטיקערין.

איינמאָל האָב איך אויפגענייט אַ קליידעל פאַר מיין שוועסטער'ס אַ חבר'טאָרין, און דערנאָך האָט מיך געבעטן אַ צווייטע און אַ דריטע פאַר זיי צו נייען, און בין אַזוי אַרום געוואָרן אַ שניידערין, הגם איך האָב זיך דאָס פאַך נישט געלערנט. די קונים פלעגן זיין צופרידן פון מיין אַרבעט. אַ סך פלעגן זאָגן, אַז איך גיב אַריין מיין נשמה אין דער אַרבעט.

פאַר מיר איז עס ווידער געווען גאָר אַ גרויסער לימוד. ווען כ'פלעג זעען ביים מעסטן און פאַסן קליידער, ווי אַזוי מענטשן

every detail during measuring and fitting sessions, I thought to myself: "And how do the garments of their soul look?"

Fathers and Daughters:

I used to sit over my work every night until very late. Afterward I would once again spend time with myself...I remember that my father, *z"l*, once bought the volume *Chok Leyisrael* with Yiddish translation, and I took upon myself to review the daily portion of Chumash, Navi, Mishna and Gemara, from which I derived great pleasure. In addition, I was very interested in all kinds of knowledge, and from time to time I would attend a lecture at a Gentile women's society.

The truth is that after every such visit I always regretted going, but at that time there was no other place to learn about topics of general interest. Now I know that there did exist in Krakow various Jewish young women's organizations, but it would be enough to relate one incident to show why I had no place there.

One Friday my cousin, an ardent member of the "Ruth" youth group, invited me to join her at a gathering that night. To please her, I went. How shocked I was when I saw one girl switch on a light. I had known that the group was not so *frum*, but I could never have suspected that they actually desecrated Shabbos publicly. I remember feeling in a quandary. Should I stay or go? After thinking it over I felt that I was probably meant to be there, and I stayed. The speeches were full of heresy, *rachmana litzlan* - and girls from Chassidic homes were listening to them. While they were attending their group, their fathers were probably poring over their Gemaros, and their mothers were probably reading their *Teitch-Chumash* (Chumash with Yiddish translation). It was at that moment that the thought entered my mind - if only our girls had their own environment, it could have been different...

On Tisha B'Av 5674/1914 the great conflagration of World War I broke out, and not long after that we were forced to leave Krakow. It was my emigration that led directly to the phenomenon that is now known as "Bais Yaakov..."

זענען מדקדק אויף יעדער קלייניגקייט אין זייערע מלבושים, האָב איך ביי זיך געטראַכט: "ווי אַזוי זענען עפּעס אויס זייערע נשמה-קליידער?..."

פֿרומע טאַטעס אָן זייערע טעכטער:

איך פלעג זיצן יעדע נאַכט ביי דער אַרבעט ביז אין די שפּעטע שעה'ן. נאָך דער אַרבעט בין איך ווייטער געווען פאַרנומען מיט זיך... איך געדענק, אַז מיין טאַטע ז"ל האָט אַמאָל געקויפט "חק-לישראל'ס" מיט עברי-טייטש. האָב איך אויף מיר געזומען אַדורכצוקוקן יעדן טאָג דעם שיעור חומש, נביאים, משנה און גמרא און האָב געהאַט דערפון גרויס תענוג. חוץ דעם האָב איך נאָך געהאַט אַ שטאַרקן אינטערעס צו אַלגעמיינע וויסענשאַפטליכע ענינים און פלעג פון צייט צו צייט צו באַזוכן פאַרלעזונגען אין אַ קריסטליכן פרויען-פאַראיין.

וואס אַן אמת האָב איך נאָך יעדן באַזוך אין יענעם אָרט געהאַט גרויס חרטה דערויף, נאָר עס איז דעמאָלט נישט געווען קיין אַנדער אָרט וואו צו הערן אַ וויסענשאַפטליכן רעפעראַט. כ'וויס אַפילו אַז מען קען מיך דאָ כאַפן ביי אַ ליגן, וויל שוין דעמאָלט האָבן עקזיסטירט אין קראָקע פאַרשידענע יוגענט פרויען-ארגאַניזאַציעס, נאָר ס'וועט גענוג זיין איין מעשה צו דערציילן, כדי איר זאָלט זיך איבער-צייגן, אַז ס'איז דאָרטן פאַר מיר קיין אָרט נישט געווען.

אין אַ געוויסן פרייטאָג קומט צו מיר מיין קוזינע, אַ שטאַרקע אַנהענגערין פון דער חברה "רות", און פאַרבעט מיך דאָרט אַהין אויף ביינאַכט צו אַ פאַרזאַמלונג. איך האָב איר צוליב געטאָן און מיט איר מיטגעגאַנגען. אָבער ווי דערשטוינט בין איך געוואָרן, זענענדיג מיט מיינע אייגענע אויגן, ווי אַן אָנפירערין פון דער חברה צינדט אָן אַ לאָמפּ. איך האָב נאָך פריער גענואוסט, אַז אָט דער פאַראיין איז נישט אַזוי פרום, נאָר אַז דאָרטן איז מען מחלל שבת בפרהסיא, האָב איך נישט געקענט אפילו חושד זיין. איך געדענק, אַז איך בין געווען אין אַ פאַרלעגענהייט און נישט געוואוסט וואָס צו טאָן. בלייבן צו אַרויס גיין. איך האָב זיך אָבער געטראַכט, אַז מסתמא דאָרף איך דאָ זיין. די "דרשה" געדענק איך, איז געווען פול מיט אפיקורסות און כפירה ר"ל און דאָס האָבן אויסגעהערט מיידלעך פון חסידישע עלטערן. זייער טאַטע איז זיכער געווען פאַרטאָן אין דער גמרא און די מאַמע ביים טייטש-חומש, און אויפן אָרט, געדענק איך, איז ביי מיר נולד געווארן דער געדאַנק, אַז ווען אונזערע מיידלעך וואָלטן געהאַט אַן אייגענע סביבה, וואָלט עס געקענט זיין גאָר אַנדערש...

אין תשעה-באב תרע"ד איז אויסגעבראָכן די גרויסע וועלט-שריפה, און נישט לאַנג האָט געדויערט ביז מ'האָט געמוזט עוקר זיין און פאַרלאָזן קראָקע, און גראָד מיין עמיגרירן האָט געפירט צו דעם וואָס רופט זיך "בית יעקב"...

A Speech in a Vienna Shul:

In 5675/1915, we found ourselves in the big city of Vienna along with many other emigrants from Krakow. For nearly two weeks we simply wandered the streets as it was impossible to find an apartment in the Jewish Quarter. Bustling Vienna was cooking like a tea kettle as it filled with Jewish refugees from all over Galicia who had fled their homes because of the chaos of the war.

Eventually I was lucky enough to find lodgings in the sixth district on Amperdampferstrasse. Once there, however, I had a new worry. I was not in the Jewish quarter, it was an hour's walk to the Schiff Shul, and I didn't know of any other place where I could daven. Seeing my distress, my landlady told me the good news that there was an Orthodox shul in the Stumpergasse. It was in this shul where today's popular Bais Yaakov movement was born!

On Friday before nightfall I went to shul, taking a siddur and Chumash with me so that I would have what to daven from on Shabbos. But then the *shammas* explained to me that this was unnecessary since the women, who didn't carry on Shabbos, could get siddurim in shul.

I was filled with joy. This meant that I now found myself among Jews...yes, even in Vienna there were Jews who did not carry on Shabbos!

Shabbos morning I went to shul. Before the Torah reading I suddenly saw the Rav ascend the *bima*. For me, this was something new.

"What's happening?" I asked my neighbor.

"Today is Shabbos Chanuka," she answered, "and the Rabbi is giving a *drasha* about *inyanei deyoma*."

Rooted to the spot I listened to the Rav's fervent and wonderful words.

In his *drasha* the Rav portrayed the greatness of the extraordinary historic figure of Yehudis, and then called out wholeheartedly to today's Jewish women and girls to imitate the heroic example of Jewish women through the ages.

What a pity that I have forgotten his exact points and beautiful presentation. But one thing I will never forget. As I was listening to his breathtaking portrayal of Yehudis, I

א דרשה אין א וויינער שוהל:

תרע"ה. צוזאַמען מיט פיל אַנדערע האָבן מיר עמיגרירט פון קראָקע אין דער גרויסן וועלט. שוין צען וואָכן זינט מיר געפינען זיך דאָ. אַ סך צרות זענען מיר אויסגעשטאַנען. קנאַפּע צוויי וואָכן האָבן מיר זיך פשוט געוואָלגערט איבער די גאַסן און ס'איז אוממעגליך געווען פאַר אונז צו באַקומען אַ דירה אין דעם אידישן קוואַרטאַל. דאָס ברויזענדע וויען האט געקאָכט ווי אַ קעסעל און איז געווען פאַרפולט מיט אידישע פליטים פון גאַנץ גאַליציע, וועלכע זענען צוליב דער מלחמה-בהלה אַנטלאָפן פון זייערע ישובים.

ענדליך איז מיר געלונגען צו באַקומען אַ וואוינונג אין זעקסטן באַצירק, אַמפּערדאַמפּפער-שטראַסע, דאָ האָט זיך אָבער פאַר מיר אָנגעהויבן אַ נייע זאָרג: ס'איז נישט קיין אידישער קוואַרטאַל, אַ שעה גאַנג איז צו דער שיף-שוהל, און קיין אַנדערע אידישע שוהל וואו צו דאַוונען איז מיר נישט באוואוסט. וואו וועט מען דאַוונען? מיין הויז-ווירטין, זעענדיג מיין עגמת-נפש, האָט מיר גוטמוטיג אַ גוטע בשורה, אַז אין דער שטומפּער-גאַסע איז פאַראַן אַן אָרטאָדאָקסישע בית הכנסת. אָט דער דאָזיגער בית-הכנסת איז געווען דאָס ויגעל פון דער היינט אַזוי פאָפּולערער בית-יעקב-באַוועגונג!...

פרייטאָג פאַרנאַכט האָב איך אַהין געטראָגן אַ סידור מיט אַ חומש, כדי שבת צו האָבן אין וואָס צו דאַוונען. דער שמש האָט מיר אָבער דערקלערט, אַז מיין גיין איז געווען איבעריג, וואָרום די פרויען, וועלכע טראָגן נישט אין שבת, באַקומען דאָ סידורים.

איך ווער באַהערשט פון אַ שמחה. הייסט עס, אַז איך געפין זיך צווישן אידן... יאָ, אויך אין ווין געפינען זיך אידן וואָס טראָגן נישט אום שבת!

שבת אין דער פרי בין איך מסתמא געגאַנגען דאַוונען אין דער שטומפּער שוהל. פאַרן לייענען, דערזע איך, ווי דער ראַבינער באַווייזט זיך אויף דער בימה. פאַר מיר איז דאָס געווען גאָר אַ נייעס.

– וואָס באַדייט עס – פרעג איך וועגן דעם מיין שכנ'טע.

– היינט איז דאָך שבת חנוכה! – ענטפערט מיר יענע – און דער ראַבינער וועט האַלטן אַ דרשה מענינא דיומא!

אַ פאַרטראַכטע און צוגעשמידטע צום אָרט הער איך זיך צו צו די פלאַמענדיגע באַגייסטערטע וועגטער פונם רב.

אין זיין דרשה האָט דער רב געשילדערט די גרויסקייט און דערהויבענקייט פון דער היסטאָרישער יהודית, און דערביי האָט ער אין א האַרציגער שפּראַך געראָפן די היינטיגע אידישע פרויען און טעכטער נאָכצוטאָן דעם ביישפּיל פון די אַמאָליגע היסטאָרישע פרויען-העלדן.

אַ שאָד, וואָס איך האָב פאַרגעסן די געדאַנקען און שיינע אויספירונגען. איינס קען איך בלויז נישט פאַרגעסן: בשעת איך האָב זיך איינגעהערט צו דער גייסטרייכער שילדערונג וועגן דער

thought to myself: How can we bring all of Krakow's Jewish women and girls here so that they can hear who we are and whom we come from?

I immediately felt that the main problem was that our sisters know so little about our history. This has estranged them from our nation and its traditions. If only they knew about the past of our glorious martyrs, if only they had some concept of the heroism of our great men and women - everything would be different.

Bais Yaakov is Born:

It was at that moment that various plans began unfolding in my mind.

After that first lecture, I became a frequent visitor to that shul on Stumpfergasse. I let nothing stand in my way, not bad weather and not even the riots that were constantly breaking out since it was war time. I regularly attended Rabbi Flesch's Chumash, Tehillim and Pirkei Avos *shiurim* as well as his deep, analytic talks about the various current problems. And the whole time, the same question burned relentlessly and increasingly in my mind - how could we bring the Jewish girls from Poland to Vienna so they could hear it all too?

Time doesn't stand still. As my thoughts coincided with the passing days, my heart beat feverishly. How would Krakow accept my idea of founding a religious school for Jewish girls?

On one hand I already knew how such a proposal would be received. "What?!" I would be asked. "In the twentieth century you want to move Jewish girls backward to *frumkeit* and *Yiddishkeit*?"

But at the same time an inner voice whispered to me: "You must carry out this idea of establishing a girls' school in order to save this generation of Jewish women for the sake of *Yiddishkeit*."

I therefore resolved that when I returned home I would arrange a gathering of Jewish women and explain my plan to them. Here I recalled the saying of our *Chachamim*, "Every gathering that is for the sake of Heaven will be fulfilled."

On the return journey from Vienna to Krakow I was still busy preparing the arrangements for my future project.

"יהודית"-פערזענליכקייט, האָב איך מיר געטראַכט: אַך, וואו נעמט מען דאָ אַהער אַלע קראָקעווער אידישע פרויען און מיידלעך, אַז זיי זאָלן הערן ווער מיר זיינען און פון וועמען מיר שטאַמען.

איך האָב תיקף געפילט, אז דער הויפט-חסרון איז, וואָס אונזערע שוועסטער וויסן אַזוי ווייניג וועגן אונזער פאַרגאַנגענהייט און דאָס פאַרפרעמדט זיי פון אונזער פאָלק און זיינע טראַדיציעס. וואָלטן זיי געקענט אונזער מאַרטירער-געשיכטע, געהאַט אַ שטיקעל השגה וועגן די העלדישקייטן פון אונזערע גרויסע מענער און פרויען – וואָלט עס גאָנץ אַנדערש געווען.

דער רעזון פון בית-יעקב וועלט געבוירן:

אין מיין מחשבה זיינען אין יענעם מאָמענט נולד געווארן פאַרשיידענע פלענער...

זינט דעם ערשטן פאַרטראָג פון הרב פלעש בין איך געווארן אַן אָפטער גאַסט אין דער שוהל אויף דער שטומפער-גאַס. איך האָב אויף קיין שום שטערונג נישט געקוקט. עס האָט גאָר נעמעגט זיין דאָס ערגסטע וועטער; עס האָבן געקענט פאַרקומען די שרעקליכסטע מהומות וואָס פלעגן זיך אָפט טרעפן אין דער מלחמה-צייט. איך בין געווארן אַ שטענדיגע צוהערערן פון הרב פלעש'ס שיעורים פון חומש, תהלים, פרק און זיינע טיפזינניגע פאַרטראָגן איבער די פאַרשיידענסטע פראָבלעמן. וואָס מער, אַלץ וויייטער האָט אין מיין מוח געוואַקסן די פראַגע: ווי קומען דאָ אָמאָל אַהער די אידישע מיידלעך פון פוילן, דאָס אַלץ צו הערן, דאָס אַלץ צו וויסן?...

דער זייגער שטייט נישט אויף איין אָרט. מיינע מחשבות באַווגן זיך צוזאַמען מיטן צייט-לויף און מיין האַרץ קלאַפט ווי אין פיבער: ווי אַזוי וועט מען אין קראָקע אויפנעמען מיין געדאַנק צו שאַפן אַ דערציאונגס-היים אין רעליגיעזן גייסט פאַר דער אידישער טאָכטער?

איך ווייס פריער, ווי קראָקע וועט מקבל פנים זיין דעם דאָזיגן געדאַנק. וואָס – וועט מען מיך פרעגן – אין צוואַנציגסטן יאָר הונדערט ווילסטו צוריקפירן די אידישע טעכטער צו פרומקייט און אידישקייט?

אין דער זעלבער צייט רופט אָבער צו מיר אַ געהיימע שטימע: "דו מוזט פארווירקליכן דעם אידעאַל צו שאַפן אַ רעליגיעזע טעכטער-שול, כדי צו ראַטעוון דאָס אידישן פרויען-דור פאַרן גייסט פון ישראל סבא".

איך האָב מיך דעריבער פאָרגעבראַכט צוזאַמענצורופן, אַזוי ווי איך וועל אַהיימקומען, אַ פאַרזאַמלונג פון אידישע פרויען, און פאַר זיי מיין פלאַן פאָרלייגן. דאָ האָט מיך געמונטערט דער מאמר פון אונזערע חכמים: "כל כנסיה שהיא לשם שמים סופה להתקיים".

אויף דער רייזע פון ווין קיין קראָקע בין איך אַלץ געווען פאַרנומען מיטן צוגרייטן דעם פלאַן פאַר דער קומענדיגער אַרבעט.

Krakow's Jewish Daughters:

Late Av 1915/5675. It's already two weeks since I'm back in my old, familiar Krakow, and during this time I have already enjoyed some measure of success.

Already on the first day of my arrival I presented my plans to a familiar crowd of religious women - obviously, the *frummest* in the city. They embraced my idea joyfully. It wasn't easy to find a location for the gathering though; only after much effort did I manage to arrange a place in the Krakow Orphanage.

But then new worries plagued me.

It was true that the older women were excited about my ideas, but what would the younger generation, the future Jewish mothers, say? Wouldn't they make fun of me and my plans?

Still, I did not falter. That Shabbos I gave a lecture to a gathering of about forty girls. My speech was based on *Pirkei Avos*, and the main idea was: Why is *Pirkei Avos* learned specifically in the summer? When I explained the phrase, *"And you shall make a fence for the Torah,"* I explained how the Torah can be compared to a beautiful garden where beautiful flowers and delicious fruit grow. And if the garden is not fenced in, then bad people and wild animals can destroy everything inside. In the same way, I explained, our holy Sages made a fence around the Torah. For example, we know that desecrating the Shabbos deserves a death sentence (as it says *"And her desecrators will die"*), and so our Sages implemented many restrictions so that we will not come to actually violate this holy day. That's how the prohibitions of *muktza* evolved. We may not touch anything that may cause us to do a *melacha*.

I sensed that most of my audience was looking at me in astonishment and wonder. What?! It was for *this* that they had been summoned?! Ironic smiles soon appeared on many faces, and then, without so much as a "goodbye," the girls gradually disappeared.

Yes, my first speech was met coldly, with mockery. That was when I realized what a colossally difficult job I had taken upon myself. But I girded myself anew with the steadfast resolution not to abandon my idea...

קראקעווער אידישע מיידלעך:

סוף חודש אב תרע"ה. שוין צוויי וואָכן ווי כ'בין צוריק אין מיין אַלטער היימשטאָט קראָקע, און במשך דער דאָזיגער צייט איז מיר שוין עפעס געלונגען.

באַלד אין דעם ערשטן טאָג פון מיין אָנקומען קיין קראָקע האָב איך מיינע פלענער רעפערירט פאַר אַ באַקאַנטן קרייז רעליגיעזע פרויען, פאַרשטייט זיך, די פרומסטע פון שטאָט. זיי האָבן מיט גרויס שמחה אויפגענומען מיין געדאַנק. נישט לייכט איז מיר אויך אָנגעקומען אויסצוגעפינען אַ לאָקאַל פאַר דער פאַרזאַמלונג. ערשט נאָך שווערע באַמיאונגען איז מיר געלונגען די ערשטע פאַרזאַמלונג צוזאַמענצוברענגען אין לאָקאַל פון קראָקעווער יתומים-פאַראיין.

נייע זאָרגן זיינען אָבער ווידער אָנטשטאַנען.

אמת, די עלטערע פרויען זיינען באַגייסטערט פון מיינע פלענער, אָבער די יוגענט, די צוקונפטיגע מאַמעס פון ישראל וואָס וועלן זיי דערצו זאָגן? צו וועלן זיי נישט אויסלאַכן מיך מיט מיינע פלענער צוזאַמען?

פונדעסטוועגן בין איך גאָרנישט געפאַלן ביי זיך, און באַלד אויף שבת אַרויסגעטראָטן מיט אַ פאַרטראָג פאַר אַ פאַרזאַמלונג ביז פערציג מיידלעך. דער פאַרטראָג איז געווען געווידמעט פרקי אבות און דער הויפט-געדאַנק איז געווען – פאַרוואָס דאָס פרק לערנען איז באַשטימט געוואָרן אויף די זומערדיגע שבתים. וועג איך האָב דערקלערט דעם מאמר "ועשו סיג לתורה", האָב איך אָנגעוויזן דערויף, אַז די תורה קען מען פאַרגלייכן צו אַ שיינעם גאָרטן, אין וועלכן ס'וואָקסן די הערליכסטע בלומען און געשמאַקסטע פירות. אַז דער גאָרטן זאָל נישט האָבן קיין צוים אַרום, קענען דאָך שלעכטע מענטשען און ווילדע חיות פאַרניכטן אַלץ וואָס דערין איז פאַראַן. אַזוי האָבן אויך אונזערע חייליגע חכמים געמאַכט אַ צוים אַרום דער תורה. מיר וויסן, למשל, אַז פאַר חילול שבת קומט טויט-שטראָף (מחלליה מות יומת), זיינען געקומען די חכמים און האָבן געמאַכט סייגים און גדרים, כדי נישט צוצוקומען צום חילול שבת. אַזוי זיינען פאַראַן די איסורים פון מוקצה, און די אַלע זאַכן מיט וועלכע ס'ווערט געטאָן אַ מלאכה, טאָרן אום שבת נישט געטומען ווערן אין דער האַנט אַריין.

איך האָב דערציילט, ווי אַ גרויסער טייל פון די אָנווועזענדע האָבן מיך אָנגעקוקט מיט דערשטוינונג און פאַרוואונדערונג. וואָ-אָ-אָ-ס-? צו דעם האָט מען אונז אַהער געפופן? ביי אַ סך האָט זיך באַווייזן אַן איראָנישער שמייכעל אויף די ליפן און אַן "א גוטן תמיד" זיינען זיי נעלם געוואָרן.

אַזוי קאַלט, כמעט מיט גרינגשעצונג, איז אויפגענומען געוואָרן מיין ערשטער פאַרטראָג. איך האָב זיך ערשט איבערצייגט ווי קאַלאָסאַל שווער ס'וועט מיר אָנקומען מיין אַרבעט וויטער צו פירן. איך האָב זיך אָבער פריש אָנגעגורט, פאַרשטאַרקט ביי מיר דעם פעסטן באַשלוס, פון מיין אידעאַל נישט צו רעזיגנירן...

A Yom Kippur Day:

א יום כיפור־דיגע טאגן

Again time didn't stand still. Months passed since that first lecture I had given to Krakow's Jewish girls, and there was no further progress. But I did not despair. Rosh Hashana was almost upon us, and then came the holiest day of the year, Yom Kippur.

On that *erev Yom Kippur* I felt more stirred up than ever before. I envisioned scenes of our history, of long ago when the *Bais Hamikdash* was standing and the *kohen gadol* performed the *avoda*, sending the *sa'ir la'azazel* to the desert, and the people watched the thread turn white, a sign that Hashem had forgiven their sins.

The *kohen gadol*, the *avoda*, the glory and splendor of Israel in those times...and what do we have today? There is no *Bais Hamikdash*, the glory is gone, the sanctity has disappeared. Everything has been taken from us!

With what can we replace all that? Where are the hearts of the *Yidden* who, with their *tefila* and *avoda* of the heart, should be able to carry out the *avoda* of long ago in the *Bais Hamikdash*?

Today the Jewish children, especially the Jewish girls, have stopped davening entirely, and if they do come to shul, it's nothing more than a habit. The heart and soul are completely lacking! Our daughters do not know about their past. They know nothing of the greatness of their nation. They don't understand our deep, heartfelt prayers. Can the situation continue like this?

That entire day until Kol Nidrei, these thought did not let me rest. I kept coming back to the same idea: **We must open the eyes of our sisters so they can see the great light of Israel!** Who cares about doubts? Who cares about obstacles? Who cares if many laugh and ridicule my plan? Once the frozen ice thaws just a bit, they will start looking at me differently. And anyway, I said to myself, what role does my personal pride play here? If the intent is sincere and the aim is pure, my goal will certainly be achieved.

When the chazzan concluded the Yom Kippur Maariv with the words, *"Hope to Hashem and strengthen your heart,"* the words kindled a fiery *bitachon* in my soul that became stronger as the choir ended *Adon Olam* on the highest note, crying out: *"Hashem is with me, and I shall not fear!"*

ווידער זיינען אַוועק עטלעכע חדשים נאָך מיין ערשטן פאַרטראָג פאַר די קראָקעווער מיידלעך, און עס האָט זיך וויטער גאָרנישט גערירט. איך בין אָבער נישט געווען פאַרצווייפעלט. אָט זיינען אונטער־געקומען די ימים נוראים און באַלד טאָקע דער הייליגסטער טאָג פון יאָר, יום־כיפור.

עפּעס האָב איך מיך אין יענעם ערב יום־כיפור געפילט מער באַרוישט און צעטראָגן ווי אַן אַנדער מאָל. עס האָבן פאַר מיינע אויגן געשוועבט אַמאָליגע געשיכטליכע בילדער, ווען דאס בית המקדש איז געשטאַנען, דער כהן גדול האָט געטאָן די עבודה, אַוועקגעשיקט דעם שעיר לעזאזל אין דער מדבר אַריין, און דעם סימן וואָס אידן האָבן דעמאָלט געהאַט, אַז ג־ט האָט מוחל געווען די זינד, בעת דער פאָדים איז ווייס געווארן...

דער כהן גדול, די עבודה, די גאָנצע גלאַנץ און פּראַכט פון ישראל אין יענע צייטן – און היינט? נישטאָ דער בית המקדש, פאַרשוואונדן איז די הערליכקייט, די קדושה אָפּגענאָמען, אַלץ איז פון אונז געווארן אַוועקגענומען!

און מיט וואָס זאָל מען עס היינט דערזעצן? וואו זיינען די הערצער פון די בני ישראל, וועלכע זאָלן מיט זייער תפלה ועבודה שבלב קענען מקיים זיין די אַמאָליגע עבודה פון בית המקדש?

היינט הערן גאָר אויף די אידש קינדער, בפרט די אידישע טעכטער, אינגאַנצן צו דאַוונען, און קומען זיי שוין יאָ אַמאָל אין שוהל אַריין, איז עס נישט מער ווי אַ רגילות, דאָס האַרץ און נשמה פעלן דערביי!.. אונזערע טעכטער קענען נישט זייער געשיכטע, וויסן גאָרנישט וועגן גרויסקייט פון זייער פאָלק, פאַרשטיין נישט די אידישע טיפע און האַרציגע תפלות. קען דען וויטער אַזוי בלייבן?

דעם גאַנצן טאָג אַזוי ביז כל־נדרי אין שוהל האָבן מיך די מחשבות נישט געלאָזט רוען און איך בין אַלץ צוריקגעקומען אויפן זעלבן רעיון: *מיר מוזן אונזערע שוועסטער די אויגן זייערע עפענען, צו זענען דאָס גרויסע ליכט פון ישראל!* וואָס מער ספיקות, ווער מער שטערונגען! וואס אַרט דאָס מיך, אַז אַ סך שמייכלען און מאַכן חוזק פון מיין גאַנצן פלאַן! אַז דאָס פאַרפרוירענע אייז וועט זיך נאָר אַ ריר טאָן, וועלן זיי גאַנץ אַנדערש אָנהויבן קוקן אויף מיר! און צוריקגעשמועסט, וואָסערע ראָל שפּילט דאָ מיין פערזענליכער כבוד? אַז די כוונה איז אמת'דיג און דער ציל איז ערליך, וועט עס דאָך מוזן דערגרייכט ווערן!

ווען דער חזן האָט אויסגעלאָזט דעם יום־כיפור'דיגן מעריב מיטן "קוה אל ד', חזק ויאמץ לבך" האָבן די ווערטער אין מיין נשמה אָנגעגליט אַ פייערדיגן בטחון, און פארשטאַרקט איז עס געוואָרן, ווען די משוררים האָבן אויף דער העכסטער שטימע פאַרענדיגט "אדון עולם" מיטן אויסגעשריי "ד' לי ולא אירא!".

Days and weeks passed, and my plan was slowly materializing. My newly-founded society for girls began to develop. I also established a library and imported books from Frankfurt, books written by Hirsh, Lehman and the like.

But one thought disturbed me constantly: Would my work have results? Could something actually be accomplished with older girls who were already settled in the life goals they had chosen for themselves?

Even so I continued my work wholeheartedly, not allowing my qualms to hold me back. The members of the society showed an interest in what I was doing. I was receiving a positive response in Krakow.

Beginning with Young Children:

I put away my sewing machine, threw away my needles and invested all my time in the society. But even though I saw satisfactory success, I wasn't entirely happy.

Yes, the activities were nice. It was true that the girls were enthralled by my speeches. They were indeed moved by a grand idea, by a poetic phrase in *Tanach*. But - they still could not yield to *Halacha*, they could not undertake actual mitzvos. And that wasn't any wonder: most of them were already grown, and it wasn't easy to teach them to start a new, truly Jewish life with all its practices and traditions.

My thoughts therefore started moving in another direction. We would have to start with the children. A young tree is easily bent. Only with young children would my idea succeed completely.

We had to establish a religious girls' school, a truly Jewish one where the educational spirit would be in accordance with authentic Judaism. And to do this, nothing could be too expensive or too difficult. *Baruch Hashem*, I thought, there still exists a religious Jewry, and they have to be reminded of something that is important but that seems to have been forgotten - their duty to the younger generation.

אינצווישן זיינען דערווייל אַוועק טעג און וואָכן און מיין אידעאַל האָט זיך איינצוגוויי אָנגעהויבן פאַרווירקליכן. מיין נייגעגרינדעטער פאַראיין פאַר מיידלעך הויבט זיך אָן וואָס מער צו אַנטוויקלען. איך האָב אויך געשאַפן אַ ביבליאָטעק און אַראָפגעבראַכט ליינען-ביכער פון פראַנקפורט: הירש'ס, לעהמאַנ'ס וכדומה.

אַן איינציגער געדאַנק האָט אָבער מיין מוח תמיד שטאַרק באַשעפטיגט: צו וועט מיין אַרבעט נושא פירות זיין? איז דען צו גלויבן, אַז ביי עלטערע מיידלעך, וואָס יעדע איינע פון זיי האָט שוין כמעט אַן אייגענע לעבענס-אָנשויאונג, זאָל עפּעס געלונגען אויפצוטאָן?

פונדעסטוועגן האָב איך מיין אַרבעט וויייטער בשלימות געטאָן. די חברות פון דער אָרגאַניזאַציע האָבן אַרויסגעוויזן אַן אינטערעס צו דער זאַך. די נייע אָרגאַניזאַציע האָט אויך געפונען אַן אָפּקלאַנג אין קראָקע.

אַנגעפאַנגען מיט קליינע קינדער:

פון דעם נייגעגרינדעטן אָרטאָדאָקסישן מיידעל-פאַראיין בין איך, וואָס אַן אמת, נישט איבעריג געווען צופרידן. די פּעולות פון נייעם פאַרבאַנד זיינען געווען אַפילו גאַנץ גוטע, די חברות האָבן מיט התלהבות זיך צוגעהערט צו מיינע פאָרטראָגן און זיך זייער פאַראינטערסירט מיט די געדאַנקען און אידייען, וואָס איך פלעג זיי דירקלערן. איך האָב מיר מיין אַרבעט ביים נייען געשטערט, אַוועקגעוואָרפן די נאָדעל, אָפּגעשטעלט די מַאשין און תמיד מיין צייט דעם פאַראיין געשאַנקען. אָבער כאָטש דער דערפאָלג איז געווען אַ גענוגענדער, בין איך אַליין געבליבן נישט אינגאַנצן צופרידן.

יאָ, זיי זיינען געווען באַגייסטערט פון אַ שיינער רעדע, אַנטציקט פון אַ גרויסן געדאַנק, געריר געוואָרן פון אַ פּאָעטישער שטעל אין תנ"ך, אָבער דאָך זיך אַלץ נישט געקענט אונטערוואַרפן דעם אידישן דין און מקיים זיין די אידישע מצוות. נישט קיין וואונדער: דער רוב פון די חברות זיינען שוין געווען דערוואַקסענע מיידלעך, און עס איז נישט לייכט געווען זיי צו באַווענען אָנצוהויבן אַ ניי עכט אידיש לעבן, מיט זיינע מנהגים און טראַדיציעס.

מיין געדאַנקען-גאַנג האָט זיך דעריבער געקירעוועט אויף אַן אַנדערן וועג. מען דארף אנהויבן ביי קינדער, א יונג ביימעלע לאזט זיך ביגן. נאר מיט קליינע קינדער וועט זיך בשלימות איינגעבן מיין אידעאל.

מען מוז שאַפן רעליגיעזע מיידעל-שולן, אמת אידישע, וואו דער דערציאונגס-גייסט זאָל זיין אין הסכם מיט די אָנשויאונגען פון ישראל סבא. דערפאַר האָב איך זיך געטראַכט, טאָר גאָרנישט זיין צו-טייער און צו-שווער. עס לעבט נאָך ב"ה אַ רעליגיעז אידענטום, וואָס מען דאַרף עס דערמאַנען דעם עיקר וואָס זיי האָבן פאַרגעסן: אין זייער פליכט צום יונגען דור. מען דאַרף עס

We must keep on talking, we must not rest until it penetrates their conscience. Our young girls need to know something, maybe even a lot, about our G-dly treasures. And when Jewish studies will no longer be foreign to them, they will become the proud bearers of the eternal Jewish beliefs.

"Throw away the machine, stop sewing clothing for the body and start stitching garments for the soul so that she will be armed against the arrows of heresy!" This thought urged me on in the work that lay ahead of me - to gather young children and begin teaching them to become familiar with "Shema Yisrael..."

אַזוי לאַנג דערמאָנען, אַזוי לאַנג נישט רוען, ביז דער באוואוסטזיין וועט ווייט און בריייט אַריינדרינגען, אַז אויך אונזערע יונגע מיידלעך דאַרפן עפעס, און אפשר גאָר אַ סך, וויסן פון אונזערע גייסטיגע אוצרות. און וען זיי וועט שוין נישט פרעמד זיין דער לימוד היהדות, וועלען זיי באַשטימט שפעטער ווערן די שטאָלצע טרעגער פון די אייביגע אידישע אידיין.

"וואַרף אַוועק די מאַשין, זאָג זיך אָפּ פון דיין שניידער-פאַך צו נייען קליידער פאַרן גוף, און נעם דיך בעסער נייען און שטוקעווען מלבושים פאַר דער נשמה, פאַר דער אידישער נשמה, אַז זי זאל זיין געשיצט פון די אפיקורסישע פיילן!" – אַזאַ געדאַנק האָט מיך געיאָגט צו דער וויטערגידער אַרבעט. צוזוניפזאַמלינן קליינע קינדער און זיי אָנהויבן צוערשט צו באַקענען מיטן "שמע ישראל"...

A Bracha from the Belzer Rebbe:

I could not get my dream of establishing a religious school for girls out of my head, I consulted my brother who was living in Czechoslovakia.

At first he laughed at me. "Why do you want to start busying yourself with political parties?" he wrote back. But when I answered him that I was firmly resolved not to abandon this mission, he wrote me: "*Nu,* let us go to Marienbad where the Belzer Rav, (R' Yissochor Dov) *zy"a,* (the father of today's Belzer Rebbe, R' Aharon) is now, and we will hear whether the tzaddik of the generation agrees to it."

There was no end to my joy. Although I didn't have much money I hurriedly prepared myself for the trip. When I arrived in Marienbad, I and my brother went immediately to the Belzer Rav. My brother, who was a *ben bayis* there, wrote in his *kvittel*: "She wants to educate Jewish daughters in the Jewish *derech*." And I heard the answer from the tzaddik's holy mouth myself: "*Bracha Vehatzlacha.*" The words were like the most expensive balsam oil, instilling fresh courage in my limbs. The blessing from the great tzaddik gave me the best hope that my strivings would be fulfilled.

א ברכה פון בעלזער רבי:

אַז מיין פלאַן צו גרינדען אַ רעליגיעזע מיידעל-שול איז שוין פונם גאַנצן נישט מער אַרויס, האָב איך זיך נאָך גאָפּרואווט אַן עצה צו האַלטן מיט מיין ברודער, וואָס האָט דעמאָלט געוואוינט אין פעטשליו (טשעכען).

אין דעם ערשטן ענטפער זיינעם האָט ער מיך אויסגעלאַכט: "צו וואָס טויג דיר זיך אַרומשלאָגן מיט פאַרטייען?" ווען איך האָב אים דערויף געענטפערט, אַז איך בין פעסט באַשלאָסן ביי זיך פון דעם ציל נישט צו רעזיגנירן, האָט ער מיר געשריבן: "נו, קום קיין מאַרינבאַד, דאָ ווואינט איצט דער בעלזער רב, זצ"ל (דעם היינטיגן בעלזער רב'ס פאָטער), וועלן מיר הערן, צו דער צדיק הדור וועט דערויף מסכים זיין!"

צו מיין פרייד איז קיין שיעור נישט געווען. הגם מיין געלט בייטעל איז געווען זייער בצמצום, האָב איך דאָך אין דער גרעסטער איילעניש זיך געגרייט אויף דער רייזע. ווען איך בין אָנגעקומען קיין מאַרינבאַד, בין איך גלייך מיט מיין ברודער אַוועק צום בעלזער רב זצ"ל. מיין ברודער, וועלכער איז דאָרט געווען אַ בן-בית, האָט אין זיין קוויטעל געשריבן: *"...זי וויל מדריך זיין די אידישע טעכטער אין אידישן וועג."* פונם צדיק'ס הייליגן מויל האָב איך אַליין געהערט די ווערטער: *"ברכה והצלחה"*, וועלכע האָבן אויף מיר געווירקט ווי דער טייערסטער באַלזאַם-אויל און אַריינגעגעבן פרישן מוט אין אַלע מיינע אברים. די ברכה פון גרויסן צדיק האָט מיר געגעבן די בעסטע האָפענונגען אַז מיינע שטרעבונגען וועלן מקויים ווערן.

A Dream Comes True:

Marcheshvan 5678/1917. At last, at long last I have reached my goal!

I am sitting in my own school room. Who can understand my feelings? Who can compare themselves to me today?

אַ חלום ווערט פאַרווירקליכט:

מרחשון תרע"ח. ענדליך, דערגרייכט דעם ציל!

איך זיץ שוין איצט אין מיין אייגענעם שול-צימער. ווער קען מיינע געפילן פאַרשטיין? ווער קען זיך היינט גלייכן צו מיר?

Have you seen the shining faces of my children? How their eyes sparkled when I explained to them the meaning of a *bracha*! How joyfully they asked: "Will we hear such nice things tomorrow too?"

There are only twenty five of them here, after all, mostly children for whom I sewed dresses, and then later said to their mothers: "Will you also let me sew them garments for their souls...?"

Twenty-five children, twenty-five *neshamalach* were given to me to revitalize. I have a small house, old benches, no blackboard – and my heart is trembling with joy. Here is the place for my sacred work...

ווער האָט נישט געזען די שטראַלענדע פנימ'לעך פון מיינע קינדער?! ווי געפינקעלט זייערע אייגעלעך האָבן, בשעת איך האָב זיי געזאָגט וועגן דעם באדייט פון אַ ברכה. מיט פרייד האָבן זיי זיך געפרעגט: וועלן מיר מאָרגן אויך אַזעלכע שיינע זאַכן הערן?!...

פינף-און-צוואַנציג זיינען זיי בסך-הכל דאָ, מייסטענס קינדער, פאַר וועלכע כ'האָב געגייט קליידלעך, און איצט האָב איך געזאָגט צו די מוטערס: וועט איר מיר אויך דערלויבן פאַר זיי גייסטיגע מלבושים צו נייען?...

פינף-און-צוואַנציג קינדערלעך, פינף-און-צוואַנציג נשמה'לעך האָט מען מיר איבערגעגעבן צו באַלעבן. אַ קליין שטיבעל האָב איך, אַלטע בענק, קיין טאָוועל נאָך צומאָל נישטאָ. מיין האַרץ ווערט אָבער ביי דער אָרימקייט אויך אויפגעציטערט פאַר פרייד. דאָ איז מיין מקום פאַר גייסטיגער אַרבעט.

On the Threshold of a New Year

A speech Sarah Schenierer delivered before the Yamim Noraim

As the year draws to a close, once again we must submit a *din vacheshbon* to determine whether we have fulfilled the resolutions we made last year.

My thoughts take me back to the second Knessia Gedola, which I attended last year. There were thousands of delegates there, headed by the leaders of our generation. I can still hear their fiery words that called all Agudah members to an intensive course of *leharamas keren haTorah*. In the large shul of the Bayerische Court, women from all over the world gathered to discuss our holy Jewish obligations. It was like a dream!

I recall very clearly the first issue that was brought up - and the two women from Riga who immediately recognized the significance of wearing a *sheitel*, and promptly actualized their realization. During the last days of the Knessia Gedola they appeared wearing their *sheitlach* proudly.

Yet the question remains: Were all the resolutions actually followed through? Most people would answer, "Not even a fraction." Even I would not deny this. Nevertheless, the achievements in the realm of education were by no means trivial. Numerous new yeshivos and chadarim were founded, chief among them Yeshivas Chachmei Lublin, from which, *be'ezras Hashem*, *yerei'im* and *sheleimim* will emerge.

The importance of religious instruction for our daughters and family purity were greatly strengthened. It was also agreed that the newly organized B'nos organizations in the Bais Yaakov schools in other countries should be encouraged and nurtured. A teachers' seminary in Vienna, to serve Western Europe, is scheduled to open on Rosh Chodesh Cheshvan. And the first Bais Yaakov in America is to be organized by Pearl Pietrkowski, one of our best teachers.

Nevertheless, let us consider whether we really and truly did our utmost to further our lofty aims. Did we put forth our best efforts to bring our wayward sisters back to the fold? Or did we merely console ourselves, pointing complacently to the achievements we have made thus far?

The shofar is calling to us.

It is a call that comes directly from the *Melech Malchei Hamelachim*, Who is seeking His sheep, "*kevakoras ro'eh edro*," for the unified and holy flock we were meant to be. Although we are diverse in our dispositions and in our temperaments, still we should have been an indivisible flock, led by One Shepherd.

Instead, what has become of us?

Many were those who have abandoned our Leader, and because of that we have lost each other. We should have felt a bond between us that reaches to those in the farthest corners of the globe, but we have fallen short of this ideal. Moreover, we have distanced ourselves even from those who are closest to us. Fathers don't understand their sons, brothers do not agree, and one sister does not acknowledge the other.

Why? How did this happen?

Because everyone has busied himself exploring alien realms; everyone is searching for a new shepherd; everyone is pursuing fulfillment according to his own perceptions.

Our trials and tribulations have proven to be too much for us. For hundreds, even thousands of years we adhered to one Authority, but when the day of reckoning arrived, we were weak and could not withstand the temptations.

We did not comprehend His works. When we looked around we saw other nations exploring other pastures; we saw a new shepherd. We wanted to be their equals and we began to emulate them. Unfortunately, since then we have been as lost as they are. We experience no true joy, no real, internal tranquility, even though externally we may appear to be serene and content.

Now our venerable Shepherd approaches us with the call of His shofar, and follows us to wherever we have wandered, wherever we have gone astray in our quest for gratification; He comes to summon us all. Come, He says, tear yourself away from all this nonsense and come with Me.

And He approaches our young boys first, some of them *baruch Hashem*, still in the yeshivos and chadarim, persevering diligently in the study of our *Torah hakedosha*, steadfast

in their belief that only there can they find the greatest ecstasy humankind can ever experience.

But what of the rest of our sons? Yes, even here in this country, which is known far and wide for its tenacious hold on *Yiddishhkeit*, He manages to find Jewish children grazing in alien pastures. Although their intention is to uplift themselves, ultimately they sink ever deeper into the mire.

Even they, however, hear the call of the shofar, the age-old call of their fathers' Shepherd from the time when we stood at Mount Sinai. And when He calls, His Will is for all His flock to respond and gather round. How blessed are those select ones of our youth who indeed heed the call and return to the fold, who have the courage to tear themselves away from a meaningless existence and begin anew a truly dynamic Jewish life.

And who else does the call of the shofar rouse?

The shofar speaks to our Jewish daughters as well, the daughters of our times, some of whom have understood the summons for a number of years and have organized a Bnos Agudath Yisrael with one purpose alone: "to do His *Ratzon* wholeheartedly." They are already experiencing the fulfillment of true Jewish life.

But other daughters of Israel? Alas, they are not our daughters any more, they have forfeited the exalted position David Hamelech describes, "Our daughters are as the cornerstones of our homes." Our daughters are the pillars, the foundations of all things sacred to a Jewish home. They are far removed from this magnificent holiness... their homes have no sanctity; their tables are no longer considered altars.

Sadly, this is how many future Jewish mothers are growing up, those mothers of the next generation who have no familiarity with or understanding of the essence of a Miriam, Yocheved, Devora, Chana, Chulda, Esther, Yehudis or other of our mothers of past generations. These daughters of our people allow themselves to be led into the mire and sink ever deeper into the morass where falsehood is sown and where empty vanity is harvested.

Therefore, I appeal to all my sisters with whom I share this burden: Shall we stand idly by and watch from afar how these sisters of ours sink deeper and deeper?

No, we have no right to be so callous and selfish! We are obligated to call out to them in a mighty voice, with all our strength: Sisters! Do you not hear the call of the shofar? Are you not aware that the call that gathered our mothers to Mount Sinai and revealed to them the now familiar "Thus shall you say unto the House of Yaakov (and we responded heartily with "*Naaseh venishma*")? This call entrusted us with the holiness of Jewish family purity, of kashrus, and of many other mitzvos. How can we fall so low, *chas veshalom*, to betray that trust? Reconsider, my sisters! This cannot be. We dare not allow this to be. You surely will not have to seek fulfillment in alien pastures.

Come back, save yourselves while there is still time. Tear yourselves away from the temptations that fill the world! Know that the luster dims eventually, but the disaster that results remains forever.

Dear Sisters! Whether in the East or in the West, whether in the North or in the South, wherever the call of the shofar finds you, remember that the call is for a holy purpose, and that there is much work to be done. Each day make an effort to be a better "complete Jew" than yesterday.

This is the way to approach your wayward sisters, to speak to their neshamos. Demonstrate to them that true gratification can be attained only through fulfilling all of our mitzvos in the right way. Do not grow weary, and do not fear their rejection. Eventually your passionate enthusiasm will impress them, and they will surely return to us. We will then merit a veritable "*aguda achas laasos Retzonecha belevov shalem.*"

And now, to work! Renounce all the hollow pleasures and all those amusements that seem to be such a great source of desire. Let our mothers' actions in sacrificing themselves for the sake of Kiddush Hashem serve as our inspiration. Implant in your hearts devotion and awe.

I wish all of my sisters *Leshana tova tikaseivna vesechasemna.*

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Sara Schenierer's letter of address to the first assembly of Bais Yaakov in Hungary

Cracow, יום ו' פרשת דברים תרצ"ג, 1933

To all of you I wish a hearty Mazel Tov, on the occasion of this worthy undertaking – the first assembly of Bais Yaakov in your land. May Hashem enable the spirit of the holy Torah to help you find the correct and most helpful paths to spread the ideal of Torah and make it penetrate into the depths of life.

It is impossible to express the greatness of my simcha, ב"ה when I see that also in other countries the Jewish woman is waking up from her deep, continuous sleep, and at last is beginning to turn her mind towards contemplating the magnitude of the תפקיד which was given to her at מעמד הר סיני.

Dearest loving sisters! We all stood at הר סיני and called out in one voice נעשה ונשמע and with these two words we sealed our everlasting commitment. Are we completely fulfilling our undertaking? With a heavy heart, many of us are unable to say we are. When a person declares bankruptcy in the simplest sense, he is ashamed to raise his head in front of others in public. Similarly, how can we walk with heads held high when we have defaulted on our eternal commitments?

Nevertheless, this should not weaken the strength of our movement. We have no part among those who do not fulfill their commitment. We know that תורת ה' תמימה. Only if we fulfill it בשלימות is it in fact משיבת נפש. We seek to pay the debt in its entirety.

Therefore, my dear sisters! Please take this matter to heart. Our goal is to reach the stage of תמים. We must learn ראשית חכמה יראת ה' – if יראת ה' is חכמה, it is if fact clear that it is necessary to learn it. Nevertheless, learning alone is not enough. The פסוק continues and says – שכל טוב לכל עושיהם. It doesn't say - שכל טוב לכל ללמדיהם, but only לעושיהם. Our חכמים said – לא המדרש העיקר אלא המעשה. You all know the 3 paths upon which I have based our work, and they are: Firstly, עבדו את ה' בשמחה next to שויתי ה' לנגדי תמיד and למנות ימינו כן הודע. Therefore, neither in sadness nor in fear of גיהינום should we sense אלוקים, but only out of the depths of pure love and בשמחה.

For this it is necessary to firstly focus attention on being careful not to do עבירות, and this will help us to reach the concept of שויתי ה' לנגדי תמיד as well as the words which follow למנות ימינו כן הודע ... Could we think that דוד המלך did not know how to count his days? Oh, he certainly knew. Nevertheless, he also knew that every second of the life of a man is divided into 3 parts: future, present and past. The moment which was "future", in the passing of a second becomes "past". In these three short periods of time we want to achieve something great and lasting. And this is what דוד המלך wished to teach us – to know how to properly save every single second for עבודת ה'...

Obviously I cannot express all my thoughts on this paper. Please read my essay in the sefer "*Gesammelte Shriften*", entitled "A Word To My Sisters".

I deeply regret that I could not personally join in your assembly. I ask that you be very particular about the צניעות of the clothing of every single participant. Also, please warn the girls that they should not associate with the members of other organizations and entreat them to be careful in all the מצוות such as נטילת ידים and ברכות הנהנין, שמירת שבת ויום טוב, כשרות and so on. Thus the entire Torah will be fulfilled, and

"ויעשו כולם אגודה אחת לעשות רצונך בלבב שלם"

Remember dear sisters, it is very easy to become enthusiastic, but to actualize this enthusiasm over the course of years is a very hard thing to do. This is the main goal which we should undertake; to make this enthusiasm penetrate our daily lives, to work to spread our holy רעיונות until we succeed in igniting the hearts of all Bnos Yisroel true אהבת ה' and יראת ה'... Please inform me of the success of this worthy venture.

I will conclude with words of נחמה. (This letter was written during the Three Weeks) May this day be transformed into a day of יום טוב and שמחה as Hashem promised us.



Bais Yaakov School in Ruzhan, Poland. Mrs. Rochel (Tenenbaum) Zisfein ע"ה *is first on the left in the top row*

FROM THE LETTERS OF SARAH SCHENIERER

This letter, translated from the Hebrew, was written by Sarah Schenierer to the girls of Bnos Agudas Yisrael.

Beloved Sisters:

Firstly, I turn to you for the cause our holy Torah. Even though in my heart I am certain that you yourselves know the perfection of Torah and its significance to the Jewish people and to every *bas* Yisroel, nevertheless, I would like to speak in short about the meaning of Torah.

First of all, it is the duty of everyone to know that Torah commitment does not mean only to learn it and understand its contents. Our main objective is to observe and fulfill the Torah.

For the Jew who studies the Torah *and* observes all its laws, the Torah is a purifying fire, nourishing milk and intoxicating wine. It is the hammer which splits the rock, the sword which conquers the world, a pillar of fire which enlightens his path, the staff which guides his walk and supports his footsteps. It is the companion in his hour of happiness and the counselor in his time of need. To all that understand its way, Torah is the song of the night, the song of the wanderer, the lamp at the crossroads, the fountain of living waters, the wellspring of all strength and courage.

Learning the Torah with diligence is not enough. Only if every commandment is recognized in its full intention and its oral tradition, can it be fully observed. Every *possuk* must penetrate the heart, deeper, and still deeper, until it becomes part of oneself.

It is only with e*munah sh'leimah* that we can acquire the Torah. When a person believes that there is a Master of his castle, but only recognizes that fact and not more, there is no positive value in this understanding. The heart must feel. The innermost chambers of one's heart must absorb these truths so that they bring one to action.

Hashem's mastery was pronounced at *Matan Torah*. The first utterance at *Har Sinai* was *"Onochi Hashem Elokecha."* I am your G-D, your Lawgiver, the Ruler over your inclinations and of your deeds. Behold, *Ben Odom*, all that is in your hands, is from My hands. I made everything – you and your property. I have given them to you as a present. Your body, your soul, and your senses, are all obligated to fulfill my will, and then, only then, are you a person of perfection, an *Odom Yisrael*!!

And therefore, beloved sisters, this ideal must be our first inclination. We, as Bnos Agudas Yisrael, must determine, as *Odom Yisrael,* to live holy lives, which are purposeful, pure, and blissful, *b'ruach Yisrael*.

א מאמר פון פרוי שענירער ע"ה
צוגעשיקט בעת איר קראנקהייט צום לעצטן סיום אין בית יעקב סעמינאר

מיינע ליבע און טייערע קינדער לאוי"ט,

מה נאמר, מה נדבר ומה נצטדק, רבות מחשבות בלב איש, ועצת ה' היא תקום!

יא, שוואך, זייער שוואך, זיינען די מענטשליכע מחשבות, אבער ווי השי"ת פירט איז דאך אלץ "גם זו לטובה".

געלויבט השי"ת פאר זיינע חסדים טובים.

זינט אין דער פרי פון היינטיגן טאג, קען איך זיך נישט באהערשען פון טרערן. איך, וואם איך האב זיך אלע מאל באקלאגט, אז עם איז מיר אזוי שווער ביים דאוונען צו וויינען, פיל איך ערשט איצט ווי שטארק עם זיינען די גייסטיגע בענדער, וואם בינדן מיר מיט מיינע קינדער. איר געדענקט אוודאי, ווי איך פלעג צו זאגן, אז עס איז דא א פוליש ווערטעל: "צא קרעוו, טא ניע וואדא" (בלוט איז נישט קיין וואסער) און איך זאג: "צא דושא, טא ניע טשאלא" (נשמה איז נישט גוף). יא, גייסטיגע בענדער זיינען דאך פעסטער, ווייל זיי זיינען אייביג!

דערפאר פיל איך, אז אזוי גוט, ווי ביי מיר גיסן זיך טרערן בשעת איך שרייב צו אייך, אזוי ווען איהר אויך לאזען טרערן, בשעת מען וועט ליינען מיינע ווערטער. זאל השי"ת העלפן, די נענעזייטיגע טרערן זאלן קומען פארן כסא הכבוד און אויסבעטן די נאולה שלימה און דערווייל א רפואה שלימה.

נו, און איצט וועל איך זיך צו אייך, מיינע ליבע קינדער, וועלכע פארלאזן אונזער הויז, גייען אין דער וועלט כדי צו ווערן פירערינם און דערציערינם פון אידישע טעכטער...

...זי זאל זיין געהארכזאם דעם צדיק ווי די ספרים הקדושים שרייבען, אז דערפאר האט דער סוף פון דער תורה א חיבור מיטן אנהייב, "בראשית ברא אלוקים" צו לערנן אמונת השם און אמונת חכמים. נביאים ענדיגט זיך מיט ספר "חבקוק", וועלכער פארענדיגט זיין ספר: "ד' שמעתי שמעך יראתי".

ווי מיר ווייסען, איז חבקוק געווען דער זון פון דער שונמית וואם אלישע הנביא האט איהם לעבעדיג געמאכט, האט ער דאך געזעהן דעם כוח פון צדיקים.

די יראה פארן צדיק ברענגט צו יראת השם ווי די חז"ל זאגען "את ד' אלוקיך תירא", מיינט מען "לרבות תלמידי חכמים". און מיר זאגען דאך אויך יעדען טאג "ויאמינו בה' ובמשה עבדו".

דעריבער ענדיגט חבקוק "הנה אנכי שולח לכם את אלי' הנביא" צו ווייזען אז די גאנצע גאולה קען קומען נאר דורך אמונה.

נו, איך ענדיג מיט מיינע אלטע פסוקים (נישט מיינע, נאר דוד המלך'ס), וועלכע זאלען אייך שטענדיג באגלייטען:

עבדו את ה' בשמחה! שויתי ה' לנגדי תמיד! ראשית חכמה יראת ה'!

למנות ימינו כן הודע! תורת ה' תמימה משיבת נפש!

ד' ישמור צאתכן ובואכן מעתה ועד עולם.

נו, השם זאל אונזערע תפילות אויסהערען, אונז שיקן באלד די גאולה שלימה, אמן.

אייער, שרה שענירער

קראקע, פ' שמות תרצ"ה.

Message that Frau Schenierer ע"ה Sent to the Last Graduation During Her Final Illness.

Translated by M. Klapholtz

מיינע ליבע טייערע קינדער לאוי"ט,

What shall we say, what shall we speak and how shall we justify ourselves? Many are the thoughts of Man yet the counsel of Hashem endures.

Human understanding is weak, oh so very weak, but the path on which Hashem leads us is always for the good.

Praised be Hashem for His great kindness.

I have been unable to control my tears since this morning. I, who always lamented how difficult I found it to cry during prayers, now realize how strong are the spiritual bonds that connect me to my children. You surely remember how I used to say that there is a Polish proverb, "Blood is not water", and I say "The soul is not the physical body". Yes, spiritual bonds are stronger, because they are eternal.

Therefore, I feel that just as my tears are falling whilst writing this letter, so too, will your tears fall while reading my words. May Hashem help that these very tears should come before the Heavenly Throne and plead for the final redemption and, in the meantime, a *refuah shleimah.*

And now, I turn to you, my dear children, who are leaving our home and going out to become teachers and leaders of Jewish daughters…

…You shall always obey *Tzaddikim* as it is written in our holy *sefarim*. Therefore the end of our Torah has a connection with the beginning. It starts off with the words, "בראשית ברא אלוקים" to teach us to believe in Hashem and in the words of our Sages. So too, the Neviim finish with the sefer of Chavakuk, whose last chapter starts with the words: ה' שמעתי שמעך יראתי *"Hashem, I heard your news; I was afraid."*

Chavakuk actually witnessed the strength of *tzaddikim.* As we all know, Chavakuk, the son of the Shunamis, was revived by Elisha HaNavi.

The fear of a tzaddik brings to fear of Hashem, as Chazal say "את אלוקים תיראו", the word את means to include our Torah sages. And we also say every day, "ויאמינו בה' ובמשה עבדו".

Therefore Malachi finishes, "הנה אנכי שולח לכם את אליהו הנביא" to show that the Redemption can only come about through the strengthening of our beliefs.

So, I will finish with my usual psukim, (not mine but those of David HaMelech) that should always accompany you:

עבדו את ה' בשמחה! שויתי ה' לנגדי תמיד! ראשית חכמה יראת ה'!
למנות ימינו כן הודע! תורת ה' תמימה משיבת נפש!

ד' ישמור צאתכן ובואכן מעתה ועד עולם. Hashem should hear our prayers and soon send us the Final Redemption, אמן!

אייער, שרה שענירער

קראקע פ' שמות תרצ"ה.

Selections from the letters of Sara Schenirer on the topic of Tznius

Translated from "Eim BeYisrael"-- courtesy of Bais Yaakov High School

To My Dear One:

...There is a lasting lesson to be learned from the Seder night. Each generation is tempted by its own false gods. Each generation chooses new symbols for its avoda zara. In contrast, the mission of the Jew is eternal. In each generation the Jews need to bind the idol of their time to the bed and ridicule and destroy it. Bnai Yisrael prove that they exist spiritually far above the avoda zara of the era...

To My Spiritual Sister:

...Spirituality can afford a person such pleasure, that once he experiences it he will willingly forego the theater, cinemas, and such ...

...I am very interested in knowing how deeply the awareness of *ruchniyus* penetrated into your students, and to what degree you have succeeded in eliciting sacrifices from them in the area of tznius...

To My Dear, Spiritual Sister,

...Let us recall Jewish life of the previous century. Every Jew would cry out in anguish over any loss in *limud haTorah*. However, from the day that the gates of the ghetto were opened, and children began attending secular schools יצאה מבת ציון כל הדרה -- all the glory has departed from Jewish daughters. Alas, she, the *Bas Yisrael* was swept up in the current of the times resulting in disdain for the pure and beautiful Jewish way of life. She is negatively influenced by the magical spell of the modern fashions in the gentile world. She is treading a path leading to a distant, alien world. Her goal: to look, and to be looked at; to be impressed by frivolities, and to impress others. The result? The destruction of Jewish homes...

The Torah is dressed in sackcloth and weeps. Yes, she weeps, the Torah weeps, that *Bnos Melachim* created in the *Tzelem Elokim* are gradually losing their *Tzelem Elokim*. They are turning into wax statues. Daughters of Yisrael are enslaved like servants, to fashions. When the fashion dictates, she does not feel the summer heat as she dons a high collar almost reaching her ears, nor the winter cold as she opens her buttons and reveals her entire neck.

Sisters, dear *Yiddishe* sisters: Is your own self respect not dear enough in your eyes? Attune your ears to the awesome calling of the heilige Torah. Beware of anything bordering on spiritual self-destruction.

Vignettes on Tznius

Rebbetzin Chava Pincus *a"h*, was the only American girl to travel to Poland to study in Cracow's Bais Yaakov. She related that at the close of her initial meeting, Sara Schenierer gave her a pin to fasten at the top of her blouse. She stated, matter of factly, that in Bais Yaakov necklines are worn closed.

Rebbetzin Pincus never forgot that first encounter with her mentor. She often retold this vignette to audiences large and small. The memory of that woman, small of stature but great in spirit, who had faith in the willingness and ability of her young charges to act on *emes* when it was presented to them, even when it meant acknowledging a shortcoming in their performance of a mitzvah, remained forever etched in her memory.

Bais Yaakov High School

Where is Sara Schenierer?

In the lovely and regal city of Cracow, with the placid waters of the Vistula River flowing quietly in the background, a ceremony is going on. A building is going up here, and the groundbreaking is being marked, as groundbreakings are, with speeches and pomp and excitement. At the dais sit many of the great rabbinic personalities of the city, members of Agudath Israel, communal leaders. Rav Asher Spira, who will supervise the building personally, telling others that this is the only building that will accompany him after he leaves this world, is there. So is Dr. Leo Deutschlander, whose vision and talent helped turn a dream into something as tangible as bricks and mortar and students. Yes, everyone is here at the groundbreaking ceremony of the Bais Yaakov Teachers Seminary in Cracow, soon to be located at 10 Stanislaw Street, first of its kind in the world. Everyone is here – but where is Sara Schenierer?

Sitting in the back, quietly, with the tznius which is one of the hallmarks of her life, Frau Schenierer is sitting where she wants to be. With her students.

Miriam Zakon – Agudah Women's Historic Pilgrimage to Cracow

Rebbetzin Vichna Kaplan *a"h*, Sara Schenierer's disciple who transplanted Bais Yaakov to America in 1937, spoke at her mentor's 50th Yahrzeit Gathering in the Felt Forum. She could have utilized that golden opportunity when 5,000 young girls hung on to her every word, to stress any of a number of issues that were significant twenty years ago. But the topic she chose was tznius. Tznius, modesty, is the most important mitzvah for women, and she beseeched her listeners to aspire to ever greater heights in being *mekayem* that mitzvah.

In her last message in the Bais Yaakov Alumni Bulletin, Rebbetzin Kaplan wrote about the subject of tznius. She lauded her talmidos for their high level performance of so many mitzvos. She commended them on how good they were on the inside, but pleaded with them to look as pure outwardly as they are inwardly. The *Gemara* states that only the talmidim who were as good on the inside as they appeared to be on the outside, were permitted into the yeshiva of Rabban Gamliel. Nowadays, Rebbetzin Kaplan stated, the problem is reversed – women are good on the **inside**; it's their **outer** appearance that requires improvements.

Rebbetzin Kaplan's message of 20 years ago was well received. Women and girls of all ages hearkened to her plea, and sought perfection in tznius. Tznius ceased being considered "nebby" as girls grew to be proud of looking like true *Bnos Melachim*. But as in all areas of endeavor, the *Yetzer Hara* never ceases to try to undo the gain. Vigilance, education, and above all, *tefillla* are weapons with which to thwart his attacks. May *Hashem Yisbarach* bless our efforts with *hatzlacha*.

Bais Yaakov High School

ב"ה

לזכרון

זון מוון מעלעך אוון מיאבמעלוף טבת תרצ"ו
בוים 5 יאהרוון יובילעאום פון דאר הויכר שולע

פרויך דיר אלוס מוון פרוייד
אלי אוועלאר ביות ווילכ-אוועלאוועל הוים ביים ב"ה אלעוו שוין דאשהערוויג.

שרה שניירר.

Sara Schenirer expresses her feelings of *nachas* at the fifth anniversary of the Bais Yaakov school in Pabianice, Poland. Teves, 5691-1931


The Establishment
of the Bais
Yaakov
Movement

Sara Schenierer

The Story of a Great Movement

By: Judith Rosenbaum - Grunfeld

This essay was written by Dr. Judith Rosenbaum-Grunfeld and originally appeared in the volume "Jewish Leaders" edited by Dr. Leo Jung in 1953. It has been reprinted countless times since.

When Sara Schenierer, the founder of the Beth Jacob Movement, left this world, she was fifty-two years old. She died in the midst of her work, having led the movement since 1917. When the news of her passing spread, thousands upon thousands of girls and women who had been praying fervently for her recovery, felt that their own life cord had been cut and that they had personally received a paralyzing blow. Tens of thousands had known her personally, had clung to her as to a personal intimate friend and had been known to her. They were her children; they knew her teaching, her manner of speech and her personal ways of life. They had her picture imprinted upon their minds—a living picture, giving stimulus together with vision. Sara Schenierer died an hour before Shabbath. She had asked for the candles to be brought to her bedside, and for the last time she had lit them. They were still burning when her soul returned to G-d.

Tens of thousands of women and girls knew then that to the end of their days they would feel the eye of Sara Schenierer watching them, her wishes urging fulfillment; that her questions to them would forever demand the right answer and that they would have to live their lives in such a manner as to be able to meet the eye of Sara Schenierer again in Eternity. This was the impact of Sara Schenierer upon the women of her generation. The vibration of this encounter between a great woman and her disciples still exists and can still be felt.

When I first met Sara Schenierer, she was a woman of forty-two. She wore a plain black dress and her very lively face was framed in black silk, in a motherly, old-fashioned way. You would not think of her as a personality in her own right, but as someone's mother who had come to greet you. Liveliness, simplicity and motherliness were the first impressions.

We met on the green meadows of the Carpathian Hills in midsummer. I had come a long way by train and coach to meet her, and she was walking along the path that led from the tiniest hamlet I had ever seen. She was coming with a group of thirty girls to meet the coach that brought me. I was the young teacher from Western Europe who was willing to spend some weeks of the University vacations in the Polish mountains to help that singular woman of whom almost legendary reports had reached me. It was not really a coach; it was a cart and horse that brought me from the railway station into that remote village, never recorded on any map. There I was, traveling along fields and meadows under the blue sky on a very hot summer day, passing lonely gypsy cottages and caravans to find the forlorn village where Sara Schenierer spent the summer in primitive huts with some fifty pupils.

I had heard that Sara Schenierer was a remarkable woman who had formerly been a dressmaker, and had then studied, on her own initiative, by night, in order eventually to convey to others as a teacher by day her newly acquired knowledge; that she shared her own room and

food with a group of young women while training them to be teachers for the coming generation. What would she be like and by what qualities would she rule and impress her charges? These were the thoughts that had puzzled me ever since I had decided to travel to Poland to meet her. I knew that she had already gathered fifty girls who lived with her and were content with the very frugal meals which a dressmaker's savings could supply for them. I also had been told that they were entirely absorbed in the new life with their teacher. What was it that this woman possessed that made her such a compelling force?

I watched the black-clad round figure of a little mother walking along with a swarm of girls round her, all talking, all bustling with life. My cart stopped by the roadside; they came swarming round the cart. Friendly words of welcome and greeting were called out to me. I was lifted out of the rickety cart and the small figure of a mother in Israel embraced me and bid me welcome. The girls lifted my luggage, paid the driver and I found myself seated on a wooden bench under a tree, in front of a little cottage, the "Mother" sitting next to me and I already under her spell. Whilst I am writing now—twenty-five years later—I can still smell the fragrance of the summer afternoon that came from the freshly cut grass around us. I can almost feel the sensation—a very strong and pleasant one—of being drawn into Sara Schenierer's circle, and my heart infused me with the very strong desire to cooperate in the great work that was being revealed to me.

Sara Schenierer told me that she was indeed a dressmaker— that she had many customers, but that when they came to her for fittings she found herself philosophizing about them. She watched them as they looked critically into the mirror. As to dress, they knew what they wanted. They were very particular as to every little detail of fashion or workmanship. But, the little dressmaker mused, after the fittings were over and the ladies had departed, did they know what they really needed? She envisioned them beautifully dressed in body but spiritually in rags and tatters. If she could only help them to see where their real happiness lay!

As she went about town, she found no kindred spirit among the women. The older women seemed to be withdrawing into a spiritual world of their own—the younger longed to be "modern," untutored in Torah, and with a smattering of modern "science." In the Polish gymnasium they seemed to feel that Judaism was merely a useless restraint, a fetter, a shell that obfuscated and that must be burst to let in the light. She felt that only because of ignorance were they ready to lose their priceless heritage, to exchange pure gold for mere tinsel. "I felt I must help them," she said "to see that they were ready to give up, not a shell but the very substance without which they and their dear ones would perish. But I was without education. I lacked the gift of speech to convey my convictions."

"Coming home from work, I used to meet my brother returning home from the Yeshivah. He is discussing something with a friend; the discussion gets more lively and more heated. They enter the living room and my father joins in the discussion. They are now pitting argument against argument, knowledge against knowledge—and they understand the meaning of each other's phrases.

"My sister, who is a pupil in a Polish gymnasium, is reading a book. She seems very much interested. My mother's hands clasp the 'Tz'enah u-R'enah' (A Yiddish anthology of

commentaries on the Chumash). I go to Mrs. G. across the road. She has six daughters. Of the eldest one she never speaks. She left the house two years ago. When she had gone they found a letter from her: 'Forgive me, Mammeshy, I cannot bear the narrow home any more. I have gone to live with my friends.' She married without *Chuppah* and *Kiddushin*. The second daughter, the fourth and the fifth, are in constant touch with her. They worship their heroic sister. They wish they could follow her. Only love for the poor, shaken, heart-broken mother makes them pretend that they belong to her.

"But there is still the youngest, our Esciu. She is twelve. She is not yet aware of all the conflicts. And Sara Schenierer together with Mrs. G. look at the sleeping Esciu. This one we may be able to keep. Her eyes still shine with that glow when the Sabbath comes in. How can we preserve that glow? How can we open her maturing and searching mind to the truth and beauty of the Torah? Where is the magic key to open up our treasures for her and all the others of her age who are still their parents' true children, but will soon awake from childhood's sleep, will hear the trumpets that are blown in the streets and marketplaces?" Sara Schenierer returns home. Her thoughts are of Esciu. She knows there are thousands like her.

"And we pass through the Elul days. The trains which run to the little 'Shtetlach' (towns) where the Rebbes live are crowded. Thousands of Hassidim are on their way to them to spend the Yamim Noraim (Solemn Holy Days) with the Rebbe. Every day sees new crowds of old men and young men in the *chassidic* garb, eager to secure a place in the train, eager to spend the holiest days in the year in the atmosphere of their Rebbe, to be able to extract from it as much holiness as possible. Fathers and sons travel and those who can afford it make this journey several times a year. Thus they are drawn to Ger, to Biala, to Alexander, to Bobov, to all these places that had been made citadels of concentrated religious life, dominated by the leading figure of a Rebbe's personality.

"And we stay at home, the wives, and the daughters with the little ones. We have an empty Yom Tov. It is bare of Jewish intellectual concentration. The women have never learned anything about the spiritual content that is concentrated within a Jewish festival. The mother goes to Shul. The service rings faintly into the fenced and boarded-off women's gallery. There is much crying by the elderly women. The young girls look on them as beings of a different century. Youth and desire to live a full life shoot up violently in the strong-willed young personalities. Outside the Shul, the young girls stand chattering; they walk away from Shul where their mothers pour out their vague and heavy feelings. They leave behind them the wailing of the old generation and follow the urge for freedom and self-expression. Further and further away from Shul they go, further away to the dancing, tempting light of a fleeting joy.

"And when the father comes home from the Rebbe, he is too dazzled to see what will come out one day into the glaring light, revealing a breach that has gone beyond repair. While the men bend and sway in the rhythm that tradition has created, and their heads are held aloft into almost visionary heights, the girls go dancing, skipping, dreaming on in their own way, along the path of a world which is wide open, unfenced and pitiless. Their paths and the parents' paths may never meet."

Sara Schenierer's mind is troubled by that picture. She sees how fathers and daughters are strangers, living in different worlds; how the happiness of family life is shattered by the breaking away of the maturing girls. And the thought is conceived in her mind to collect the little girls early enough, when they are still hiding their little curly tops behind mother's apron and still sit on their father's lap, when they are still tucked in snugly in the home atmosphere. She wants to call them together and open up a new world to them. The Alef-Beth is the key to wonderful reading, and reading is the key to wonderful ideas, and the ideas are bright and warm and clear so that they stand out in the mind, illuminating the horizon. She wants to collect the little ones who still have laughter fresh in their hearts, with feelings untouched by conflicts and unspoiled by outside influences and the adversities of life. She wants to bring them together in towns and villages and hamlets that they may learn together, that they may discover the treasures of which their parents are the trustees. She will round them up in comradeship and make them all strong in the security of companionship. There will have to be club rooms, summer camps, holiday centers, day schools. It will all have to develop into an army that links hands together, and everyone will feel proud of its strength, will feel ready for implicit obedience and will rejoice in the numbers, the swelling numbers that will have almost undreamed-of power.

This was the vision of Sara Schenierer. She unfolded it to me with all the enthusiasm of an inspired and determined mind. She made me see the thousands of girls, small, sweet, still within the sheltering folds of their homes, see them march in a big array across the span of time. They stretch, they grow, they become huge figures and each figure splits again into numerous smaller figures and the array becomes gigantic and triumphant in its march.

It seems that it is a simple woman that dreams these dreams. Yet her mind has an enormous capacity to fill itself with this vision, so that this vision becomes a force that overshadows everything else. Her soul seems to have traveled from afar. She seems to be merely a simple dressmaker in Cracow. She is known there, walking along the streets of the Cracow Ghetto, a plainly dressed motherly person, always cheerful, busy, a lively little woman. But the soul that shines out of her eyes has come from afar. It is as if her soul had emerged from contact with the holiness of the Jewish past, pointing towards a messianic future. In the night, while children sleep, while she stitches away on her customers' dresses, she seeks to find a way in hard reality to make of the slumbering children that mighty legion that her vision beheld.

II:

Sara Schenierer would probably never have left her small home in the Cracow Ghetto, had not the World War forced her to seek refuge in Vienna. The winter of 1914-15 sees her, a woman of thirty-two, in the Jewish quarters of Vienna, together with thousands of others who had fled from Galicia, struggling to find a temporary home until the storm had abated.

On a Shabbath morning, in one of the Shuls in the 6th district, a Rabbi ascended the pulpit to address his congregation. It happened to be a Shabbath Hanukkah and he spoke of the Maccabees, their strength, steadfastness and loyalty to the name of G-d. His thoughts were clear and deep, his illustrations and examples convincing and fascinating. In the women's gallery a stranger listened spellbound. She experienced a revelation. What was it that was so new, so

striking in this speech that made her breathless with inner excitement? Here were the words she had been longing to find, here was the truth of Jewish teaching. The beauty and the glory of Jewish History were laid clear before the listener in a manner that could not fail to interest. Here were words like sparks that could kindle. Until now she had been groping in the dark, not knowing how to set out to accomplish the task for which she felt the burning desire. Now listening to Rabbi Flesch of the Stumpergasse, she saw her way clear before her. It would be simple, she would only have to magnify his voice, to pass on his words, so clear, so convincing, to all the women back home who were unaware of the fact that such truth existed. Like her, they would be dazzled by the light and then be guided by it. Their desire for learning, that had until now driven them away from home, would then be satisfied, the idea presented to them could not fail to impress them deeply and thus they would be led to respect Jewish life and to cling to it.

So Sara Schenierer wrote down with painful loyalty every speech, every lesson she heard from Rabbi Flesch during her stay in Vienna, when she became his most regular pupil. And the thicker the volume of her writings, the more impatient she grew to go back to Cracow to share the treasures she had gathered.

In the summer of 1915 she returned home. At first she struggled to find a way of attracting the young ladies of Cracow permanently. She assembled them, it is true, but she failed to hold them. Her words seemed to come back to her empty, and in spite of the growing determination to acquire a circle of listeners and pupils she found herself alone. But with every failure her determination increased. She kept her treasure close to her heart and her vision clearly before her eyes; she was certain that just as she had been granted the language to speak, so she would find the hearts to speak to. And she found those hearts, willing to listen and to learn, when finally she turned to the children.[1]

Now we have come to the part of her story that sounds rather like an old-fashioned fairy tale, when the dressmaker turns over night into a teacher and the workshop into a schoolroom, and the customers, instead of sending in their orders, send their children to be pupils of this school. A curious school indeed, without black board, bell, utensils, or books; with a teacher whose main qualification is her single-minded aim, and her love of the Torah. Who called that teacher to her place? No one ever bothered to ask. The children were all eager to come and to stay as long as they were allowed to; the older ones begged to be allowed to help the younger ones. They all loved Sara Schenierer and quite forgot that she was their teacher; they spoke to her as to a mother who had always time and patience to listen.

In spite of the primitive setup of the school, the number of children grew rapidly, and soon there were so many in the small room that it was impossible to carry on. Sara Schenierer saw herself forced to refuse admission to any more children. Of course, there was something wrong. How can one person teach hundreds of pupils? The solution would be the training of teachers who would each be able to teach a group. So Sara Schenierer started on her own initiative with her own meager means and in her own magic way to train teachers.

There is a small side street in the Cracow Ghetto. We walk into one of the large tenement houses and go up the narrow stone steps that lead into the various flats inhabited by numerous families with numerous children. We stop at one of the doors in the hallway of the first floor. We

are at "Catachina No. 1." in front of Frau Schenierer's door. We shall soon see her "College." The door opens and we first enter a very small kitchen; a curtain separates this kitchen from a large room which looks bright and pleasant in spite of its bareness. Here, in Sara Schenierer's own room, twenty girls sit by the table and study; some are seated on boxes in the middle of the room and write with their books on their laps, as there is no more space at the table. They are all intent, they all seem lively and eager. Frau Schenierer sits at the table; when she starts speaking, they all turn to her, fasten their attention on every word she says. While they look at her, their faces seem lit from within. There seems no fatigue in this room, no slow creeping of hours. Time in this room seems to be unmeasured and the atmosphere is bright and vibrant with intellectual activity. They seem to be confederates; you can almost detect a triumphant look when they share the scanty frugal meals in the ascetically furnished room. All these girls have responded to Frau Schenierer's call and have come forward when she asked for volunteers, to be trained as teachers.

Not many have seen "Catachina No. 1." It was a place hidden from the eyes of the world; and of those who have seen it not many are left to tell the story, to recall the heroic hours that were spent in study and happy privation. Here, a real pioneer was at work. She allowed nothing and no one to discourage her or belittle her plans; she marched on, and the harder she had to fight, the brighter became the sparks that flew from her eyes when she came to grips with the realities of life and made them bend to her will. Twenty-five young girls, none older than sixteen, were the first willing disciples who lived with Sara Schenierer in her two-room flat, sharing every hour of the day under her guidance for several months. They all copied from the exercise books which their teacher had filled in Vienna and they felt rich in the possession of the thoughts gathered from there. They all copied out a guidebook for teachers that she had compiled. Though it was simple, primitive and old-fashioned in its style, it seemed to them a panacea of teaching problems. Here is a dialogue between teacher and pupil as it appeared in her book:

Teacher:	וואס ביסטו?	What are you?
Pupil:	יאך בין א אידיש קינד.	I am a Jewish child.
Teacher:	מיט וואס ביסטו א אידיש קינד?	What makes you a Jewish child?
Pupil:	יאך בין א אידיש קינד, ווייל איך האב די הייליגע תורה וואס האט געגעבן דער הייליגע באשעפער.	I am a Jewish child, because I have the holy Torah, given by the Holy Creator.
Teacher:	וואס שטייט געשריבן אין די הייליגע תורה?	What is written in the Holy Torah?
Pupil:	אין דער הייליגע תורה שטייט געשריבן אז דער הייליגע באשעפער האט באשאפן די הימלן און די ערד.	It is written in the Holy Torah that the Holy Creator created the heavens and earth.



BETH JAKOB SCHOOL AT LIEPAJA

BETH JAKOB PROFESSIONAL SCHOOL

AT WARSZAWA





TYPICAL PICTURE OF BETH JAKOB SCHOOL

IN A POLISH VILLAGE

And so it goes on for pages and pages. It is enough material to keep curly tops gathered around you, and it can serve as a key to the first gates of knowledge, love and loyalty. Then, after a few months of this kind of training are over, Frau Schenierer leads her students into the arena.

I recall one of these events. It was Gittel's turn. Gittel was fifteen years of age. She had a pair of bright black eyes that were set like jewels in her firm, round, and childish face. She had a melodious voice and a clear way of pronouncing her words. Every sentence she spoke had a ring that carried it about the room. Her movements were graceful and assured. All this when she was only fifteen years of age! But, she had learned the use of hairpins. With hairpins you can put your plaits up in a grown-up fashion and if you also wear a longer skirt than usual, you can look older than yourself. Gittel is sitting in the train next to Frau Schenierer, traveling to a town some hours away from home; on her lap, from sheets of paper, she is memorizing a speech that she wrote or rather that they both worked out together. It is all about the Jewish woman, her part in our great history, her mission in our own days, her duties as the mother of the coming generations. And when they alight in the town of their destination, big posters on the walls of the Jewish quarters invite all women of the town into the large Town Hall to a mass meeting to hear the two speakers.

The hall is filled to capacity. This is an event in a "*Klein Shtetel*." They all come, those that are interested and those that are only curious to see, all those that welcome a break in the everyday monotony and all those that hope to be able to sneer at the old-fashioned talk of two unknown women-speakers. The child on the platform hears her heart beat as loud as a drum. She sees hundreds of faces staring up at her and she hears herself delivering the speech she had memorized in the morning, and she faintly realizes that the multitude and the situation she has to master make her speak in a voice that is not her own, with a confidence and a fire that seem to have suddenly come to her from the unknown. Her eyes roam over the crowd, she seems to master them all, and when Frau Schenierer, after she has finished, asks the audience whether they are willing to start a school with this girl as a teacher, there is an enthusiastic response. They enroll their children, and contribute to the setting up of the school. Gittel remains behind to be the one and only teacher, while Frau Schenierer takes the next train to make her second and third trips to establish further schools.

And Gittel and Sura Lea and Esther, they all teach, each in her own school, each from the same source and guidebook, each in the same style and manner. And after some months they have come to the guidebook's last page and all their knowledge has been exhausted. There is nothing left, they have no books to draw from and they have never been instructed to go to the sources themselves. But the pupils are not aware of any spiritual famine threatening them; the schools are at work and they are set on a very sound foundation. Gittel and her colleagues have built on that foundation with all the young, fresh, unbroken strength that flows when pioneers go into action.

By the year 1939 there were in Poland hundreds of Beth Jacob Schools[2]. The training of the teachers had become more methodical and thorough; more modern and, altogether, educationally sounder. Meanwhile Dr. Leo Deutschlander had set up in the place of Sara

Schenierer's first College a "Teacher's Training Seminary" of which we shall write later. But the aim of the schools did not change.

A BETH JACOB SCHOOL

A Beth Jacob school was a school but it was also an organization and a club, brightened up by the constant power of love and discipline. These things wove an original pattern into the quiet regular routine of school life. The teachers were all young. They all lived away from their own homes, away from their parents, and were devoting themselves to one purpose only, consumed by a fire which had been kindled by Sara Schenierer. They fulfilled their task even beyond their abilities, they planned and schemed, spending that youthful and radiant vitality which seemed to be so particularly strong in Polish Jewish girls. Skillfully they would weave a web capable of attracting and holding all those young ones entrusted to them. No other interests would interfere with their work. They were dedicated to their mission, like high adventurers or great artists. Their school became the horizon against which they set up their Beth Jacob dream, compounded of vision and reality. To the children and young girls who flocked in numbers to these schools, the young teachers became friends as well as instructors. They were important personalities in the Polish town, vested with directing power over the young souls. Slowly it became obvious how the almost lost ground of Jewishness was being regained and gradually redeemed.

Every one who has seen Beth Jacob magazines knows the typical photo of a large group of girls around a teacher not very much older than themselves. In the very way of grouping is revealed a kind of fellowship. Thousands of such photos existed. Hundreds stood in frames on small mantelpieces, on little shelves, by the girls' beds, in homes all over the country. And hundreds were carried about in the handbags of Beth Jacob girls as their dearest possession, carried even to journey's end. They were recollections of radiant days and promises. When, on fine summer days, teachers and pupils went across the meadows, talking and singing, they did not know whether it was just the summer that made them feel so happy, or whether it was their own youth or the secure feeling that they were guided by one .they could admire and at the same time identify with their own parental home. The link to parents and traditions grew stronger, and the schools stood like citadels fortified by the pupils and under the High Command of Gittel and her colleagues. Here among the girls, the inspiration of the chassidic life had found its way into the woman's world. It had formed it own style, softened and differently molded, but it was of the same fibre that made the Hassidim crowd round their Rebbe, made them stand for hours to catch a glimpse of him, made them unfold all their latent powers in the elevated atmosphere of chassidic devotion. No longer was the life of the Jewish daughter empty at home. She too had her community life, her school, centre and club, where there were comradeship and studies and well-organized activities— an outlet and a spur for her eager ambitions.

III:

The centre of the whole school organization and the pattern according to which the ever-increasing number of schools formed themselves was the Beth Jacob Seminary in Cracow.[3] There it was in Cracow, a huge building on the bank of the Vistula, a five-story house

overlooking the river. This house was a world of activity; there 120 young women, aged between sixteen and eighteen, concentrated on their intensive studies, filling the day between early morning reveille and bedtime at night. These girls had come from all parts of Poland and Lithuania and had been selected from hundreds of applicants. They attended the Cracow Seminary in order to train under Frau Schenierer as future teachers and to share life with her for a period of two years.

The studying and training went on all day long and was rounded off in the evening and on Shabbath by activities leisurely and recreative in character. Teachers and students formed one large family. They all seemed to be closely linked to each other, welded into one great circle. There was a fire of youthful enthusiasm and a purity of purpose, a satisfaction of duty fulfilled. Hours of study stretch into one another without any fatigue, the elasticity of mind seems unlimited, understanding bursts open, the intellectual spark ignites the emotions, releases new energies that seem to give unending drive to pupils and teachers.

I was a teacher in the Beth Jacob Seminary for many years. Here I wish to set a memorial to all those shining lights most of whom now illumine the eternal path; a memorial to those shining eyes that questioned you, that searched for deeper and clearer truth, that claimed and acknowledged and showed their receptivity to understanding in a flash of the eye that was unmistakable. Here is a tribute to all those voices that were heard in the classrooms, saying words which were like shrines containing treasures, which they had gathered and wanted to preserve. Never since have I heard such young voices, caressing the contents of their words, voices so warm and so keen and so anxious to express thoughts adequately. I want to pay tribute, to those Beth Jacob Girls of Cracow who gathered for years round Frau Schenierer, to their unflinching loyalty in face of the high demands that were made upon them, asking them to keep pace with the very exacting self-discipline that Sara Schenierer expected from all her followers.

She demanded much of them. Wrapped up in a happiness of perfect harmony with herself and drawing continuous strength from her ideals, she demanded, with the vigor of a general, implicit obedience from all her students. But she was loved like a mother, with a love that increased with the span of time and growing maturity of her pupils. As they all would feel the security of belonging to her family of children when crowding round her, they would submit and give in. Some would do it with a little sigh, some with a slight revolutionary "murmur" in their heart, others with subdued longing or good-humored resignation-but they all gave in, gave in as you give in to a mother whom you love too much to have her serenity clouded.

This was the greatest mystery, something almost magic, and quite inexplicable, something that will probably evade forever any attempt at psychological or analytical explanation. All the young girls, those from Poland and those from Lithuania, those with a revolutionary rebel spirit and those who were by nature inclined to accept dictatorial leadership, those who had a searching mind, and those who found all answers ready in their own piety, those that came from wealthy homes, and those who had always lived in the squalid basement dwellings of the Ghetto, the vivacious and progressive as well as the humble types, they all loved Frau Schenierer.

When that love was expressed, quite an uproar could be created. I remember those summer afternoons. All the girls were bent over their studies in the large common room. Frau Schenierer had been absent for a week on a mission to the provinces. Suddenly you would hear a clattering of hooves on the pavement below, a carriage jolting along, and then stopping in front of the house. One girl who had run to the window would call out "Frau Schenierer, Frau Schenierer" and fifty, sixty, seventy others would echo this call. Then all pens are flung down, all books are pushed aside and all girls rush down the stairs, they all crowd round the carriage and Frau Schenierer is triumphantly led, almost carried upstairs, and everything else has stopped in a breathless, excited mood. And although Frau Schenierer had been traveling and lecturing through the night, perhaps through two or more nights, she would, following this reception, unpack the experiences of her journey. She would give a report in a way that was a mixture of seriousness and amusement. Later, only much later, every girl would find her place back in the interrupted work, happy for having had the privilege of listening to Sara Schenierer's report of her travels.

This was the spell of Frau Schenierer's personality. She was able to produce in every one of her thousands of disciples a unique feeling that was a composition of love and respect and childlike devotion.

She had a good sense of humor. She liked stories, jokes and riddles. To her, nature was an illustration of Tehillim (The Book of Psalms), psychology and science an application of God's wisdom. Nothing had a meaning for her unless it could be connected with the supreme purpose. Even the new coat we persuaded her to buy would mean the enhancing of her prestige for the purpose of being able better to disseminate her ideals among those who stood yet aside or afar. Never would she start the delicious Shabbos meal without exclaiming in a merry, almost chuckling voice לכבוד שבת, (For the glory of the Shabbos), while dipping her spoon into the hot, golden soup.

Yom Kippur Katan (a day of penance on the eve of the new moon) was always a special day in the Cracow Seminary. Whatever Sara Schenierer's idea behind it was, whether it was her natural piety that clung to this custom or whether she was following a Kabbalistic line, it always became the occasion for a memorable unfolding of Jewish History to the young girls under her banner. Followed by one hundred and twenty girls she walked on Yom Kippur Katan to "Remo's Shul" (named after the coauthor of the Shulchan Aruch, Rabbi Moses Iserlis) in the Ghetto. After they had all said their prayers inside the small old Shul, they walked to the graves of the Remo, the "Bach" (the great R' Joel Sirkis), the author of "Tosefoth Yomtov" (Rabbi Yomtov Heller) and other giants of the Jewish past. With the book of Tehillim in their hands, they felt included in the circle that connects every loyal Jew with those great and holy luminaries of the Torah, and thus the names of these great men and all they stood for, became imprinted on the minds of the girls while they stood in front of the tombstones. They felt eternity and mortality at peace with each other. The tranquility around the graves of these immortals inspired the girls to make their own contributions towards a lasting effort. Sara Schenierer probably could sense that those walls drew the young generation into the living circle of pulsating Jewish history. And on Lag B'aomer which is the "Jahrzeitstag" of the "Remo," when thousands of Chassidim thronged the Beth Olam, making the place tremble with the vibration of their presence and creating an

In Iyar 5761(May 2001) a group of more than one hundred women, travelled to Poland on the Aguda Women's historic pilgrimage to Cracow, to honor the memory of Sara Schenirer *a"h.*



Number 1 Katarzyny (Catachina) Street. When Bais Yaakov outgrew Sara Schenirer's apartment, the *Va'ad Hachinuch* had rooms donated in this building for the school.



Number 30 Augustjanska Street. This building was acquired by the *Va'ad Hachinuch* after the school outgrew the premises at number 1 Katarzyny Street.

On 9 Iyar (May 3), a plaque was placed on the building at 10 Stanislava Street as part of the rededication by the Sara Schenirer Commemorative Committee of the Agudah Women of America.



Number 10 Stanislava Street. Final home of the Bais Yaakov Seminary and central headquarters of the worldwide Bais Yaakov movement. The foundation was laid on Elul 16, 5687-1927, and the building was completed in June 1931.



The apartment in which Sara Schenirer lived.

atmosphere aglow with religious fervor, then Jewish History became overwhelming to those very young and impressionable girls round Frau Schenierer. It is good to lean back against these ancient walls. They are pillars in a world to which we add our own bricks. And when the girls went home, they felt that their footsteps on the cobbled street of the Cracow Ghetto echoed the footsteps of those great and holy men that had walked there in the past. They resolved to make sure that their echo would still resound in the future.

IV:

"Stanislawa 10" was the citadel of the Beth Jacob Movement.[4] This large building was set up to bring the Beth Jacob students into pleasant, adequate surroundings. The girls would no longer have to share one large room that served as a study during the day, no longer would they have to climb narrow staircases which at the same time were used as a day-nursery for the many children of the overcrowded tenement houses, no longer would they have to study in rooms over backyards which resounded with the chatter of neighboring women. They saw a house being built on a broad foundation that would be their Residential College. There was quite a ceremony on the occasion of the setting of the foundation stone on a large site in Stanislawa Street. On a decorated platform, erected for the occasion on the muddy, empty site, speeches were made by various notables, promising that one day, in the near future, a new building would stand on this site, complete and spacious; that the pioneer students would then be rewarded for all their present privations and move into beautiful rooms well arranged and equipped. The crowd assembled on the side (thousands had come in honor of the occasion), applauding the words; the eyes of the Beth Jacob students widened in this cheering vision of the forthcoming improvements. And Frau Schenierer, who stood with her disciples amongst the audience - shunning, as a pious woman of her type would do, glaring platform publicity - sent up a prayer to G-d. It was in joyful anticipation of her dreams fulfilled, as well as in trembling fear, lest comforts and the luxury of normal standards might stifle the heroic efforts that had brought this movement into being. The mother's heart desired the best for her children. But the founder of the movement, who had seen Beth Jacob pushing itself through with an elementary force of defiance against odds, was somewhat afraid of the debilitating influence of easy conditions. Although she loved and appreciated beauty, she was always alert against beauty's possible dangers. And so the wishes of a mother mingled with the fervent prayer of one who felt herself responsible to history and posterity, and prayed for strength to ward off slackness in a movement that had to continue in defiance of a world of opposition.

While Sara Schenierer stood amongst the crowd on the 16th of Elul, 1927, her mind wandered back to the days when they had all shared a morsel of bread, back to the days when they slept crowded in the dressmaker's workroom, back to the endless hours of study and spiritual delight they had enjoyed together like a taste of transcendent pleasures. She felt the surge of loyalty and devotion that had made those hours blessed in the midst of squalor, and she prepared herself to be the keeper of this new and modern home so that its soul should not depart from it, but dwell in this frame in the same way as it had in the old one.

And then came the day in June, 1931. The ground floor and the first floor of the house were finished, while the four other floors stood still raw and unfinished. One hundred and twenty

pupils moved into this building, which was more of a builder's workplace than a place fit for habitation. Cement, dust, tools of the workmen all over the place, floors that were not boarded and entrances that were without doors; yet they moved in; and from the inside they watched the gradual completion that spread over years. The guiding hand of Frau Schenierer was strong over them and the spirit of the school prevailed. Those who visited the Seminary in the years between 1933 and 1939 saw a fine building, well equipped, large dormitories and study rooms and a beautiful dining hail, sunlit and well furnished. But the building was never fully completed. The outside decorations, which were the last thing on the plan, were never actually made. When the hostile wind of destruction howled over the Jewish quarters of Cracow, the Beth Jacob Seminary in Stanislawa 10 still displayed an unfinished facade, bare against the sky. The powers that wove a pattern of Jewish history inside never made themselves evident to the passerby. Deep down in the earth, below the foundation stone, there rests a document. It tells of the lofty ideals this house stood for and embodies the record of valiant men who sponsored and supported Sara Schenierer's Beth Jacob throughout the years. It contains also a prayer for the success of this holy work. High up in heaven there is the record of the martyrdom, heroism, agony and incredible suffering of which the walls of this house will forever be silent witnesses. The name of Yehudah Leib Orlean, who was the trustee of Sara Schenierer's spiritual legacy after she left this world, dominates the last phase of the history of this building, the details of which we shall never know.

But let me go back to those brilliant, sunlit days when crisp bagels were sold at every street corner in Cracow by busy little women who earned their pennies in restless toil so that their men folk should have time to study the Torah; when the smell of pickled herrings and onions coming up from the basement shops scented the air of the narrow cobbled street; when the Yeshivoth were resounding with the vigorous young voices of learning, when Beth Jacob was budding and bringing forth blooms, when six hundred letters were filed in the secretary's office in Stanislawa 10 asking for teachers to be sent hurriedly to hundreds of towns for the thousands of children whose parents impatiently clamored for their children's instruction in the Beth Jacob way. Let us talk of those bright days when the girls' life was unclouded, when the School changed face several times a day, from College to Club and residential home; when the pendulum of their activities swung between the gaiety of youth and thoughtful search for the true essence of Jewish teaching.

July and August were hot days in the Cracow Ghetto. The heat and stench of the factories and tanneries, right next to the residential apartment houses, made the air exceedingly dense. We left Cracow for two months every summer. We had rented a number of lightly built houses in the country. Huge wagons drew up in front of Stanislaw 10; hundreds of suitcases were stored in them, also bedding, kitchen and household goods. For the next two months our schoolrooms would be meadows and woods and the fields of lonely country places. We marched out at 6 a.m., in the cool morning air, for physical training. We learned Tehillim in the rays of the rising sun, and by the slope of the hill we learned Hebrew grammar while the bells of the cows grazing by tingled to the conjugations of the verbs. We read מסילת ישרים, S. R. Hirsch's "19 Letters" and "Horev," as well as Isaac Breuer's "Messiasspuren" (Traces of the Messiah) and "Juden problem", whilst the scent of the Carpathian vegetation filled the air. We listened to lectures of

learned men who came to us after they had become used to the fact that there was a colony of girls who were themselves already young scholars and intelligent listeners. We would sit in the meadows and have debates on education and there the students would discuss improvements in their own school units.

At the same time, these summer courses were attended by the majority of those Beth Jacob teachers who had already found teaching positions in various schools. They flocked to these camps, formed themselves into groups and thus, during their summer vacation, they became once more disciples of Frau Schenierer and her teaching staff, in order to increase their knowledge and to keep abreast of educational developments. Thus the spirit of Beth Jacob never grew stale in them and the personal bond that linked them with their tutors and comrades never weakened.

The summer continuation courses of Beth Jacob were the backbone of the movement, which gave strength and support to an ever-increasing number of girls. It stimulated the emotions while it strengthened the intellect.[5]

V:

These courses were the work of Dr. Leo Deutschlander. They were the manifestation of his educational genius that had lifted the Beth Jacob from the dream of a dressmaker, from the vision of an untrained enthusiast, to the level of a systematic, well-planned organization. What would have become of Sara Schenierer's visionary fervor had it not been joined by Providence with Leo Deutschlander's genius of organization and education? It might have been a fire doomed to extinction for want of fuel to sustain it. But in 1924 he did come along. He saw the tender beginnings, he recognized the latent forces and he set himself to work. He reared the child he had found in its promising infancy. And he found scope for his foresight and educational talents. Leo Deutschlander made of Beth Jacob a well-organized movement. The syllabus, curriculum, examinations, continuation courses, as well as the financial foundation of the whole work, the building of the beautiful Seminary-all these were the result of his wisdom and effort.

The spark that was kindled by a daughter of chassidic tradition was fanned by the methodical manner of a man who had been educated in the best schools of modern European training, who had picked up what was best in European culture, and had blended it with the Jewish stores of his mind. He was deliberate in his plans; there was nothing abrupt or impulsive about him. He was by nature a reconciler of contrasts and his guidebook was Tehillim. There was no harshness in his disposition. Wherever there was beauty or goodness, he discovered it and held it up to be admired. In the valuable achievements of modern culture he saw the reflection of the Torah's eternal truth and as such he acknowledged it and borrowed from it. Thus he could speak to youth. Thus he could rouse and satisfy all those who felt the Ghetto too confining. Thus he could fascinate thousands of intelligent Jewish girls in Poland, whose desire for intellectual freedom had grown to formidable dimensions, and who were in danger of being lured away from Judaism by the phantom of philosophical negations. He could understand their questions and difficulties, spoken or unspoken. He eased their problems by his blessed smile, he analyzed them in his academic manner, and he threw a new light on them in his generous artistic

vein. He solved riddles by the blend of his wisdom and his harmonious personality. There were many eager girls who had loved Sara Schenierer, but needed him to help clear their minds. They would never have found their way without him. He linked them to the intellectual world at large and, made them stronger on their own ground. He himself radiated harmony. Discipline and order, system and method, were introduced by him. He enforced them in his own entirely undictatorial way. And while examinations were held in the Seminary in an atmosphere of awe and respect, he would take a leisurely walk along the corridor to the examination room and address pertinent questions to the candidates in a sociable, almost soothing, way.

Leo Deutschlander spent two or three months of every year in the Seminary. All of a sudden he would appear and walk into the study room like one who had never been away. He smiled his own smile, seemed to know everyone, everyone's troubles. He came with ideas, suggestions, new ways, help, support, progress. He was always the same. Kindness came from deep within him. With the "Tanach" in his hand, he went into the classroom. He unfolded his thoughts and appeared to grow while he spoke. He seemed to exchange the plane on which we live for a more worthy one. When he had finished, the spell endured. Jewish law had become one with the law of beauty and freedom for which these girls longed so much; there was no more conflict, there was harmony in the Universe. The "Thou shalt" that some had felt as a burden had become transformed into a triumphant "I will."

Thus he stayed for weeks and then he left again, to come back when weariness threatened to hamper everyday life in the Seminary. None of the students could have realized how hard he worked, how he had spent the months in between his visits; that he had been through the countries of Europe and had spoken before many organizations, visited fashionable drawing-rooms in order to make friends for the growing work in Poland and Lithuania. I often watched him in this field work. In his gait and deportment he was always the scholar, modest, yet sovereign, without pretense or disguise, with the slight touch of a Bohemian, copying no one, being himself. For years he had given up rest and repose and the comfort of his pleasant home, had written and dictated letters in strange hotel rooms in all the capitals of the world, telephoned and wired across the ocean-all to keep Beth Jacob and the Yeshivoth alive.

The banker whom he faced in his comfortable office, and approached for financial support, had perhaps not heard anything about Jews and Judaism for years, his ambitions being of quite a different nature. Yet he could not help feeling that the cause for which his visitor pleaded so warmly and eloquently and without any obvious effort must be a worthy one. Leo Deutschlander's cultured and noble personality, with the mischievous spark of humor, was guarantee for the cause. He felt that here truth was represented and to this truth he had to pay his tribute. Sometimes the work was hard. But never was Leo Deutschlander bitter or out of gear. Perhaps he felt a little weary or had a pang of grief. But then the cheerfulness of his blessed nature helped him to fight any discouragement

VI:

In Eretz Yisrael, where the remnants of Israel found a home on holy ground, the Beth Jacob movement struck fresh roots and is now bringing forth fresh blossoms. From Cracow

through the hell of Europe into the haven of our homeland, Beth Jacob has remained unimpaired in its strength and undiluted in its program.

In the new developing land of Israel, the Beth Jacob Schools are on duty to see that Jewish girls are taught the sanctity of Jewish home and family life, so that they will be, like the mothers of old, the guarantors that the Torah will continue to rule the life of our people. "Thus shalt thou speak to the house of Jacob" The houses of Jacob, our sages explain, are the women who in all nations and at all times have the greatest influence in the making of the coming generation.

Beth Jacob began in Eretz Yisrael with two teachers' training colleges in Tel Aviv and a larger one in Jerusalem; as well as many schools and kindergartens too. Chava Landsberg, who worked for many years with Sara Schenierer and Leo Deutschlander in Cracow and in Vienna, accompanied Beth Jacob on its route from Europe to Israel and helped to transplant the Beth Jacob ideal to the Holy Land. She died in 1947. Also in other countries, wherever Orthodox Jewish congregations are found, Beth Jacob Schools have been set up, and although the local coloring may bring variation, the fundamental principles are everywhere the same. The Beth Jacob movement is woven into the fabric of the great history of the Jewish people.

The figure of Sara Schenierer will become more and more legendary. The story of her life will not lose its spell and will grow more touching as the movement grows wider and branches out. As time passes on, the personal touch that is still lingering round her name will fade and she will become a historical personality, known as the founder of Beth Jacob. But no one will know of the many who worked with her and gave of their strength and devotion to breathe life and vigor into the movement. Alas, for those girls who passed untimely into the realm "beyond", for those "*who were lovely and pleasant in their lives and in death were not parted,*" alas, for those sweet young teachers, so wholehearted in their efforts, so generous in their love for the school children, so loyal unto death to Sara Schenierer and to their own mission.

Will Beth Jacob ever again bring forth girls like Hanka Grossfield Biegun, the brainy, gay-spirited young person who, schooled in the Beth Jacob since the age of fifteen, had passed through all the stages of self-discipline and had become Sara Schenierer's first assistant in the Seminary and the central figure for all the girls after Sara Schenierer's death? Hashem's blessing had rested upon her to find grace in the sight of all. And Lacia Sczaranska Wasciac, who in those difficult years, when the Beth Jacob had to squeeze itself into the poor Ghetto of Cracow, saw to it that the young enthusiasts should not suffer for lack of health and care; and when in those first days, fanatic concentration on studies found them all forgetful of essential needs, she went quietly about setting up kitchens, healthy dormitories and sickbeds providing for all needs. There were Esther Goldstoff, Gittel Teitelbaum-Pass, Bela Gross, Betty Rothschild-Baumgarten, Ida Bauminger, Ester Heitner, Rosa Heitner, those brilliant teachers, firstlings of the Beth Jacob movement, trained in the movement and later on becoming lecturers in the Seminary. There were Yehudah Leib Orlean, Alexander Zysche Friedman, Gerson Friedenzon, Senator Moshe Deutscher, Reb Ascher Spira, Freilich and Meier Heitner. Their names are recorded here as they have no graves or tombstones. But their souls are woven in the loom of life because they contributed their lives to the success of the Beth Jacob long before anyone could realize that by



בית יעקב

ליטעראַרישע שריפט פאַר שול און היים

דינט דיענסט פון בית־יעקב שולן אין אַרגאַניזאַציעס בנות־אגודת־שואל א"ן פוילן

רעדאַקטירט דורך א"ג פרידזאן

שרה שענירער נשמתה עדן

פרייטיק ערב שבת־קודש ד' ריקהל כ"ז אדר א' תרצ"ה מצר ליכט־צינדן האט נאך ז לעבנדיגער קראנקייט אריסגיהרט איר ריינע נשמה אין עלטער פון צוויי און פופציק יאר די בשטאפערין אין בריען פון אונדזער בחורטע, מרי שרה שענירער זכרונה לברכה!

ת נ צ ב"ה

טיף גיבויגן שטייען מיר פאַרן קבר פון דער גרויסער ליכטיקער יידישער פערזענלעכקייט, די בּאַשאַפערין פון דער הויכער בית־יעקב־אידיי, די מאַמע פון דער בנות־באַוועגונג, די ערשטע מיטגרינדערין און שטענדיקע מיטאַרביטערין פון אונדזער זשורנאַל

פרוי שרה שענירער זכרונה לברכה

גרויס איז פאַר אונדז דאָס אומגליק און שטאַרק די וויטיק, מי יתן לנו תמורתה ?

די רעדאַקציע

Announcement of the passing of Sara Schenirer
in the Bais Yaakov Journal כ"ו אדר א' תרפ"ה

יחד עם כל בית יעקב ובית ישראל מבכים
אנו את השרפה אשר שרף ד' בהלקה
מאתנו האשה הצנועה והכשרה אם כל בית
יעקב ובנות אגודת ישראל מרת

ש ר ה ע"ה ש ע נ י ד ע ר

שנפטרה בש"ט במעלי שבתא כ"ו אדר ראשון
בעיר שהרביצה תורה ויהדות בקרקא.

בפרי עבודתה של דור ישרות שהעמידה
אחרי' ושמתחנכות עוד בבתי ספר בית
יעקב במדינה ובחו"ל—נמצא תנחומים.

מרכז אגודת ישראל בפולניא

ההסתדרות של מוסדות חינוך
הדתיים „חורב" בפולניא

מרכז הסתדרות בתה"ס
„בית יעקב" בפולניא.

Originally appeared in "Darcheinu", a prewar Agudas Yisrael journal, 2 Adar 2, 5695, 1935

their work history was being made. They belong to the champions of the Beth Jacob movement together with the precious thousands whose names cannot be recorded in these fragmentary annals. The continuation of the Beth Jacob movement is their Kaddish.

I have tried in this sketch to describe the personality of Sara Schenierer and the movement created by her. But as her personality is a mystery and eludes description, I shall conclude by letting Sara Schenierer speak for herself, by reproducing in English translation, the words of her last will, written on her death bed, to her thousands of pupils all over the country:

"What shall we say, what shall we speak, how shall we justify ourselves? There are many thoughts in the heart of man, but only the counsel of the Lord prevails. Whatever the Merciful does, He does for our good. May His great Name be blessed for his manifold kindnesses.

"All my life I complained about my inability to cry at the time of prayer. But now it is hard for me to keep back my tears. Only now do I feel how strong is the inner bond that ties me to my children. But spiritual ties are very strong. They last forever. Just as I cry as I am writing to you now, so will your tears flow as you read these my words. May it be the will of our Father in Heaven that your tears and mine reach the Throne of Glory to pray for Israel's complete redemption.

"I am turning to you, my dear daughters, going out into the great world to guide and train the daughters of Israel and to establish homes in Israel.

"I am convinced that you understand well your great task. We have a good G-d in Heaven and he aids every person to walk in the way that he desires. Throughout the years of my work, men were sent to me who were genuine helpers.

"I should like to single out two grave dangers which threaten you, my daughters. Beware of the feeling of pride, arrogance or cocksureness that persuades one to think that he is great in achievements and deserving of honor. Secondly, keep away from the other extreme, the feeling of inferiority which whispers to man: 'you are nothing, without any value'. This exaggerated humility causes sadness to abide in man, introduces doubt into his heart as to whether his work will succeed.

"If the feeling of sadness should overcome you, if doubt should arise in your heart whether you are worthy of the mission entrusted to you, whether you are fulfilling your tasks properly - then examine yourself whether you have done your duty or not. If your answer is positive, then remember what I told you every day after prayer, quoting the passage in Deuteronomy. 'And now, oh, Israel, what does the Lord thy G-d ask of you, except to revere the L-rd, your G-d, to walk in all His ways, to love Him and to serve the L-rd thy G-d with all thy heart and soul.'

"And now my dear daughters, you are standing before the severest test, that of life itself. For sometimes life is hard, but in your hands, by the blessing of the L-rd, are strong weapons of defense. They are fear of G-d, reverence, love and service. Your sainted teacher, Yehudah Leib Orlean, once said, at the time of a formal examination: 'The tests have shown that you know how to learn and to teach. The problem which troubles us is whether you will also understand how to train Jewish souls.'

Sara Schenierer-The Story of a Great Movement

"Before the High Priest entered on the service in the Holy of Holies, he would be asked 'Is there any whisper of evil intention in your heart, have you forgotten or perhaps not even learned? One can remedy ignorance or forgetfulness, but if your intention has become impure you would desecrate the Holy of Holies.'

"My dear girls, you are going out into the great world. Your task is to plant the holy seed in the souls of pure children. In a sense, the destiny of Israel of old is in your hands. Be strong and of good courage. Don't tire. Don't slacken your efforts. You have heard of a Chassid who came to his Rebbe and said joyfully, 'Rabbi, I have finished the whole Talmud.' 'What has the Talmud taught you?' asked the Rebbe. 'Your learning is fine, but your practical task is the main thing.'

Let me complete these words with the verses you all know so well.

עבדו את ה' בשמחה.

שויתי ה' לנגדי תמיד.

ראשית חכמה יראת ה'.

למנות ימינו כן הודע.

תורת ה' תמימה משיבת נפש

ה' ישמור צאתך ובואך מעתה ועד עולם. ה' יקשיב לתפילתינו וישלח לנו את גואל הצדק ואת הגאולה השלימה, אמן!

May the Lord guard your going out and your coming in from now and forever more.

May He listen to our prayers and send us the true redeemer and true redemption.

Yours forever,

Sarah Schenierer

My beloved daughters, may God grant you long life."

Cracow, 1935

Notes

The following are excerpts from a report written by Dr. Deutschlander, that appeared in a fund-raising journal documenting the progress of Bais Yaakov until and including the academic year of 1928-1929. This journal was released in 1930, in Vienna, by the central Beth Jacob office to assist in helping raise funds for the Beth Jacob movement and its seminary building. The foundation for the new Seminary building was laid in Elul, 5687, 1927 and it was completed in the summer of 1931. (The translation from German was done by S. C. Reisman.)

[1] In 1913, at a conference in Czernowitz, one of the Jewish Leaders of Eastern European Jewry took a stand to encourage the education of girls. Although, even today, we are confronted with opposition from those who insist that the גמרא forbids girls to learn תורה, we have here the פסק and decision of the greatest *halachic* authority of our

Notes (cont.)

times, Rabbi Yisroel Meir HaCohen (Chofetz Chaim) in ליקוטי הלכות, מס' סוטה כ"ז who sanctions the work of בית יעקב and Keren HaTorah.

The first בית יעקב School was founded in 1917, in Cracow by Frau Sarah Schenierer, completely on her initiative, starting with 30 students. A small rented room served as the classroom. In 1919, as a result of the demands of many facets of the Orthodox population, the local Agudas Yisroel of Cracow decided to take the school under its wings. They selected a Vaad Hachinuch consisting of Mr. A. Spira, Senator M. Deutscher and Mr. M. Heitner who still serve as the administrators of the Cracow school and donated rooms at No. 1 Katarzyna Street for the school. The school in Cracow became the example and prototype for all the other schools. After this, the Rabbinical Council of Agudas Yisroel showed their support for spreading the בית יעקב idea and requests came pouring in from all the provinces and suburbs to help set up similar schools in their own villages. So Frau Schenierer decided to send out some of her most talented students to become teachers. She had to give them some basic instructions on how to tackle their new task, after which they were sent to the different provinces and villages.

At the same time, the school in Cracow was flooded with applications. The Vaad Hachinuch decided to acquire their own premises and build on a third floor at Augustjanska No. 30 with 9 additional rooms. By 1924, besides for Cracow, there were 19 other schools with about 2,000 students!

[2] *Dr. Deutschlander graphically depicts the explosive growth of the Bais Yaakov movement in his article, up until 1929.*

YEAR	SCHOOLS OPENED	NEW STUDENTS	TOTAL SCHOOLS	TOTAL NUMBER Of STUDENTS
1919-1923	8		8	1,130
1924	22	3,360	30	4,490
1925	19	2,095	49	6,585
1926	6	755	55	7,340
1927	32	3,565	87	10,905
1928	27	2,700	114	14,505
1929	33	3,340	147	16,145
1933 *			265	37,981

** According to information documented in Carry Me in Your Heart by Mrs. Pearl Benisch*

[3] There was an international conference of Agudas Yisroel in Cracow in the fall of 1924. The agenda included the problem of girls' education. Both the representatives of the Vaad Hachinuch of Bais Yaakov as well as delegates from abroad such as Dr. Nathan Birnbaum, realized the importance of this fundamental work and managed to persuade the director of the Keren HaTorah organization to take over both the financial and educational aspects of the wonderful establishment of בית יעקב.

The main branches were in Cracow, Lemberg, Premysl and Lublin. At the first Bais Yaakov conference which was held in Warsaw, various resolutions were formed to help lay the groundwork for helping the schools grow and develop.

The educational goals of Bais Yaakov work that were outlined at various conferences (Cracow 15 Sept. 1924, Warsaw 17 Feb. 1925, Amsterdam 25/26 Dec. 1926, Riga 22-26 Feb. 1927, Warsaw Feb. 1927) were as follows:

1. To convert the Cracow school into a professional teachers' training seminary, as a 2 year course instead of 3 months, with visiting teachers from abroad.
2. An annual 2 month advanced teachers' training course for current teachers.
3. The acquisition of teacher and student textbooks for the Bais Yaakov schools.
4. The founding of a Seminary in Cracow which should also serve as the headquarters of the administration of the entire Bais Yaakov system.
5. Setting up training courses in different fields for those who completed the 8 grades of the *Chavatzeles* gymnasium in Warsaw.
6. Setting up trade schools in Lemberg, Cracow and Warsaw for the school graduates.
7. The founding of schools and teachers' training programs in Vienna and Czechoslovakia.

Notes (cont.)

This program was carried out completely. The central Keren HaTorah organization acted in accordance with the resolutions of the conference in Warsaw. The following lecturers were sent to the Seminary in Cracow: Miss Betty Rothschild-Zurich (1925-1926), Miss Judith Rosenbaum-Frankfurt am Main (Spring 1926), Miss Eva Landsberg-Breslau (Spring 1927). These teachers were responsible to assist their seminary classes to finish off their teacher's degree *(ibid.)*

[4] The laying of the foundation took place 16 Elul 5687 (13 Sept. 1927), in the presence of many statesmen and many local city councilmen, and of course the members of the Jewish administration and many thousands of participants.

The building plans were the result of the coordinated work of German, Austrian and Polish architects. The entire building was made out of solid concrete and on the top, there was planned a terrace rooftop, for the girls to relax on.

So far, $27,000 has been invested in the raw materials required for the building. In order to complete it, with the minimum amount of facilities, another $30,000 would be required. This amount is urgently needed...*(ibid.)*

[5] For additional advancement and training of any of the current teachers, annual courses were organized in the villages of the Polish mountains (Robow 1925, Jordanow 1926-1927 and Rabka 1928-1929) during school vacations to help them acquire teachers' degrees. At the same time these teachers were given a chance to enjoy their vacation time in the various holiday resorts. These courses lasted 2 months. The teaching staff, besides for Frau Schenierer consisted of Fraulein Judith Rosenbaum (Frankfurt am Main), Miss Lottka Szczaranska as well as Rabbi Dr. Ehrentreu (1925) Miss Rosalie Mannes (1925) Mrs. Resie Deutschlander (1926-1928) Teacher Bomberg (1927) A. S. Frydman (1926-1928) Principal Orlean (1929). Rabbi Bakst (Lomza) gave various lectures during 1929.

These are the numbers of the participants in the advanced training courses:

1925	Robow	48 participants
1926	Jordanow	98 participants
1927	Jordanow	76 participants
1928	Rabka	124 participants
1929	Rabka	240 participants

At the latest course (in 1929) candidates came from Eretz Yisroel, Austria, Hungary and Slovakia besides for Poland.

During these courses, there were important conferences with all the teachers in order to clarify different organizational questions. At these conferences, guidelines were established for the entire future of the Bais Yaakov system. *(ibid.)*

Bais Yaakov Summer Course in Rabka

Reflections by Dr. Judith Rosenbaum

This article was written by Dr. Judith Rosenbaum (later Grunfeld) for the Bais Yaakov fundraising journal which documented the history and progress of the movement up till and including the years 1928 and 1929. The journal was released in 1930. This article was translated from the original German by S. C. Reisman.

Once again summer takes us out to the country. The meadows and hills of the Carpathians are in full bloom. Every day Hashem sends the shining sun to beckon in the new day.

Year after year, we have been doing this. This summer is just as radiant as the previous ones. We are familiar with the landscape, and it is this familiarity that makes us feel at home.

We are now in the midst of the fifth Teacher Training and Advancement Summer Course. This peaceful setting with its camaraderie and learning makes the ideal vacation, rejuvenating the teachers who work hard preparing for the upcoming school year.

This experiment was begun in Robow, and every year it has only improved – thanks to the untiring efforts of all the staff members. The goal has been to bring together the different facets of east and west.[1]

While the course framework remains the same, we have moved from the town of Robow to the picturesque village of Rabka.[2] Rabka is a small, beautiful health spa known for its recreation facilities, parks and concerts. Bais Yaakov has rented a roomy, three-story summer villa located a quarter of an hour away from the center of town. One side of the villa faces the sunrise, while the sun sets gently over the windows on its other side. All the rooms are sunny and spacious.

We learn right alongside the cornfields with a magnificent view of the green meadows. We feel free, invigorated by the sun and wind. We live a simple, wholesome lifestyle together, while we are occupied with our ideals and our calling. This is our greatest gain.

Let's look at an average day in our Bais Yaakov camp:

7:00 a.m. Exercise and sport.

8:00 a.m. Study time. A group of girls is sitting on benches in the middle of a field, studying Sefer Iyov. In another shady spot another group is discussing the social laws of *Klal Yisrael* as

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[1] The author was referring to Eastern and Western Europe with their different mentalities.

[2] The first summer teachers' training course took place in Robow in 1925. In 1926 and 1927 it was held in Jordanow, and in 1928 and 1929 it was held in Rabka. The number of participants grew from 48 in 1925 to 240 in 1929.

they are written in the Torah. Yet a different group is analyzing the Spanish era in Jewish history, its glory followed by the Inquisition. And then there are those poring over Paul Ostereich's latest educational work.

The learning program touches upon all educational topics. The young teachers are sharpening each other's minds as teachers and staff members conduct discussions and clarify issues that come up.

Throughout the day there are various free periods for playing games, dancing and singing.

In the evening everyone gathers in the main auditorium for conferences and workshops, discussing the real-life problems and scenarios the teachers face in their teaching. One young teacher conducts these meetings in the presence of the senior staff members.

The teachers present their problems clearly and briefly. Some of the difficulties include school financial straits, students' social welfare, and lack of sympathy from the administration or the parents in educational matters. In some places the whole curriculum has been questioned and challenged because of various frictions that exist in the school, each faction trying to steer the program toward what they want. There is also a lack of suitable textbooks, a need for general scheduling improvements and other educational issues and regulations.

All these problems merely testify to the greatness of the wonderful, enthusiastic teachers we have here. Look at the adverse conditions they work under and their tremendous willpower! During these exchanges the strengths and abilities possessed by this new generation of teachers shine forth.



FRESH AIR SCHOOL AT RABKA

Judith Rosenbaum (seated on chair) giving a shiur. Gittel Teitelbaum is seated immediately to the left (wearing dark dress with white collar). Hanka is seated in second row, third from left (with a bow at her neck).

DEVELOPMENT of THE BAIS YAKOV MOVEMENT

Reprinted from the fundraising journal of 1928-29

No.	LOCATION of SCHOOL	TEACHER'S NAME	FOUNDING YEAR
1	Krakow-Seminar	Schenierer	1919
	Krakow	Landsberg	1919
	Krakow – Schule	Szczaranska	1919
2	Ostrowiec z. Radun	Scheinmann	1921
3	Przemysl	Fr. Heidenstein	1921
4	Tarnow	Bornstein	1921
5	Lutatow	Erdynast	1922
6	Bedzin	Ester Rose	1923
7	Kolomeja	B. Klein	1923
8	Wloclawek	Bobrorska	1923
9	Blaszki o. Sieradza	P. Szajer	1924
10	Gorlice	R. Parnes	1924
11	Krzepice z. Kaliska	G. Erdenas	1924
12	Kolo	Frohmann	1924
13	Lodz	Blisko	1924
	Lodz	Vogel	1924
	Lodz	Sobotka	1924
14	Lask o. Lodzi	B. Friedmann	1924
15	Lemberg	B. Klein	1924
16	Lukow	Helfmann	1924
17	Leczyca o. Lodzi	Wolnowiez	1924
18	Lubien	Jerusalem	1924
19	Olkusz	Katz	1924
20	Ozorkow o. Lodzi	Gelblum	1924
21	Osrow z. Lomza	Grynberg	1924
22	Pabianice Warszawska	Ch. Scheradzka	1924
23	Sokolow P. Laski	Grunberg	1924
24	Stanislawow	Friedfertig	1924
25	Wyszkow z. Warszaw	Taube	1924
26	Wielun Fabryczna	Hirsch	1924
27	Warszawa (Nalewki)	L. Rose, Friedmann	1924
28	Zloczow o. Lwowa	Roth	1924
29	Zarski	Kohn	1924
30	Lublin	Koler	1924
31	Biecz	A. Laufer	1925
32	Klobuck o. Czestochowy	Singer	1925
33	Kaluszyn	E. Etynger	1925
34	Kazminka o. Sieradzy	Sch. Berliner	1925
35	Miechow	Böhm	1925
36	Ostroleka z. Warszawska	Zazberg	1925
37	Piotrkow Tryb.	H. Grosfeld	1925
38	Sosnowiec	Elenberg	1925
39	Stryi	Rozanska	1925
40	Sieradz	Singer	1925
41	Tarnobrzeg	Brandwaja	1925
42	Wegrow z. Warszawska	Israelska	1925
43	Wolbrom z. Kielecka	Zurkowska	1925
44	Zloczow z. Kaliska	Traube	1925
45	Zelow o. Lodzi	Bornstein	1925
46	Kutno	Jerusalem	1925
47	Gora Kalwaryja	Hollander	1925

No.	LOCATION of SCHOOL	TEACHER'S NAME	FOUNDING YEAR
48	Brzesko Galicya	Wolforska	1925
49	Bochnia	Goldblatt	1925
50	Bielitz	G. Teitelbaum	1926
51	Kalisz	Procel	1926
52	Lipno z. Plocka	D. Sieradzka	1926
53	Sambor	Kluger	1926
54	Telaki o. Sokolowa	M. Unger	1926
55	Czestochowa	Rothfeld	1926
	Czestochowa	Fliederbaum	1926
56	Grojec z. Warszawska	Szydlowska	1927
57	Drohobycz	Blecher	1927
58	Dobryn z. Plocka	T. Lewkowicz	1927
59	Czemerniki z. Lubartow	Ramler	1927
60	Chrzanow	R. Klein	1927
61	Falenica z. Warszawska	Schiff	1927
62	Jaslo	Koller und Laufer	1927
63	Kobryn	Ch. Spiro	1927
64	Krasno	Katz	1927
65	Lodz II	S. Kluger	1921
66	Makow z. Warszawska	Dau	1927
67	Przedborz	Baum	1927
68	Serock z. Warszawska	Hendeles	1927
69	Sczekotiny	Kestenberg	1927
70	Koprzywnica	Rogowska	1927
71	Wyszegrod	Bleiweiss	1927
72	Turek z. Kalinska	Zurkowska	1927
73	Ustrzyki dolne	Kac	1927
74	Nowe Radomsko	Bochner	1927
75	Zgierz	Goldstoff	1927
76	Zychlin	Marek	1927
77	Rzeszow	Kirschenbaum	1927
78	Jazdow z. Warszawska	Blajwajs	1927
79	Nasielk z. Warszawska	T. Majmin	1927
80	Drobnin z. Plocka	Ch. Majmin	1927
81	Rozan n/Narwia	Kapusta	1927
82	Mogilnica z. Warszawska	Pomeranz	1927
83	Lisko	Frau Goldstein	1927
84	Nowy Targ	Warchowska	1927
85	Klimentow	Wolnowicz., Tratner	1927
86	Kielce	Hoffmann	1927
87	Brzesc Litowsk n/B	Wolofska	1927
88	Ostrow-Mazowiecki	R. Wolf	1928
89	Unicjow	Paczanczerska	1928
90	Belchatow	Stockmann	1928
91	Bychowa (Lub.)	Lewensohn	1928
92	Goworowa	Schremer	1928
93	Dabrowa-Gor	Boguchwat	1928
94	Dobrormil	R. Laufer	1928
95	Warszawa Tvarda 35	Glücksberg	1928
96	Wloszczowa	Wojdyslawska	1928
97	Zawiercie	Kestenberg	1928

No.	LOCATION of SCHOOL	TEACHER'S NAME	FOUNDING YEAR
98	Zyrardow	Hoffmann	1928
99	Zareby	Laska	1928
100	Zelechow	Lenczewska	1928
101	Chmielnik	Berliner	1928
102	Tykocin	Kiwelewicz	1928
103	Tarnopol	Goldblatt	1928
104	Czechanow	Hendeles	1928
105	Jedrzcjow	Kreutner	1928
106	Jaroslaw	Rothenberg	1928
107	Jadow	Seidmann	1928
108	Loncza	Abowicz	1928
109	Lowiecz	Czernik	1928
110	Lodz (Piramowicza)	Knoblewicz, Rosenblum	1928
111	N. Sacz	Dachner	1928
112	Skierniewice	Harasz	1928
113	Sandomierz	Kaufteil	1928
114	Strzegow	Ch. Unger	1928
115	Przedecz	Hirschberg	1928
116	Plonsk	Lubart	1929
117	Plöck	Kutner	1929
118	Koprzywnica	Rogowska	1929
119	Proszowice	Lewkowicz	1929
120	Parczew	B. Unger	1929
121	Konin	Konopnicka	1929
122	Konsk	Steuer	1922
123	Krasnik	Eichenbaum	1929
124	Radom	Wroclawska	1929
125	Rembratow	Wittelsohn	1929
126	Radounpl wielki	Ch. Goldstoff	1929
127	Raciaz	Minska	1929
128	Szydloviec	Horowitz	1929
129	Siedlec	Kreitmann	1929
130	Czyzew	Myszkowska	1929
131	Sochaczew	Waldlieferant	1929
132	Bilgoraj	Krieger	1929
133	Wierzbuik	Ch. Grünberg	1929
134	Michow (Lub.)	Kraurec	1929
135	Nowe-Miasto	Altschuler	1929
136	Tamaszow-Maz.	I. Baum	1929
137	Rawa-ruska	Wiesenfeld	1929
138	Biata-rawska	Kaliska	1929
139	Sanok	Bluth	1929
140	Janow (Lub.)	Rawicz	1929
141	Lagow	Goldberg	1929
142	Ozarow	Niedzwiadowicz	1929
143	Sierpe	Tornheim	1929
144	Trzebima	Roth	1929
145	Piaseczno	Spira	1929
146	Zakrocim	Wiez	1929
147	Bodzanow	Schleifstein	1929



Bnos Aguda Yisrael Youth Group in Kinsk, Poland.
Center, front row- Mrs. Miriam Lubling (Albert) is holding the banner.

EVERY BAIS YAAKOV GIRL IS HER MEMORIAL

By Mrs. Miriam Lubling

Thinking back sixty years*, I recall fond memories of my *heilige Bubbe*, Chayala Albert, *Hy"d*, from Kinsk (Konskie in Polish). Her home was always open to everyone. Just like Avrohom Avinu, her house had four doors and one could enter from all sides. Her home was truly a "*bais va'ad la'chachomim*". All meetings of Agudas Yisrael affairs were held there. The Bais Yaakov teachers who came to our town lodged with her because she wanted she wanted to help shoulder the responsibility of the *kehilla* and to support the local Bais Yaakov School. Whenever Frau Schenirer came to town, my Bubbe Chayala was privileged to have her as her guest.



A class in the Bais Yaakov school in Kinsk, Poland.

I remember as a child how I went to my grandmother's house to sleep over when I heard that Sara Schenirer

* These memoirs were recorded in the "Shearis Ha'pleita" edition of "Dos Yiddishe Vort" (Adar I, 5757), and were translated in honor of the 70th Yahrzeit of Sara Schenirer, 26 Adar, 5765.

had come to establish the Bais Yaakov school in our town. I had the privilege to prepare her *negel vasser* and to serve her. The holy image of her countenance remains in my mind and her sweet voice still rings in my ears. Her mouth spoke only holy words and she illuminated the whole Jewish world with her shining eyes…

In 1973, I was in Teveria. There I met up with some Bais Yaakov teachers from pre-war Poland. I suggested a plan for us to try to bring the remains of the "mother" of Klal Yisrael, Sara Schenirer, for burial in Yerushalayim. Immediately, a committee was formed and enough funds were raised to carry out the plan. However, I asked my husband *z"l* to go ask the Gerrer Rebbe, the Bais Yisroel *ztz"l* for his *haskama.*

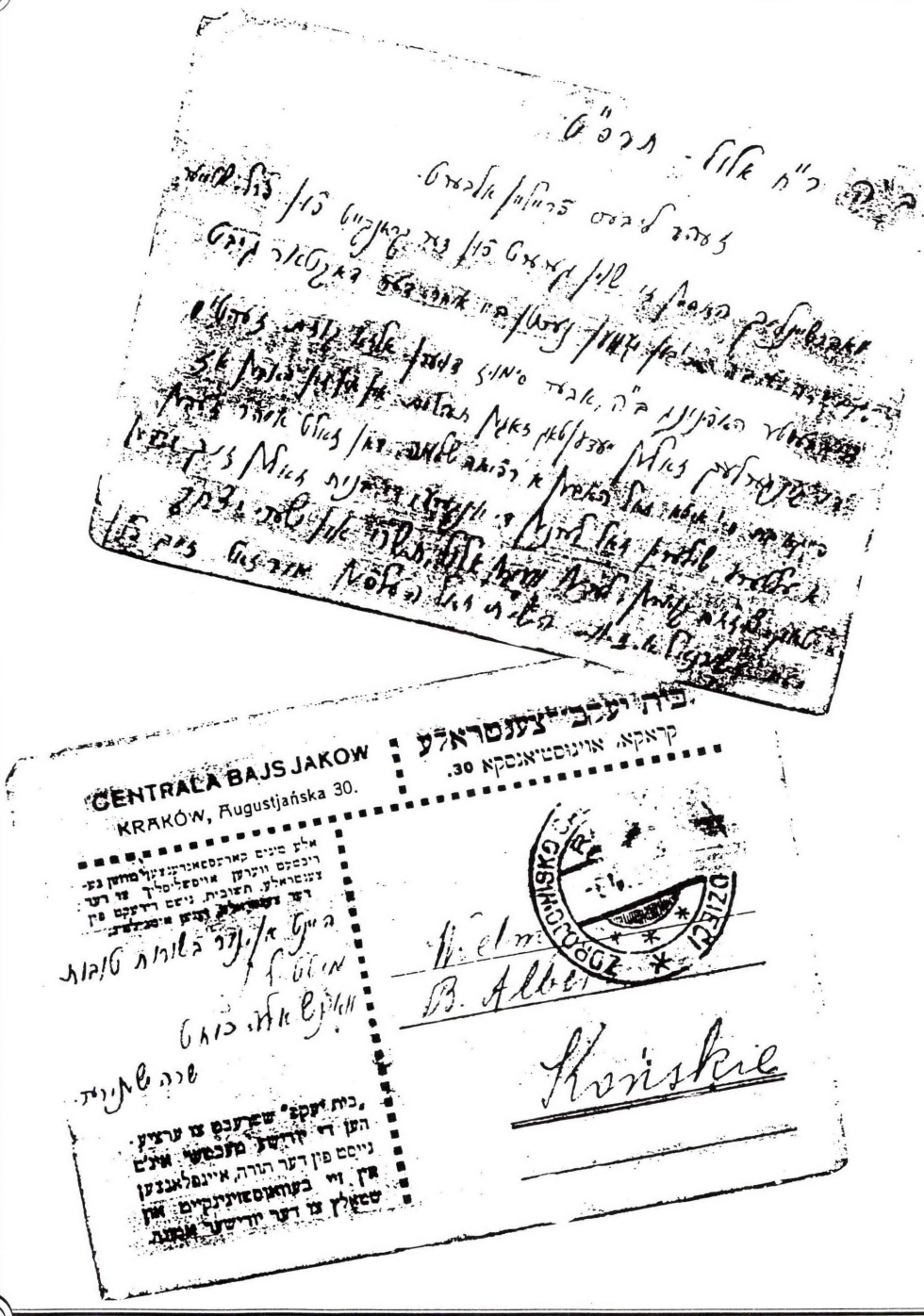
The Bais Yisroel's answer was "יעדע אידיש בית יעקב קינד איז איר מצבה", *"Every Jewish Bais Yaakov child is her memorial".*

From his answer I understood that our plan would not come to fruition, that there would be nothing to bring. I immediately contacted Poland, and to my sorrow, discovered that a broad highway had been built over the cemetery, after the war, by the Poles. The cemetery was no longer in existence.

Dear *Mamme* Sara, we are all your *matzeivah*, and we remember you every day with love and gratitude. Your memory is holy to us and we commemorate your *yahrzeit*, until the coming of *Mashiach* speedily on our days, אמן.



Partial view of head table at founding conference of Central Bais Yakov in Poland. From right to left: Dr. Levi Nivtzevitch, R' Eliezer Gershon Friedenson, R' Alexander Zushe Friedman, R' Yosef Moshe Heber, HaRav Yitzchok Meir Levin and R' Asher Spira.
(Photo courtesy of Dos Yiddishe Vort and Mrs. M. Lubling)



ב"ה

ר"ח אלול תרפ"ט

כבוד ו'בעס פרי"ן אלבערט

וואהרשיינליך האבען ני' שוין געהערט פון דער קראהנקייט פון פרוי. שט"ר.

... איך בין געווען נסבתן ב" איהר. דער דאקטער ג'בט

די בעסטע האפענונג ב"ה, אבער ס'אוי די'ערן. אלעכאו קודם כסדר

אויטאו כאוט האבען או רפואה שלאה. דאן כאוף כאוכן תהלים אוון אין כין האבן אוכ שיכאו בתך ח"

או סלעטערס שוערען כאוך לעכן, די "וכעטרס, די בנות כאלען כיך, יסדן טאוך כוכאום

קואסן, לערנען וועכן אלוך, תשרי, אין שטרי, כחק, דסם כשורנאוך, או.כ.וו..

השי"ת כאוך הסלפן איר כאלען כיך ... [אונכאוכן פון]

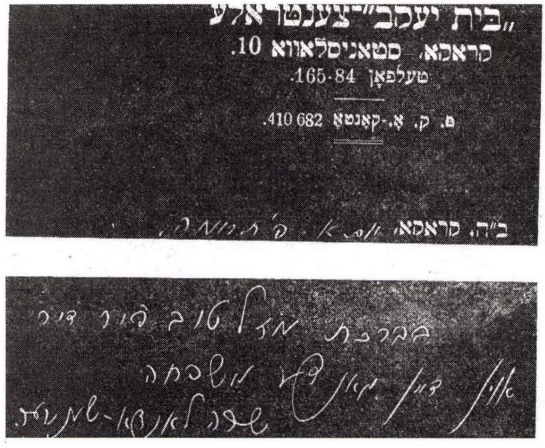
ה"נ אוז נאר בשורות טובות

א'ט ...

וואוהן אלעך כוח"ט

שרה שטיינער

Copy of postcard sent to Fraulein Albert, aunt of Mrs. Lubling, who was a teacher in a Bais Yaakov school, Elul 5689-1929.
See facing page for original.



Mazal Tov Greeting signed by Frau Schenirer in her married name.



One of the early classes of the Bais Yaakov Seminary in Krakow, during the summer course in Rabka.
Yaffa Rottenberg-Gura is standing first on the left.


Remembering
Dr. (Leo) Shmuel
Deutschlander l"3

Dr. (Leo) Shmuel Deutschlander

By Judith Rosenbaum-Grunfeld

Originally written in תש"ל. Reprinted with permission for Bais Yakov D'Gur H.S., New York, in תשס"ג.

In the Jewish cemetery in Germany I watched a man. He was bent over the high wet grass, digging with a little spade into the surface of the muddy soil groping with his hands among the debris of broken tombstones. He was in fact gathering and piecing together the fragments of the smashed marble plate that belonged to his grandfather's tombstone. The Nazis had smashed the inscription to pieces and here was the grandson, decades later, trying painstakingly to reconstruct the tablet that recorded his grandfather's name, noble deeds and the essence of his life's pilgrimage.

One generation later, not only would the soil have forever absorbed the tiny splinters, but most likely there would have been no one any longer who would have been close enough to this ancestor to feel spurred on to do this work of fighting oblivion.

The picture of this man impressed itself on my mind. Who will, I thought, piece together the scattered fragments that record the life of Leo Deutschlander, who died childless in 1935? The number of people who were his adoring friends has sadly dwindled. Of the thousands of pupils who were inspired by his teaching, only a very small number survived the devilish powers of hell that lashed the world. His solitary grave in Vienna is overgrown and no descendant of his will ever tend it or say Kaddish. Yet the sanctification of Hashem's name as expressed in the Kaddish has been so strongly intensified through the continued influence of his beloved work for Jewish education. The educational structure which he created spreads now all over the globe, for his name is connected with the birth, growth and triumph of the greatest educational movement of our epoch, Beth Jacob.

Thirty-five years have elapsed since he left this world. We are just still near enough to rewrite from personal recollection the faded inscription on his Matzevah with letters of gold. These letters sparkle and shine today in the reflection of light which he kindled in thousands and thousands of hearts in his lifetime and which is still increasing in our days, as a result of his work. I first met him in 1925 in a quiet forlorn small village deep down in the solitude of the Carpathian Mountains. He was then thirty-seven years of age, a slightly built tallish figure of Bohemian negligence, a thin, pale face lit up from inside by goodness of heart and the twinkling of a superbly harmonious mind. He walked with a slight stoop, head sideways, hands in the pockets of his jacket, slightly awkward, as if it would never do to show a Jew-hostile world the easy harmony of a superior soul. He was at this time organizing the very first methodical Beth Jacob training course and he had chosen for this venture this mountain village, inhabited only by a few peasants, and a few gypsies, remote from civilization of any kind of traffic, without even a railroad. He had chosen the panorama of the mountain, the shadow of the trees and the richness of meadows, to fashion there, undisturbed by any distraction, the tender beginnings of a

new movement destined to be of historic consequences. He must have guessed then that he was laying historical foundations; there must have been a foreboding in him, the inspiration of a saintly man.

In September 1924, at an important conference of the Agudath Israel in Cracow, he had met Sarah Schenierer, a woman then totally unknown to the Jewish world and even little-known or talked about in her own hometown. She was completely unassuming and simple, looked like one of a crowd, but for the burning will and conviction that came out in simple, straightforward and compelling language. Nevertheless it needed real discernment to be touched by her to the point of ignition. Sarah Schenierer was vibrating with a desire to establish female youth on an intellectual traditional platform so that girls in Poland and around it would be educated parallel to the host of Bachurim that thronged the Yeshivot. She had however, no possibility to put the plane of her electrified spirit into reality; she had neither method, nor training, nor assistants nor funds. She fought nearly alone for seven years, propelled by the conviction of what was needed, experimenting with a few willing but not really suitable helpers. While her output of energy was tremendous, the results were meagre and in the long run, ineffective.

Leo Deutschlander listened to Sara Schenierer's passionate plea. He was born in Berlin, the son of a Rabbi, and had a fair share of Jewish learning coupled with a firm Orthodox conviction. He had studied at the Universities of Berlin and Giesen and had assimilated in his alert and artistic mind the noble thoughts of the best thinkers of the world. He had never accumulated knowledge in the sense of putting layer upon layer, but was possessed of an inborn intuition which enabled him to sift world literature, to assimilate the best, and reject what was not worthy of becoming his mind's inventory. Knowledge acquired in the academic halls of Germany served him well to widen his mental horizon, to give further wings to the flight of his thoughts. It made him understand the language of all humans, the struggle of diverse purposes, the complications of the human soul in perplexity and its uplift in harmony. As a young boy he had lost both his parents and had been brought up partly by relatives and partly in an orphanage. He appeared shy and reticent by nature, and subdued, probably by his experiences as an orphan child; he was frail of physique and his negligent gait betrayed that he was entirely untrained in sportsmanship. In studying his grew; he received inner strength from exploring the self-confidence spirit that animates and moves the thinking world. He also became familiar with the system and method of academic thinking. He saw the advantage of it, whilst at the same time he sneered at its grotesque and dangerous abuse when he came across it. He became a master of methodical planning, a superb organizer and administrator without ever over-estimating the absolute value of mere organization and always slightly suspicious of its over-emphasis. However, Dr. Deutschlander's gift of administration proved later on to be fundamental in the building up of Beth Jacob's gigantic movement.

Making his way through the academic halls of Berlin and Giesen, Leo Deutschlander remained in his appearance the outsider and the intruder; the totally "non-Arian" intellectual with the Jewish eyes, the side whiskers, the little pointed beard, the

outmoded hat, an intellectual ghetto figure. While in his academic achievements, he ranked top among the students, he remained inwardly aloof, his eyes turned to guidance from the Gedolim, the giants of Jewish Law and learning. The melodies of the Beth Hamidrash always remained in his ears; the Tanach was his constant companion, his sourcebook and yardstick, his means of immunization against all encroaching falsehoods. During the First World War, Leo Deutschlander had found some new territory for his activity. His soul immediately responded when he was sent to Lithuania to serve in the Ministry of Education as Jewish Cultural advisor and was charged with the founding in Kovno of a Jewish Grammar School. There he came really face to face with the Lithuanian Gedolim and their Yeshivot. It was there that his soul, forged by generations of noble ancestors found a lasting spiritual home.

Leo Deutschlander, university graduate, Cultural Adviser to the Ministry of State, author of the book, GOETHE UND DIE BIEBEL, started to walk with the Gedolim, without ever negating any part of his spiritual make-up, and became closer and closer to them by dedicating himself entirely to the furtherance and promotion of the aims of these Yeshivot. The next years were entirely devoted to the Yeshivot by fundraising on their behalf, by promoting their cause through lectures and addresses in different countries, by arousing public interest in the work of the Yeshivot even in circles which before, were indifferent or antagonistic to the Yeshiva world. It was touching to see how beloved he became in Yeshiva circles, and how he succeeded in his wise and witty way, warmed by an inner glow to charm people totally estranged from Traditional Judaism to affirm the Yeshivot's significance as the power stations of our people's strength, and he knew how to have this interest made evident, enlisting financial support on a large scale. But above this, he was chosen by Providence for yet another fundamental contribution to the aspirations of the Manhigei Hador and as it has become retrospectively clear, to the very survival of Orthodoxy.

The Gerrer Rebbe (the Imrei Emes) is reported to have said "I have thousands and thousands of Bachurim amongst my followers but I am not sure whether there exists even for ten of them, girls who are fit and willing to share their lives. What will become of our future families?" The day when Leo Deutschlander met Sarah Schenierer and agreed to take charge of the development of the Beth Jacob movement was a historical day, because it provided the solution to the Gerrer Rebbe's problem. Here, a union of vision, ecstasy and practical efficiency was created which was to bring about the fulfillment of a great plan. Sarah Schenierer, the daughter of Chassidic Jewry, entrusted the furthering of her ideals to the Educationist reared in Western Europe, in the schools of Torah im Derech Eretz. Leo Deutschlander gave his heart, his soul, his strength, his methodical care and perhaps most of all his genius of human relationship to Beth Jacob and helped it to grow into a world-wide movement of such driving force that, even the demons of hell that tried to annihilate our Jewish World, could not weaken it.

What was the magic formula by which Leo Deutschlander scored his tremendous success? You had to watch him in order to comprehend how his genial encounter with pupils and assistants, his delicate handling of psychologically complex situations, his

humility in wisdom, his modesty, which, far from making him awkward, gave him an air of superiority, performed the miracle of harmonizing all efforts and coordinating different approaches. He made nothing of himself, was constantly surprised that he was a central figure and yet in this self-effacing way, he commanded authority. When important questions were put to him, he shrugged his shoulders, amazed that one should turn to him and yet the answers he gave were astounding, showing his profound grasp of the problem and the fullness of vision. All the facets of his rich personality and all the wisdom he had ever acquired were mobilized by his drive and urge to make reality of a cherished dream.

His first step was to call together to the remote village of the Carpathian Mountains-to Robov-all the fifty girls that Sarah Schenierer had already succeeded in attracting, who had been gripped by her fire and had actually committed themselves to be teachers in various towns in Poland. Their preparation for this task had been painfully insufficient. In the course of a few months only, they had taken down notes, dictated to them, an elementary Jewish knowledge. Their exercise books were their guidebooks, containing all their wisdom; they were to be their resource in addition to the flutter of enthusiasm which they caught from Sarah Schenierer's compelling personality. They were the volunteers, the avant-garde, "instant" teachers with a first-aid spiritual outfit. They were willing, but by no means qualified; responsive to the problem but could not be equal to their task. They were zealous, but alas, not even educated enough to be aware how scanty their knowledge was until their knowledge really faded out and they came to a rough awakening. They became drained and felt bewildered by their own inadequacy in face of the overwhelming responsibilities. So much was demanded of them as teachers and they knew so little.

In Robov, during the ten weeks of intensive study and training, they were promised a charging of their batteries, a fresh supply of knowledge, and the clearing up of all their problems. They would leave Robov-this was the promise-well equipped to carry on for another year and this would also mean the beginning of a regular Teacher's training course, run on systematic lines. All eyes were on Robov; had it been a failure, it would have meant the end of Frau Schenierer's dreams, and the beginning of a great sneer lurking round the corner, from hostile anti-Orthodox camps who had only been too ready to predict a rapid collapse of the "antiquated and narrow-minded" enterprise. But Robov was a success. And this was entirely due to Leo Deutschlander's personality and genius of education. I was one of the three Western-trained teachers whom Dr. Leo Deutschlander called to Robov as his assistants. I was there from the first day to the last. The beginning was strange and bewildering for everyone, but the last day showed the triumphant breakthrough of the conscious joy of achievement of a group welded together by ten weeks of intensive study, often for twenty working hours a day, in such romantic surroundings as woods, meadows and hills. All members of the unique school were welded together by a common ideal and common task. Looking back on those ten memorable weeks in Robov, from nearly a lifetime's distance and from a World Jewish

scene which has so fundamentally changed, and where East and West have been intermingled by fate, the following features stand out.

We, the three Western teachers (from Frankfurt, Munich and Zurich)[1] were for the first time in our lives confronted with pupils brought up in an intensely Chassidic atmosphere, entirely cut off from the perplexing cultural and social problems of the world outside. And the Chassidic girls of Poland were for the first time in their lives confronted with the Torah im Derech Eretz principle as interpreted by Samson Raphael Hirsh and his disciples, with University Graduates. It was a great experiment, as risky and vital as a new birth. It needed the right doctor to manipulate it. There were all the pangs of birth and also the feeling of great promise and of creative joy. Leo Deutschlander was the conciliator, the builder of bridges between East and West. He could dispel reserve, infuse confidence; he could warm up the atmosphere, brighten the day by radiating benevolence and gentle humour that soothed all worries and smoothed all frowns. He could tune the minds to see all positive aspects to discover what was common between strangers and made us all feel united on a higher level. The result was phenomenal. Robov was undoubtedly the beginning of the upward trend in the Beth Jacob movement. The ingenious enterprise of Leo Deutschlander made Beth Jacob beloved by those who were already a part of it and attractive to those who, from a distance had waited to see its development. The foundations of the movement, up till now so shaky and fragile, became firm and secure.

Dr. Deutschlander's lectures on Tehillim mainly were of intrinsic value for the formation of the Hashkafa of these girls. I witnessed those lessons. They took place during the hot summer days in the clearing of a wood; the bells of the grazing cows round about were an idyllic accompaniment to the serious contemplations that were unfolded there. These lectures were always anticipated with a festive eagerness like a symphony from higher spheres. There was indeed a symphony of thought and a structure of noble and lofty ideas which the Beth Jacob students had never encountered before. On the wings of Dr. Deutschlander's interpretation of Tehillim, their minds soared high and were opened to the understanding of the unity of religion, life and law. In the past they had been merely obedient to parental guidance, warmed by the warmth of their home atmosphere and had then been alerted to the call of emergency to help in the saving of the Jewish Heritage. It was the specific art of Leo Deutschlander to be able to reveal to these girls that Torah was the fountain and sourcebook of every noble thought that had ever animated the mind of the great and that it was the origin of every humanitarian

[1] Rabbi Dr. E. Ehrentreu, then Dayan in Baden, near Vienna, later on Rabbi in Munich and at present living in London; Miss Rosalie Mannes of Zurich, who married Isaac Rosenheim, son of the renowned Orthodox leader Jacob Rosenheim, and finally, the present writer. I would, at this point, remark on the great influence that Rabbi Dr. Ehrentreu had on the students in Robov. He was singularly qualified to make a large contribution to the education of the girls, and although his official duties did not allow him to stay in Robov as long as he would have liked, his contribution during the six weeks he did stay in Robov made a deep and lasting impression on the first Beth Jacob teachers. There are many interesting letters in Rabbi Dr. Ehrentreu's possession written to him by those first pupils which show clearly what a debt of gratitude they felt to Rabbi Ehrentreu for his lucid lectures, his patient answering of all their questions and his deep understanding for their particular needs.

endeavor and every social progress. To give this insight became increasingly essential when Jewish girls, bare of Jewish knowledge, were charmed by world literature, captivated by humanitarian slogans, overawed by the propaganda talk of atheistic intellectuals who could throw catch-phrases at them and put the "great free unchained mind" in contrast to the "narrow fettering commands, senseless and outdated" of the Jewish Tradition. How many of the best and most intelligent girls had been led into the alluring world of irreligious camps away from so-called "obscure confines" by persuading them that they exchanged the guiding light of the free humanitarian mind for worthless relics of antiquity.

To understand this well, it must be borne in mind that Europe was then in a period of liberal humanism, and Western civilization was in those days considered by the Eastern youth to be the highest culture to look up to and to get inspiration from. This was especially so as their world around them was darkened by the oppression and inhumanity which was the sinister mark of the Czarist regime. It was a natural consequence of this contrast that the great representatives of Western literature were hailed as spokesmen of humanitarian ideals, torchbearers of mankind and that they were glorified by the young idealistic girls whose souls were thirsting for something superior to look up to. Today, after the sad debacle of Western European civilization which has become so tragically obvious, after the total collapse of the humanitarian values and the easy way in which tyranny and its inhumanities were accepted by the so-called enlightened world; today the problem would not have arisen in the way it arose then. Today the lure of non-Jewish civilization has lost much of its danger because we have seen how little resistance it provided to the satanic powers of demonic tyranny; how on the contrary, in the very lap of the most cultured nation, demonic powers had their breeding ground.

Now a new world was opened up to the first Beth Jacob girls in Poland. They were led by masterly guidance to the real sources of all humanitarian values. The curtain was lifted. They had known Jewish practice only in its minutest detail but had never been led to behold the great, great panorama of the governing ideas. But now, as more and more was revealed to them, their entire mental attitude underwent a total change. They recognized the source of truth and they stood in awe and gratitude. I remember distinctly when, for example, Dr. Deutschlander expounded Tehilim 87, 5-6:

"ולציון יאמר איש ואיש ילד בה והוא יכוננה עליון. ה' יספר בכתוב עמים זה ילד שם סלה. ושרים כחללים כל מעיני בך"

And of Zion it shall be said this, and that man was born in her and the highest himself shall establish here. The L-rd shall count when he writeth up the people, that this man was born there. Selah... All my springs are in you":

"All thinkers are influenced by the Bible and we cannot perceive of any lofty mind which has not been fertilized in some distinctive way by the Bible. Thousands of thinkers have testified to the fact that they owe their moral concepts to the Heights of Zion."

Dr. Deutschlander could bear this out by bringing many examples; he had the knowledge of authors and their writings. He found the right illustrations for the thirsting minds of these eager students and he put his ideas across, illuminated by the radiance of



Beth Jacob Seminary Building in Cracow under construction

his sincerity. His thoughts flowed from a wide and integrated knowledge. But all this would not have been powerful enough to capture their hearts had it not been for the rays of his human kindness that enveloped all, and made every single girl feel personally caught in an atmosphere of benevolence. Impressionable as these girls were, they responded to this kind of guidance and to Dr. Deutschlander's smile of approval for every effort. For the first time, their eyes were opened to behold the spiritual wonders of Judaism. Familiar Jewish laws, sayings and customs which never had conveyed much meaning to them, became now transparent, revealing a wealth of hitherto undiscovered treasures and their world was lifted onto a higher plane.

In the ensuing years, the type of girls that came to the Beth Jacob changed. As the tale of happiness and fulfillment that was found in the Movement spread, a wider circle of girls became interested. They were of a more critical disposition and frame of mind, more demanding in intellectual respects. They joined perhaps only half-heartedly with reservations, showing some preconceived antagonism, but were driven by a certain curiosity and also by the sincere intention to give the tradition of their parents a fair chance. These girls, not so easy to win, proved to be the most valuable material. As they themselves had had to go through the pangs of slow transformation, they were better qualified to understand and guide others. Absorbing this type of girl, Beth Jacob became a much wider platform. Dr. Deutschlander turned the Teachers Training College that had been called into existence in so spontaneous and haphazard a manner by Sarah Schenierer into a well organized and methodically conducted college. The little flat where classrooms had to serve as bedrooms during the night, was soon replaced by a huge 6-storey building, erected through Dr. Deutschlander's fundraising efforts, at the bank of the Vistula. "Stanislawa 10, Cracow" where the Beth Jacob Teacher Training College was situated, soon became a famous address.

There were spacious halls, large dormitories, lecture rooms as well as modern sanitary equipment and a roof-garden for leisure and recreation. One hundred and twenty girls lived and studied there, all carefully selected from a large group of applicants. The applicants spent the first few weeks of college life as a trial period, to have their suitability as future teachers, as well as their sincerity of character and devotion to the cause assessed. They were under observation during the trial period by the various members of the staff who had to pledge themselves not to discuss the candidates with each other. Only at the end of several weeks, the observations recorded on paper were exchanged at the staff conference. The candidates who were finally accepted for a two year's full course were indeed a very select group of girls. They were all distinguished by their unconditional surrender to Sarah Schenierer's high demands of complete devotion, their attention to every detail of the Din without compromise, without wavering, without fatigue. And Sarah Schenierer did demand a great deal of those girls who flocked around her and whom she infused with her indomitable spirit. They absorbed the atmosphere that was charged with the intensity of her will-power. And while she not only taught them, but lived with them, the sparks that her pure soul radiated were caught. The girls discovered what it was that made the life of their brothers in the Yeshiva and their fathers

in the Beth Hamidrash such an unconquerable fortress. They were staunch, single-minded, enthusiastic, an eager and happy crowd, full of zest and joy on account of their new intellectual discoveries. There was fun and gaiety and serious studies, a rare combination and indeed an entirely new type of Orthodox Jewish girl.

After two years of intensive studies, pedagogical training and happy, unforgettable community spirit, these girls were sent out to the towns and villages in Poland to become teachers, guides and youth leaders. They built on a small scale, youth centres, animated by the spirit they had imbibed in Cracow, at their alma mater.

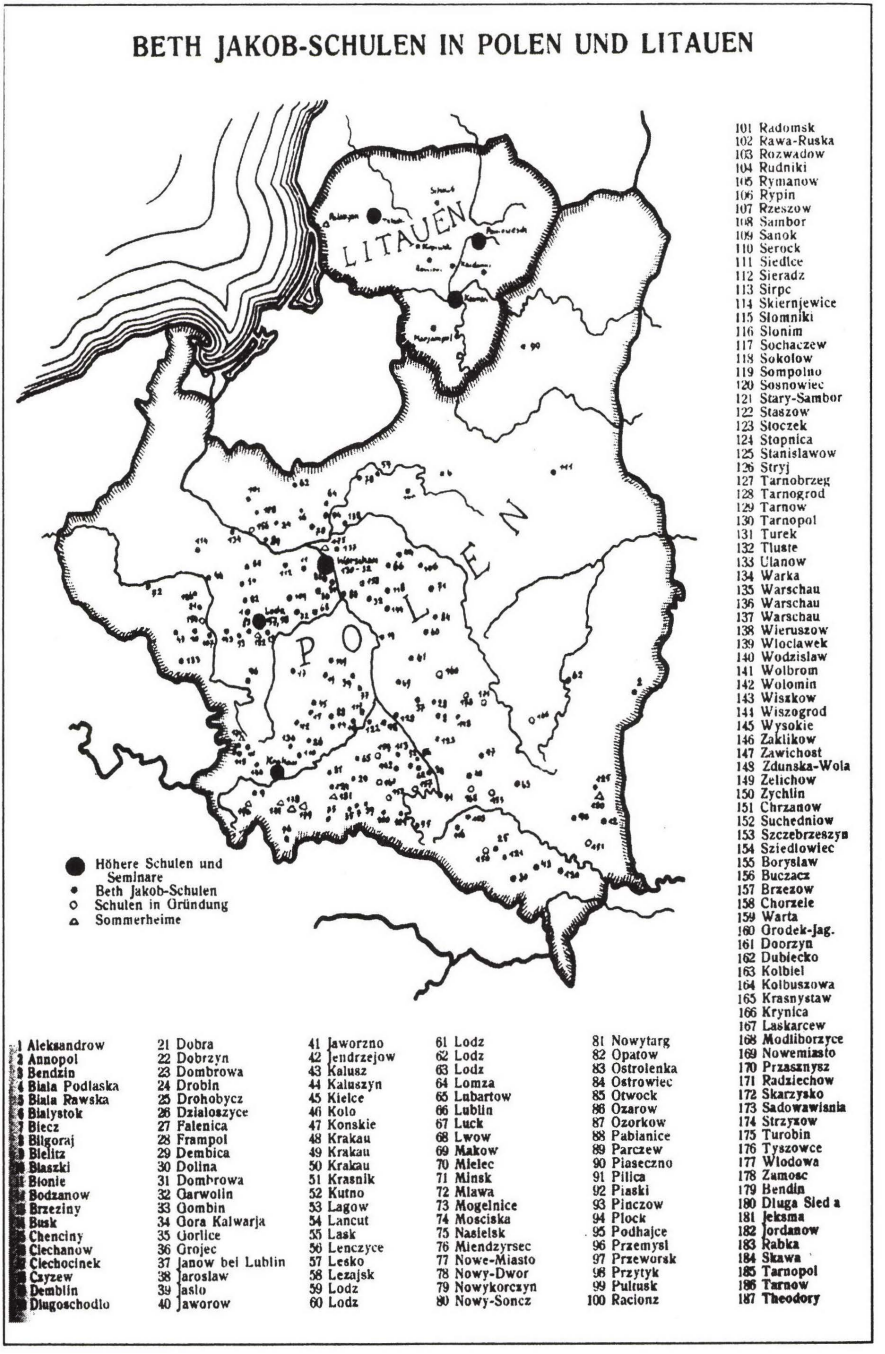
Dr. Deutschlander guarded this college like the apple of his eye. He came there three or four times a year from Vienna where he had his domicile, and his visits were inestimable. He always seemed to appear when there were difficulties in the general management of financial administration, when spirits where flagging. I was one of Sarah Schenierer's permanent assistants at the Seminary in Cracow for several years and I can testify to the practical and psychological assistance the reviving winds that Dr. Deutschlander invariably brought. Our College was an entirely new venture; there was no similar establishment anywhere that could have served us as pattern to be guided by. It was the first Orthodox training college for women teachers exclusively. At the time of writing this article, we have many such colleges all over the world, to name only Gateshead, London, Manchester, Lucerne, Aix-le-Bain, Williamsburg in New York, Jerusalem and Tel Aviv. None of these training colleges existed at that time. We had to find our own way, make our own plans and programmes, and this, in rather impoverished circumstances, a daily battle for survival. Also, the staff, with the exception of Sarah Schenierer, was all very young and their lack of experience was only matched by their devotion and enthusiasm. Dr. Deutschlander, when he came, would supply us with new educational ideas and help us to improve our standards. He always found a way out of all pressing problems. The magic of his charm filled the hearts of all. He spread confidence, and by his presence, harmony was restored wherever there had been tension before. A jewel, our Sages say, was suspended round the neck of Abraham, our ancestor. And every ailing or distressed person who looked at it was healed and comforted. When Abraham died, this Jewel was suspended in the sun. With this, our sages wish to convey to us that the healing and soothing power of Abraham's personality was a heavenly gift, like the healing power of the sun. Of such a heavenly gift our Leo Deutschlander had a share which showed itself in his soothing and encouraging influence on staff, pupils and school committee alike which was of such importance in those hard pioneering days.

He directed the College, and while guarding its precious flame he saw constantly to the needs of the scholastic requirements, the "up-to-date" equipment and the modern teaching approach. He collected the necessary funds for all that was needed. When we first moved from our little teaching flat into the new large building, it was entirely bare. We had neither tables nor chairs, nor cupboards, just beds only. Improvement came in stages, always welcomed jubilantly by everybody. It was pioneer work carried out in pioneer spirit and it needed someone to keep the pioneers in confidence and in hope. This was done by Leo Deutschlander. He combined devotion to pedagogical aspirations

with economic drive. In one hand he held the Tanach, the contents of which he knew how to communicate to the students, in the other hand the ledger. For one month he was our fascinating inspiring lecturer and principal and the other month saw him traveling as our cultural representative with a fundraising aim, addressing learned societies, speaking in literary clubs, in Lodges and Universities. And when he went to see the merchant princes in all European towns, the heads of philanthropic societies, such as the "Hilfsverein", the "Joint", the "Ort-Ose" on behalf of Beth Jacob, he cashed in on the good name he had made for himself as a well-known scholar and fascinating orator. Whatever the aim of the organization was that he approached, Dr. Deutschlander understood how to show that in his miraculous Beth Jacob organization every noble purpose of social and moral improvement would be fulfilled. However cold and indifferently audiences or individuals would receive him, once Dr. Deutschlander began to speak, he would conquer them all. He spoke in his own relaxed manner, but with compelling sincerity, with wit and humour, elegance of style and simile. He made little of his own personality which shone through nevertheless, betraying his genial mind together with his intensely Jewish Heart. His listeners probably had never met anyone like him before, so scholastic and loveable all in one and so purposeful in his drive for Jewish traditional survival and so entirely self-effacing.

It was Leo Deutschlander who gave the tender pioneering movement the strength to carry on. To Beth Jacob's sacred aspirations he added that touch of grace that made it attractive even to those who were far removed from its religious ideals. He carried the entire burden of this new historical movement on his frail shoulders. He brought the struggling beginnings to a place in the sun, securing Beth Jacob's survival. He stretched the net of Beth Jacob schools over the entire East of Europe where the Jewish population was dense and the educational problem of the girls, grave. He covered Poland, Letland, Lithuania, Rumania, Czech-Slovakia, Austria, and finally also Israel. There were all kinds of educational institutions: Hebrew classes (Chadarim for girls) Elementary school, High schools, Trade and Commercial Schools, Domestic Evening Classes for working girls, Holiday Camps and an additional Teacher's Training College in Vienna. There existed before the outbreak of the Second World War about 300 Beth Jacob schools, all guided on the same principles and conducted by such Jewish men and women whose religious ideas corresponded to those of Dr. Deutschlander and Sarah Schenierer.

In the educational work he was greatly supported by such outstanding and saintly personalities as Alexander Zysche Friedman (author of מעינה של תורה), R. Yehuda Leib Orlean, who afterwards became Principal of the Cracow Seminary, R. Eliezer Gershon Friedenson, Editor of the first Beth Jacob Journal, that provided the first reading material for the Beth Jacob youth. In the running of the Seminary he was supported by a committee consisting of the Senator Rabbi Moshe Deutscher and Rabbi Asher Spira. The schools expanded and flourished. There were six more summer holiday refresher courses on the lines of Robov (Jordanov and Rabka) in the Carpathian summer resorts where all the teachers from all over the country met for further instruction. Then in March, 1935, came the first blow. Sarah Schenierer, at the age of fifty-two, succumbed to a fatal illness.



The hundreds of Bais Yaakov schools in Poland and Lithuania in 1934



Bais Yaakov schools in Austria, Czechoslovakia, Romania and Hungary in 1934

Leo Deutschlander hurried to Cracow to keep the work alive in the days of great lamenting and mourning. But six months later, at the age of forty-seven, he himself was called to his eternal reward. The sigh that he had suppressed so often when physical weariness had dragged him down-his health had long since been precarious-was last heard on Tishe B'Av in Vienna, where he found his last resting place. Beth Jacob was mortally smitten for the second time.

But Beth Jacob lived on.

The grief and pain over the loss of these two leaders changed into the awareness of the responsibility to carry on their sacred heritage. "Allegiance beyond death" was turned into increased effort. Yehuda Leib Orlean the outstanding educationist, thinker, and writer took over the headship of the training College, assisted by that most gifted and most admired of all Sarah Schenierer's pupils Channah (Hanka) Grossfeld-Biegun, wife of Rav Joseph Biegun (known as "the little חפץ חיים") who from 1926 until then had climbed all the stages from questioning, thinking youth, to maturity and knowledge. The seminary, far from losing any of its force, even enriched its teaching programme and deepened its intellectual concepts. Leo Deutschlander and Sarah Schenierer had fulfilled the Mishnaic order of "Ha'amidu Talmidim Harbe". They had raised many disciples. Then in 1939, the world went berserk, and a dark blood-soaked curtain covered the world, where devilish forces wrought havoc.

When the darkness was lifted and the curtain rose over the ruins, when we looked around to see what was left after the great conflagration, there emerged among the shadowy figures that staggered back to reality, one which, though worn and weary, had withstood the powers of destruction and was covered with badges of heroic survival. Beth Jacob emerged intact. In camps, in woods, in underground dugouts, in graveyards and in ghettoes-the spark that Beth Jacob education had kindled gave strength of endurance and illuminated the dark path. Never will a human heart know, nor will any writer's pen ever be able to describe how the spirit of Beth Jacob gave strength to thousands in the agony of their last hours. We have only one little glimpse, afforded to us by the farewell letter written to the world by the "Ninety-three Beth Jacob Girls" who gave their lives for Kedushath Hashem. Their letter shook the world and the story of these ninety-three girls belongs to the great stories of Jewish Women's heroism, and martyrdom in our age-old history. Beth Jacob lived on through the camps of Bergen Belsen and Auschwitz, losing thousands under the boot of the oppressor. Yet those who survived, though small in number, seemed to have become heirs to all the moral strength of those that were slain. Few though they were, they carried the seed of their devotion to the four corners of the earth. In Williamsburg, New York, we have the grand Beth Jacob Seminary under the headship of Rabbanit Kaplan, who as Vichna Eisen from Baranowicze, was one of the pupils in the Cracow Seminary in 1930. With her, as assistants and lecturers in the Seminary work: Vichna Kaplan nee Eisen (Baranowicze), wife of Rabbi Boruch Kaplan; Chava Wachtfogel, nee Shlomovitz (Goni dr near Bialystok), wife of Rabbi N. Wachtfogel; Chava Pinkus, nee Weinberg (NYC), wife of Rabbi A. Pinkus; Shifra Yudassin, nee Singer; Rochel Cisner, nee Wiener, (Chranoir), wife of Mr. Y. Cisner; Chava Rottenberg, nee

Zeinwirth (Cracow) wife of Rabbi S. Rottenberg; Lea Goldstein nee Galler (Preskow), wife of Mr. Goldstein; Basia Bender nee Epstein (Otwock), wife of Rabbi David Bender. All these assistants of Rabbanit Kaplan were together with her as pupils in the Cracow Seminary. Together they found the supreme purpose of their survival in building up the Beth Jacob Seminary in Williamsburg on the pattern of Cracow, and it has been ever since, a pillar of strength in American Jewry. There are Beth Jacob Teachers' Training Colleges in Jerusalem, in Tel Aviv, in Bnei Brak; and there too a number of Cracow-trained teachers have helped to carry across the desert of time some of the old undiluted spirit. We have today flourishing Beth Jacob centres and schools all over the world. Their education carries the hallmark of staunch traditional loyalty, and the pupils they turn out distinguish themselves by their uncompromising integrity. Also in England, Beth Jacob has flowered into bloom and its influence has shaped the new growing generation. It is surely not wrong to say that even these Training Colleges in England and Switzerland which do not carry the name of Beth Jacob have sprung up in consequence of a need to which Beth Jacob has drawn attention and they are certainly fashioned on the Beth Jacob pattern in their method and in their task.

In those carefree and still happy days before the Second World War, when Jewish life was pulsating with full vigour in the towns and villages of Poland, when Beth Jacob girls would sit, eyes wide open in front of their young teachers, trained in Cracow-how could anyone have ever guessed then that here strength was being engendered which was to withstand the powers of hell which so soon brought Jewry to the verge of destruction? Who could have known then that in the Beth Jacob schools the very ground was being prepared from which Jewry's mutilated body would be infused with new life? Indeed we can trace back the miraculous reconstruction of Jewry after the Holocaust to a very large extent to the power of Beth Jacob spirit that had endured through the surviving Beth Jacob girls and women. In 1945, Continental Jewry consisted of remnants of families only. Most children rescued were orphans; surviving parents found themselves bereft of children. They were all brands plucked out of the fire. And yet within thirty years our people have rallied again to new strength and vigour. Although waggonloads of our holy books and scrolls were burnt and the smoke of the pyre darkened the sky, the sacred letters have as it were, returned to earth and have found their strongholds again in the hearts and minds of thousands upon thousands of Jewish youths who dedicate their lives to the study of these sacred letters. There are today countless Yeshivot and Chadorim all over the globe, places of joyful dedicated Torah and Talmud learning. Little children, "Tinokot shel Bet Rabbon" react again to the age-old tunes of "learning", and young, healthy men, unaffected by the materialistic pull of an affluent and easy going society, clamour to be admitted to these places of learning. However frugal their material lay-out may be, once they are admitted to these Yeshivot, they take to studying day and night with the single mindedness of dedicated youth. Jewry, which thirty years ago presented a picture of utter desolation, has risen again, infused with new blood and is animated again by the same life's purpose which has sustained generations of our ancestors. There is the same glow and devotion to Torah in Yeshivot that bear the name

A page out of a student's notebook with notes on Tehillim.

of once glorious places; Telz, Mir, Ger, Slobodka, Ponivecz, Brisk, Bobov, Vishnitz, Pressburg, Tzebin. They all have merely changed their geographical address; they have not changed their programme or spirit. There is the same vibrating Torah life, with its same old traditional niggunin and sing-song of learning. And when the Bachurim, bent over their tomes, sway to the rhythm of learning, or when on festive occasions, their joy erupts into the dancing traditional in the Yeshivot, it is as if no hell had ever blotted out the sun and as if no perverted fashions of a corrupt society had ever swept schools and colleges of the modern world. The generation that in cold savagery had been done to death has been recreated true to its old image and nothing, not one iota, is missing. The grandchildren of those that sang Ani Ma'amin as their last affirmation in the death camps sing again this song of their forbears in the same tune, with the same intense conviction fired by the same never-fading Jewish hope for the ultimate triumph of justice and redemption on earth.

In tracing back the process of the reconstruction of the Jewish people after 1945, we arrive at the first admirable manifestation of unshakeable optimism: the weddings in the displaced person's camps, showing a spirit of strength and defiance. I witnessed one of these unforgettable weddings in 1946 in the Carolus Camp of Famagusta in Cyprus (where I accompanied my husband Dayan Dr. I. Grunfeld on a public mission.) Both partners in these weddings were-how could it be otherwise-orphans; they had neither brothers nor sisters. They were, like all people in the camps after the war, twigs broken off from huge family trees that no longer existed. The young people had no home to come from, neither a home to go to. They were granted, by the military camp authorities, after special intervention and out of special consideration, the use of a narrow tent, with two army camp beds for the duration of one week, after which they were to rejoin the general tents again. Yet the wedding itself, in spite of all extreme privations behind the barbed wire, was a glorious festivity intense with the loyalty of the Chaverim who tore the air asunder with their rapturous singing and with music performed on primitive musical instruments, improvised for the bridal joy. The air was charged with the avowal for Jewish survival, with the implicit trust in the G-d of our fathers. Under the nocturnal sky of Cyprus the stars held out the challenge to the young couple under the canopy,

"הבט נא השמימה וספר הכוכבים אם תוכל לספר אתם ויאמר לו כה יהיה זרעך" (בראשית ט"ו, ה')

"Look up unto Heaven and count the stars... thus will be your seed"-

...like the stars going their pre-ordained path and illuminating a dark world, pointing to the Creator who will keep his Promise to Abraham. With no earthly possessions, little earthly hopes, with no family to steady them, no country willing to have them, with no securities of any kind, the brides and bridegrooms of these first weddings in Bergen-Belsen and Cyprus revealed the unrelenting Emunah of those who had passed the test of fire and water; it was they who took the first steps towards the great work of the reconstruction of Jewry after the greatest catastrophe in our history.

It is comparatively easy to understand whence the young men took their moral strength and trust in Hashem. They carried with them the heritage that had been implanted into them by the intense education which boys had always received in the



Bais Yaakov Sommerheim in Robov, 1925. Resi Deutschländer is in first row, second from right.





The dining room at Stanislava 10



Judith Rosenbaum (seated, third from right) and Gittel Teitelbaum (standing at far right)



Hanka is seated on bench second from right. Judith Rosenbaum is seated on bench fifth from right.

Yeshivot and Botei Midroshim, in their circle around the Rebbe and from their father's teaching. Since early childhood they had been made well aware of the age-old covenant under which they were since Abraham's time. But the young women? Some years before, the Gerrer Rebbe had plaintively remonstrated that whilst he had thousands of Talmidim there were no girls to be their worthy partners, brought up to be the co-builders of the true Jewish homes. But now the girls were there; Beth Jacob, within a span of 15 years had formed them. They were prepared to play their part, aware of their historical destiny to be the rebuilders of the devastated and decimated Jewish People. And they knew there was no time to be lost. Leo Deutschlander and Sarah Schenierer, during their short pilgrimage on earth, had done their work efficiently. These girls understood what was demanded of them at this crucial hour of Jewish History, as the survivors after the shipwreck. They did not look for an easy life, for guarantees, or for comfort. They built up houses. They encouraged, in spite of the sparse economic conditions, their young husbands to carry on with "learning"; they reared large families and worked for a livelihood at the same time. They became teachers at the newly sprung up Beth Jacob schools in addition to being mothers of large families.

An entirely new type of Orthodox young woman had emerged through the educational channels of Beth Jacob. It became the dream of a young girl to marry a Talmid Chochom; a young man who would continue with the study of Torah, irrespective of the economic privations involved. More and more Kollelim would be formed and more and more girls were prepared to live by modest means for the sake of their husbands' Talmudical scholarship. Much later, when the economic position of Jewry improved, young men in the Yeshivot would come to realize that it was their concentration on learning and their intention to carry on with it that made them desirable as husbands in the eyes of marriageable girls and that prosperous parents would be happy to support sons-in-law bent on full-time learning. And thus, as time went on, enthusiasm for learning implanted into Jewish womanhood by the Beth Jacob education, was passed on to the next generation.

Today, as never before, boys flock to the Yeshivot, not only because their fathers might wish them to go, but because of the mothers too, who know of no greater happiness and pride than to have their sons in the Yeshiva and in the Kollel. They regard this as the ultimate reward for all their labours of love. However busy they may be, they make the extra errands to take their little ones to Cheder in the early mornings or home on the dark winter afternoons: Proudly they line the bus routes to welcome home the boys from the Zeman (Yeshiva Term), or see them off when they go back after the holidays, richly laden with the best their mother's kitchen and care can produce. It never enters the minds of those mothers that any of these grownup lads should help at home with the livelihood. They only want their sons to study the Torah; this is their ambition, their pride, their triumph and maybe even their secret jealousy.

This new type of mother knows if reality lags behind their dreams, what the first generation of Beth Jacob girls, previously described, did not know, but had to be taught first: that there is nothing impressive in modern civilization that does not go back to the

teaching of the Torah. They are fully cognizant of this and know how to present to their children the superiority of Jewish culture. The majority of Orthodox young women, dominating the communal scene today, have been at least for some time through one or another of these Seminaries or have attended courses with similar programs and have acquired Jewish Knowledge on a scale wide and deep enough to enable them to guide their children during the formative years of their childhood. Mothers in times like ours have to be on their guard to build the fortress of their homes strong enough to withstand the intrusion of a crazy world. They have to know how to immunize their children from the very cradle against the disease and germs that threaten to poison their spiritual life and to undermine all that is sacred. Their care in the nursery and their educational skill is giving Jewish life a positive meaning, and creating an atmosphere where all the Jewish observances carry with them a joyful uplift. The citadel of the home has to be built strong to withstand the avalanche of corruption that threatens our society. The Mother's influence today is perhaps more important than ever before. The historical figures of Channah who brought Shmuel to the Sanctuary, when he was still a child and of Sarah who shielded her son against all distorting influences of evil companionship step out of the ancient settings of Tanach and became a practical challenge, pointing the way to decisive action in Education.

The Beth Jacob Education has prepared the womanhood of our days for their task and it has provided the female counterpart to all the Yeshiva-trained young men. It was the Beth Jacob that forty years ago called the girls to the awareness of the part they have to play and taught them the meaning of the Scriptural sentence (Shmos 19:4), whence does Beth Jacob derive its name:

"כה תאמר לבית יעקב ותגיד לבני ישראל"

"Thus shall you speak to the house of Jacob"

The words "House of Jacob", our sages say, refer to the women. With them lies the guarantee for our people's future, for into their hands is given the education of the young. The interpretation of the Scriptural saying has always been known to the entire learned world, and yet it was left to a simple Jewish woman with vision and devotion and to the pedagogical genius of a Western Jew aglow with love for Torah, to make the world aware of the great need, hitherto unfulfilled, for intensive and specialized girls' education. Dr. Deutschlander's call, though gentle and unassuming, yet vigorously demanding, and accompanied by his educational enterprise, found its echo. This echo becomes more and more dynamic as it continues to challenge the conscience of the Jewish World calling it to action. The deserted graves of Shmuel Deutschlander in Vienna and of Sarah Schenierer in Cracow are monuments, small to the human eye; but innumerable are the stones that have been added, as it were, to these monuments and the names engraved on them are alive and their memory is blessed.

We have skimmed the skyline of the historical work of Leo Deutschlander. But this essay, written by one who had the privilege of working closely together with him for Beth Jacob, was meant to provide along with the evaluation of his efforts and achievements also that personal reminiscence which should recall the mystery of his mind's charm and

the sunshine of his human benevolence. Whenever still today, two people who knew him, reminisce about him, it is invariably done with a smile that seems to be still triggered off by him, like a belated response to his own defensive humour, his sublime reaction to life's vicissitudes. There are many recollections of his gracious humility that make good story-telling, but are too sensitive to stand the print. I have written to several of his former pupils in England, America and Israel to give me their recollections of Leo Deutschlander's teaching which they received when they were quite young some forty years ago. "He was a revelation to us. Like the healing rays of the sun, his kindliness opened our hearts so that we drank his teaching. He radiated harmony. He had wings to his mind and he carried us aloft with him and our horizon became widened by the flight of his thoughts". Kaethe Jacobson, herself a teacher *of* renown who has done so much for female youth in Sweden, Lidingo, Sweden and Jerusalem, stresses how Dr. Deutschlander succeeded in making Tehillim alive by tracing the unity of thought in each chapter throughout the entire sequence of the sentences. He achieved, she said, that uplift which no secular masterpiece could possibly give us, and is in no way comparable to the sacred character of the Tehillim that he knew how to communicate to us. Rifka Pinkusewitz (of Cracow, now Antwerp) writes: "When we listened to his words, we no longer felt the stifling heat of the burning summer in the narrow ghetto streets of Cracow, intensified by the stench that came from the nearby tannery. Different rays of the sun seemed to flood the room and give us their own radiance. We felt in a strange way disconnected from burdensome realities. It suddenly seemed to us that down there by the river Vistula people lived a trivial meaningless life; but up here on the 3rd floor of our poor tenement schoolroom, Dr. Deutschlander's flight of thought seemed to carry us all aloft to higher spheres and to more sublime visions" She recounts what the interpretation of the sentence in Shmos 13: 17 meant to her.

"ולא נחם אלקים דרך ארץ פלישתים"

"Hashem did not lead the Israelites through the land of the Philistines because it was near."

Hashem did not lead them the short way in order to impress upon them that great and lofty aims cannot be attained by quick light footedness; they must be attained by suffering and endurance. We were too young at the time she said, to grasp the meaning of this comment; but later, when we were put to harsh and cruel suffering in the concentration camps, these words re-echoed in our minds; they fortified us, they gave a meaning to our pain and strengthened us not to be crushed in this seemingly hopeless vast ocean of inhumanity. In the inferno of our hell, the memory of those radiant thoughts sustained us and gave us the eternal Jewish hope. For this alone, if not for many other reasons, Leo Deutschlander engraved his lasting picture into our Beth Jacob."

Mrs. Sabine Kohn- Pinter (formerly of Vienna, now of London) was a very young girl when she heard Leo Deutschlander's lectures on Tehillim. She tells me how she listened spellbound to his lessons and remembers that she was lastingly fascinated by the unique atmosphere that permeated the classroom. She was too young then to recall the details now. But one thing stands out: Dr Deutschlander once stopped in front of her desk and

סימנריון למורות אצל מרכז ה"בית־יעקב"
בקראקא

ב"ה.

תעודה

התלמידה פרל ערנא _____

מעיר פרעשבורג _____ גליל _____

למדה בסימנריון שלנו על הקורס הא' והב' מיום ב"ח סבת תר"ץ עד סוף בסלו תרצ"ב

והצטיינה בהצלחה שלמה אצלנו הנן:

תורה נביאים כתובים, דקדוק־לשה"ק, תולדות עם ישראל, פרקי אבות ועוד.

בלימודים הכללים:

פדגוגי' ופסיכולוגי', שפה הונגרית וגרמנית, היסטורי' פולנית וכללית, נאוגרפי' ועוד.

ההתקדמות בלימודי־קודש היא: טוב _____

בלימודי הכללים: ---- _____

בעת ובעונה אחת, שמשה בתור מורה בבית הספר „בית יעקב" הקראקאית לשם שמוש מעשי.

וההתקדמות שעשתה בפקודת המעשי של מורה הן טוב מאד _____

על פסק ההתקדמות הכללית בהלימודים שעשתה כל זמן שלמדה בהסימנריון שלנו, ונם בהתאם

להנסיון שבכתב ובשבעל־פה שהי' מיום ב"א _____ עד יום כ"ו כסלו צ"ב הבירה

הועידה הפדגוגית שהיתה ביום _____ שנה _____ את התלמידה כתור מורה ומנהלת בבי"ס „בית־יעקב".

קראקא, יום כ"ח בסלו תרצ"ב _____

בית יעקב צענטראל
קראקא
סמאנימראוא 10

שרה שענירער
תחיפת הדירקטוריון

ד"ר ראזענבוים
חבר המורים

שלשיאפבה

Diploma signed by Sarah Schenirer and Dr. Rosenbaum

said to her: in his own simple way: "What are you doing here in my lesson, my child? Your father is a much bigger Talmid Chochom than I am, go home and listen to him." She remembers also how her father, Rabbi Pinter, having been challenged by one of the Chassidim as to how he could send his daughter to the Beth Jacob where a "Herr Doctor" was teaching Tanach, answered, "I have seen this "Herr Doctor" in our Beth Hamedrash; I have seen his davening, I have seen his deference, his respect and humility towards the men learned in the Talmud. To such a man I can safely entrust my child". And, as if to reveal more of Dr. Deutschlander's inner greatness, it so happened that after this conversation, which the child heard at home, she heard on the same day Dr. D. expounding on the sentence in Tehillim 42: 6.

"מה תשתוחחי נפשי ותהמי עלי הוחלי לאלקים כי עוד אודנו ישועות פניו"

"Why are you cast down O my soul and why do you moan within me? Hope in G- d for I shall yet praise Him".

He made them feel the trembling and moaning of the soul that shivers in awareness of its imperfection, yearning for the ascent to the ultimate Sublime. The right scale of values was implanted lastingly into these girls during the Tehillim lectures of this "Herr Doctor".

Although Tehillim seemed Dr. Deutschlander's favourite book in "Nach", he did not neglect the other books either, his lectures on Iyov are well-remembered, and like his lecture notes on Tehillim, are in the possession of some of his former pupils. However, they are not in print. There exists, however, in print, a synopsis of deep searching talks which he delivered in front of an academic forum on the Book of Koheleth. This synopsis is to be found in "Unser Weg", the organ of the Bund Juedischer Akademiker (Association of Jewish Academicians) Volumes 4 and 5, published in Berlin in the year 1930- 5690.

Erna Frei (Deutsch), now in London, was the only girl who went from Bratislava at the age of fifteen to the Seminary in Cracow and after she had completed her training, became a teacher in several towns in Czechoslovakia, and started to awaken the interest of womanhood in that country for the ideals of Beth Jacob. Some time after the liberation in 1946 she met one of her pupils who had survived in the camp and who told her how the teaching she had received had sustained her in those years in the camp. She remembered her teacher's words when she passed on Dr. Deutschlander's thoughts on Tehillim to her pupils: "David's soul was never drowned in sorrow or fear. He found a purpose in all suffering because it is Hashem who has built suffering in His plan of the Universe. Tribulations are there to purify the soul like the field needs rain to free the creative powers of the earth. Thus Hashem sends tears to free the higher forces within the human soul and all those who have to go through the valley of tears should know that Hashem is opening a valley of rejuvenating powers. Suffering and punishment are also revelations of Hashem's love." She recounted to Erna Deutsch in a most touching letter, how the echo of the lessons helped her to remain sane and strong when the miseries were almost unbearable.

Dr. Deutschlander was humble and yet he was a man of vision. It was vision that spurned him on and it was his humility that made him accept the burdensome task without reservation, the task that *Hashgacha Pratis* had so clearly assigned to him. We can now see the full extent to which his work has expanded. Some years ago I visited New York and one of Dr. Deutschlander's oldest friends promised to show me the result of Dr. Deutschlander's labours. I was shown around the large and lively Beth Jacob Seminary in Williamsburg but this friend did not think that this was the place that would best reveal what had been achieved. He took me to young families in Lakewood, to one, to another and yet another, quite a few of them. The young fathers were learning in Kollel, the young mothers were Beth Jacob trained girls, the children in each family were brimming with Jewish activities and knowledge. Moisheles, Shloimeles...Racheles, Rifkeles... There was everywhere the same atmosphere of intelligence, beauty, discipline and tradition all woven together in perfect harmony. "This is Dr. Deutschlander's work," he said. "The Seminary may be full but the harvest of the fruit you can see here". I had been sorrowfully reminded of the Yiddish song I had once heard in Wasrsaw and Cracow *"Unter die greenchike baimelech spielen sich Moyshelechs, Shloymelechs..."* Those once alive Jewish places were now bare of our precious children, but here new life on the old pattern was sprouting.

In the well-known Aggadah of Choni Hamaagal, narrated in the Talmud Tractate of Taanith, we are told of an old man who planted a cherub tree. It takes a long time for a cherub tree to bear fruit, and the man who plants it cannot hope to live long enough to see that fruit and reap it, and later in the story there appears a young man who plucks fruit of the same tree, the planting of which he himself had not witnessed. It had been planted so obviously before he had been born.

Those that plant in devotion might never see how rich the abundance of the coming harvest might be. Yet, at harvest time their name will re- echo and their memory will be blessed.

Postscript

In olden days one had "Memoir books" in which the names were recorded of those who had died as martyrs. These names were read out once a year in the old Kehilloth so that those that had given their lives for the sanctification of Hashem's name should not remain unrecorded. Alas, how many have perished in our time, leaving neither Kaddish nor tombstone. Here is the place to record the names of those noble men and women who in their time, inspired by the aim of Beth Jacob, devoted the precious years allotted to them to the strengthening and furthering of the Beth Jacob educational work. The teachers who worked with Sarah Schenierer in the Seminary were:

Channah (Hanka) Biegun- Grossfeld, Cracow, (mentioned in this article previously as Sarah Schenierer's successor after her passing away.)
Esther (Esciu) Goldstoff, Cracow.
Gittel Pass Teitelbaum, Cracow
Yehudis (Ida) Bauminger, Cracow

Bella Gross, Cracow
Laca (Lottka) Sczareinska Wasciacz, Cracow
Chaya Rosenblum Cohn, Lodz.

All these young girls and women were outstanding in their devotion; they gave their strength wholeheartedly, were loved by their pupils and had the full confidence of Sarah Schenierer who relied on them to carry out the work that she had outlined. Without them the growth of the Beth Jacob movement would be unthinkable. Every one of them was not only dedicated to their work but they were all most gifted as teachers and educationalists.

Chava (Eva) Landsberg from Breslau taught first in Cracow, then in the "Krueger Heim" in Vienna and later she became an influential teacher in the Beth Jacob Seminary in Jerusalem where she died. She was a devoted teacher and most successful and her pupils remember her gratefully.

I should also like to mention those that worked for Beth Jacob in the Cracow Seminary and are by the grace of the Almighty here and carry on educational work in some form or another even as mothers and grandmothers.

Betty Wreschner-Baumgarten Rothschild from Zurich who belonged to the first teachers who went to Cracow from Western Europe and left her mark on all those she taught. Judith Munk-Hildesheimer from Berlin, now in Israel. Esther Hamburger-Gross from Berlin, now in San Paulo (Brazil). Linka Schreiber Biberfeld from Vienna, now in New York, did all secretarial work for Dr. Deutschlander and helped him in the organization of the continuation courses.

And last but not least we would like to remember with warm affection and admiration Resi Deutschlander nee Lindenberger, who was Dr. Deutschlander's lawyer and devoted help-mate and shared his work and tribulations in the course of sixteen years which were so entirely devoted to the promotion of Torah Education.

She survived him and after his death in 1935, established a girl's boarding school in Vienna in order to carry on his work and perpetuate his name. She was taken away by the Nazis never to be seen again. She has an inestimable share in all of Dr. Deutschlander's work and achievements. We also wish to pay here tribute to Dr. Deutschlander's lifelong loyal friends and supporters Rabbi Dr. Leo Jung, New York, the editor of this volume and Rabbi Wolf (Wolly) S. Jacobson now in Jerusalem. The merit of these two personalities, their power of inspiration and perseverance for the cause of Education is well known.

Prüfung am 16. Januar

Anwesend: Rosenbaum, Grossfeld, Hamburger (beisitzend auf Frau Schenirer)

Prüfend: am abwechselnd

Geprüft wurden:

Stahl, Rembalska, Burstin, Hirschberg, Blumanska

Ergebnis:

Stahl. Man hat den Eindruck, dass sie verstellt nun was es sich handelt und dass sie mit mit der Zeit doch und ganz gut orientiert ist hat in der Prüfung lebhaft gehandelt.

Rembalska will [illegible]. Hat auch bei der Prüfung versagt - gründlich.

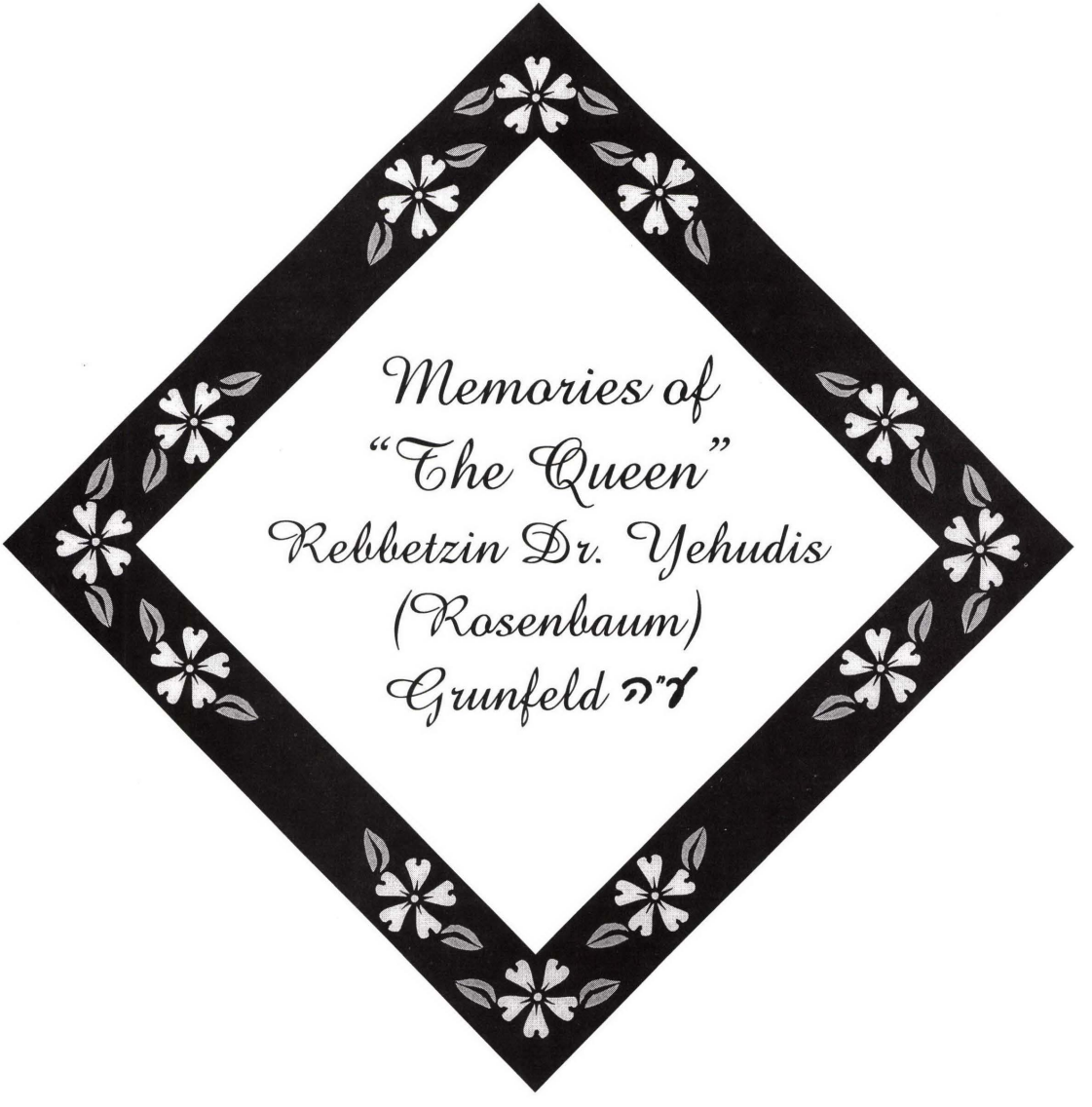
Blumanska

versagt, nicht fähig, und wenn wenn R Spezialfächer, gänzlich will entwickelt

Minutes of a seminary staff meeting attended by Dr. Rosenbaum, Chanka Grossfeld, Esther Hamburger, and Sara Schenirer

A REGULAR WEEKDAY SCHEDULE OF THE BAIS YAAKOV SEMINARY	
5:30 AM	Dress, *daven* and review lessons
7:45 AM	Breakfast: a cup of cocoa, bread and butter
8:00-9:30 AM	First period: *Chumash*
9:30-11:00 AM	*Shir HaShirim*
11:00-11:30 AM	Intermission of midmorning, snack
11:30- 1:00 PM	History (I learned about the rise of the Reform movement and the important role played by Rabbi Shimshon Rafael Hirsch in stemming the tide of assimilation)
1:00-2:00 PM	*Dinim*-Jewish Law (I have a vivid recollection of a slaughtered chicken that was brought into the classroom to demonstrate the difference between a chicken that is *kosher* or *treif*)
2:00-3:00 PM	Lunch (The first day I ate the kasha, but left over the soup, and was severely reprimanded for transgressing **בל תשחית** (wasting). The outstanding feature of this hour was the digest of the news of the day presented by a different student each week. After lunch we usually went for a walk.)
3:30-4:00 PM	*Minchah* (afternoon prayer)
4:00-4:30 PM	Tea
4:30-7:30 PM	Study, homework, recopying of class notes
7:30-8:00 PM	*Ma'ariv* (evening prayer)
8:00-9:00 PM	Supper
9:00-10:00PM	Informal reading group (One of the teachers read a few chapters from a *sefer* on Jewish ethics, and the girls took an active part in the discussion. I was impressed by their profound knowledge and ability to express views and opinions on a subject that was above my comprehension at times.)
10:00 PM	Lights out - time for bed

Daily schedule of the seminary as recorded by Mrs. Chava (Gordon) Schechter during her trip from America to Poland in 1933. She visited her friend, Chava (Weinberg) Pincus, who was a student in the seminary at that time.


Memories of
"The Queen"
Rebbetzin Dr. Yehudis
(Rosenbaum)
Grunfeld ע"ה

Rebbetzin Dr. Judith Grunfeld a"h

By Mrs. J. Israel

Reprinted with permission from Hamodia.

The legendary matriarch of the Beis Yaakov movement, Rebbetzin Judith Grunfeld a"h, departed this world on Lag B'omer, 5758-1998, at the age of 95. Universally known as "the queen", her passing spells the end of an era and of a life where *mesiras nefesh* reigned supreme, where dedication to the Klal superseded all personal considerations.

Rebbetzin Judith Grunfeld - what memories this name evokes, what nostalgic feelings of love and awe are inspired by its mere mention. And as we pay this final tribute, as we express our deep-felt gratitude to this illustrious leader of Klal Yisroel, we also take leave of a majestic, compassionate and devoted servant of Hashem and His people, a true queen.

Rebbetzin Grunfeld was born in Hungary into the distinguished Rosenbaum-Bamberger family. While she was still an infant, her parents moved to Germany where she received her formal education. Thus, the young Judith Rosenbaum's personality was molded with a rare blend of the fun-loving, bohemian sparkle of Hungarian ancestry, coupled with the strict disciplined dignity of staunch Orthodox Frankfurt doctrine.

It was the early 1920s in Poland and the world was crying out at the indescribable pain of *Yiddishe* daughters departing from the holy traditions of their parents' homes. Fathers held the eager hands of their sons, *Gemaras* clutched under their arms, leading them to the *Beis Hamedrash*, to the *shtieblech*, to everlasting life. But where were the daughters, the future *Yiddishe* mamas, the *akeres habayis* of Klal Yisroel? Why were the eyes of their mothers red-rimmed? Why did they shed copious tears, bent over their *Tehillim*, beseeching *HaKadosh Baruch Hu* for *rachamei Shamayim*? And even worse, why were some mothers so nonchalant, so indifferent to the spiritual destruction of their daughters?

Sarah Schenirer - who has not heard of this legendary mother of Beis Yaakov, the humble seamstress, who snatched these young *neshamos* from the jaws of eternal death, who revived the mortally wounded Jewish nation, who returned the crown of the *bas Yisroel* to its former glory? Filled with a burning zeal, with a dedication that bordered on the sublime, she desperately needed help in reaching the hearts of these precious souls. The youthful Judith Rosenbaum, the newly qualified, not yet experienced educator, courageously stepped up to the challenge, capturing the hearts of these first pupils to a degree that defies description. When reciting *birkas hamazon*, these students used to insert a special *haracahman* for their teacher.

Let us not delude ourselves that it was an easy beginning, that right from the start these girls eagerly awaited what was offered to them. Far from it. Indifference, hostility, and rebellion were what first met her in the class room. But slowly, with endless love and patience, with understanding and tolerance, she captured their hearts, until the most estranged ones became her ardent admirers.

She burned the midnight oil over the works of Rabbi Shimshon Rafael Hirsch, and many a dawn found her at her desk, where she fell asleep from sheer exhaustion in her great desire to prepare profound, elevating and inspiring lessons for her pupils. She did not spare herself, and the results were spectacular. Nor were her efforts limited to academic achievements alone. When a pupil was heartbroken because she could not afford the tuition required for the forthcoming year, Fraulein Rosenbaum herself traveled to solicit funds, thus covering the expenses. She could always bear her own pain, but her noble heart would in variably break at the suffering of others.

During this time she married the distinguished Dayan I.Grunfeld zt"l, of Germany, later to become an emissary of the Chief Rabbi's Religious Emergency Council and a senior *dayan* at the London Beis Din.

Here a most vital aspect of her multi-faceted personality came to light. It is perhaps the most

poignant lesson she ever taught - the ultimate essence of the Beis Yaakov philosophy. Rebbetzin Grunfeld recognized that from the day she left Poland to get married, her prime duty in life was to be a dedicated wife and mother. Although she was later called upon to participate in monumental achievements on the public scene, it was clear to her that these were only secondary to her duties to her family. When the need arose, all her great achievements in educational and organizational work were put aside for that most basic of all callings, to be an *akeres habayis* and an *eim habanim*.

August 1939 saw the dark ominous, clouds of war threatening to erupt over Europe. In an obscure, out-of-the-way village in England, in a place called Shefford, hundreds of children, mostly between the ages of eight and fourteen, were evacuated to escape the inevitable bombs that would devastate London. At their head, leading this mass exodus to the unknown, was the dynamic headmistress Rebbetzin Judith Grunfeld, the colleague of the brave and dauntless single handed rescue institution, Rabbi Dr. S. Schonfeld.

Shefford - a name that conjures up fond memories of a valiant struggle against all odds, of a true, meaningful *Yiddishe* educational establishment planted in completely strange, non-Jewish surroundings. It recalls alien hearts won over by steadfast loyalty to Torah values, and a courageous lady who was crowned with the title "queen" by the villagers of this remote little place called Shefford.

My brave, heroic aunt, Rebbetzin Dr. Judith Grunfeld, the "Queen"! How can I describe in a few short lines all that you sacrificed for your hundreds of children during those six long years of war in Shefford? How you cared for them spiritually and physically, how you faced Her Majesty's Inspectors, and earned their unstinting praise and acclaim for your gallant school. You built a kingdom based on benevolence and lovingkindess, on integrity and sheer, hard work, a kingdom dedicated to giving *nachas ruach* to *HaKadosh Baruch Hu*. And in turn, you gained the love, loyalty and admiration of the simple villagers. Peace had returned to the world, but Dayan and Rebbetzin Grunfeld had not yet allowed themselves to bask in its luxury. They flew to Cyprus, where the *shearis hapleita* were interned, and once again, Rebbetzin Grunfeld, who symbolized for these broken hearts their former glory of Beis Yaakov, brought hope and courage to illuminate their darkened lives, to imbue them with the will to continue with a purpose:

Beis Yaakov, l'chu v 'neilcho b'or Hashem.

This was her legacy to us and to her dear children. "Beis Yaakov, go forth with pride and courage in the name of Hashem." By personal example, with example Rebbetzin Judith Grunfeld taught us *emuna*, *yiras Shamayim* and *ahava* Hashem. Throughout her turbulent life she was a noble and gracious queen, who hid her own pain and sorrows, stretched forth her hand to her people and smiled.

A capacity audience filled Manchester's Bnos Yisroel Hall in honor of the first *yahrtzeit* of Rebbetzin Dr. Judith Grunfeld. The event was in support of the Kesser Torah Senior Boys School and the Yeshiva Ketana, one of the oldest established Torah institutions in Manchester.

Chairwoman Mrs. I. Hassan paid tribute to Rebbetzin Grunfeld's pioneering spirit in establishing the Beis Yaakov movement together with Sara Schenirer at a time when girls' Torah education was desperately lacking.

Renowned speaker and educator Rebbetzin J. Israel of Manchester gave a moving tribute to the dedication to the *klal* that was the hallmark of the noble life of her aunt. She described how the dignified Fraulein Rosenbaum, who never accepted anything for herself, traveled throughout Europe soliciting funds for her needy pupils and for Beis Yaakov.

The guest of honor, Dr. A. R. Cohn, shared vignettes from her life with her distinguished mother and eloquently described how her mother's life was an embodiment of *ahavas Torah* and *gemilas chessed*, with home and heart always open to the unfortunate.

Dr. Cohn also read aloud the recently found "Letter of Legacy," in which Rebbetzin Grunfeld instructs her family and *Klal Yisrael* to continuously do more and never be satisfied with accomplishing less than their potential in *avodas Hashem*.

Memories of Rebbetzin Dr. Yehudis Grunfeld ע"ה

By Mrs. R. Pinkusevitch, Antwerp



"The Queen." That's how Dr. Judith Grunfeld is described by all who knew her in London, and with good reason. When I think of her, the image that floats up in my mind is one from days as a Bais Yaakov student in Cracow, when Dr. Grunfeld was called "Fraulein Doctor". In those times, it was most uncommon to meet a young woman who was educated, had a university degree and was also observant! According to what I heard, she also *davened Mincha* and *Maariv* every day and was dressed modestly and in good taste. In those days, it was far more common to hear of girls who had abandoned a Torah-true life as soon as they had begun to study or to read foreign literature. Dr. Grunfeld was a truly rare phenomenon.

Contrasting the two worlds she had known is no simple matter. Enthusiastic by nature, Dr. Grunfeld felt wonderfully at home in *chassidic* homes, such as that of Reb Henach Landau. Yet she was raised in Frankfurt, Germany, cradle of the *Torah im Derech Eretz* ideology and birthplace of the Ezra youth movement. Cracow, on the other hand, was the typical Eastern European city, in which Sara Schenirer began the Bais Yaakov movement with a program which was in keeping with pure, age-old Jewish values.

Judith Grunfeld clearly remembered her first meeting with Sara Schenirer. The meeting took place in Cracow in the summer of 5685/1925, when Sara Schenirer was teaching a group of students who had been attracted by the concept of a Bais Yaakov.

"The young girls seemed to me like butterflies, fluttering around a modestly dressed woman whose eyes burned with a special fire, a fire which had the power to ignite thousands of hearts. Her glance seemed burning, yet somehow caressing at once," she related.

"When Sara Schenirer told me why she had devoted herself to the establishment of a school for girls, I immediately knew that she was creating history. I instinctively felt that she knew it too. Her simple, modest words came straight from the heart."

From that point on, Dr. Judith Grunfeld was "hooked" on the new movement. She became a loyal partner in Sara Schenirer's work, fully aware of the gravity of the situation and the necessity for action.

She taught *Tanach* with a fiery enthusiasm which delighted her students, who admired her young spirit. Once a week during the winter months, when Bais Yaakov was based in the city, Dr. Grunfeld would lead her students on joyous, carefree trips to the mountains.

Whoever participated in her lesson on *Shir HaShirim*, presented in an open field during the last summer before she left, will never forget those uplifting hours. Nor will they forget the gathering held in her honor before she left to be married. The gathering took place in the depths of the forest, with only the moon illuminating those gathered as they sat, shoulder to shoulder, along with Sara Schenirer. We accompanied Dr. Grunfeld, to whom we'd all come to feel deeply attached, with spirited dancing and a silent prayer on our lips that she be successful in this new stage of her life.

Sara Schenirer, too, who would feel Dr. Grunfeld's absence more keenly than any of the others, joined in this silent prayer. Mrs. Chana Biegun, who later filled Dr. Grunfeld's place as a teacher, expressed our emotions and described the deep admiration and respect we all felt for Dr. Grunfeld. During the rare moments of silence between rounds of dancing, Mrs. Biegun, in the name of all the teachers, mentioned the *pasuk* "*Zacharti lach chessed ne'urayich ahavas kelulosayich.*" These words expressed both our disappointment that she was leaving and the gratitude and love we all felt toward Dr. Grunfeld.

This remarkable evening drew to a close around a bonfire, as we sat singing slow, quiet tunes, *hartzige niggunim* and the Bais Yaakov theme song.

There is one particular sentence, uttered by Sara Schenirer on that unforgettable evening, which has remained engraved in my memory. Staring into the fire, she said, "Remember, girls: A fire which is not fed logs of wood dies out. There is a need to constantly add more and more."

The fire which she ignited has never died.

Judith Grunfeld never told us about her impressive origins. If not for a miraculous series of events which led to the discovery of her father's *sefer*, *Shimu Amirah* in France, along with a letter from her parents, no one would have ever known.

After the war, these writings were discovered in Limoges, France. They were published by Judith Grunfeld's husband. Among these letters was a paragraph written in her father's hand:

"I don't know if these writings will ever be found, but in the event Hashem *Yisbarach* wills it so, I request that they be published upon approval from three *Rabbanim* and *Gedolei* Torah. In the event that they never come to light, "*Keshem shekibalti sachar al hadrisha kach ani mekabel al haprisha*" (*Pesachim 22*).

Penned on a bundle of letters, in his wife's hand, are the words *"Tov li Toras picha me'alfei zahav..."*

Having presented these lines, I feel no further need to describe at length the *middos tovos, yiras Shamayim*, and *ahavas habriyos* (including *hachnasas orchim*) of her parents. These words speak for themselves, providing a true picture of the atmosphere in which she was raised, of the *hashkafa* and *chinuch* of her home.

Instilling Jewish *hashkafa* in the hearts of the young women of those days was no simple matter. We must bear in mind that these girls were already too old to have been educated in the Bais Yaakov elementary schools that were just beginning to be established. On the contrary, the youth of those days was captivated by foreign ideas, such as Zionism, Socialism, and Communism. Judith

Grunfeld went nights without sleep in order to prepare for her talks and find something new and interesting which she might use to influence her students.





Rebbetzin Grunfeld and Rebbetzin Kaplan at a luncheon held in Rebbetzin Grunfeld's honor during one of her visits to New York.

It's interesting to note that many distinguished personalities were in that first class for which Dr. Grunfeld spared no effort: Chana Biegun, Esther Goldstoff, Gittel Teitelbaum, Yehudis Bauminger, and others. May Hashem avenge their blood. It's interesting, also, to note that the founders of the Bais Yaakov Seminary in the United States, an institution which has always played (and still does) an important role in the Orthodox life of the United States, were students of the last class Dr. Grunfeld taught before she was married.

Her success was the fruit of the training she received from Sara Schenirer, along with her perceptive understanding of the fundamentals of Bais Yaakov. These two were integrated in her *chinuch* work, her deep-rooted Judaism, her vitality, and her devotion to her students.

Dr. Grunfeld's life continued to be a chain of activity after her wedding as well. Because of the Nazi threat, the couple moved to London, where Dr. Grunfeld managed a school. The heritage she'd been bequeathed by her parents was evident in her every action.

While visiting the Agudas Yisrael refugees in Cyprus after the war, she provided support and encouragement to every one she met.

During the war, many English schools relocated to villages in the countryside. Dr. Grunfeld's school was transferred to Shefford. The children were given temporary homes with non-Jewish families, and she saw to it that their *Yiddishkeit* was not harmed. She arranged a kosher kitchen and organized steady *minyanim*. She describes the difficulties of the period in her book "Shefford," the content of which can be summed up in one verse from *Eishes Chayil*: "*Chagra b'oz masneha.*"

Dr. Grunfeld's work was cut off as a result of her husband's illness. Dayan Grunfeld's life was prolonged due to her devoted care. His important work of translating the works of Rav Shimshon Raphael Hirsch into English was tragically interrupted. She tended to him loyally until his passing. During her *aveilus* for her husband she demonstrated what she had always explained to us on the words יתגדל ויתקדש. Her tremendous *bitachon* helped her resume her previous activities as well as her *mitzvos* and *ma'asim tovim*.

Many unfortunate souls whom other people often declined to have as guests found a welcome place set for them at Dr. Grunfeld's table. She continued making good use of her talent for writing and her natural ability for rhetoric by delivering lectures and speeches. Twice a week, summer and winter, through heavy downpours and even snowstorms, she would travel an hour each way in order to speak to groups of women.

Dr. Grunfeld, sensitive to the importance of *hakoras hatov*, organized a gathering celebrating the seventieth birthday of Rabbi Dr. Solomon Shonfeld. This special evening was to commemorate and ensure remembrance of his colossal wartime efforts in saving four thousand children and families from war torn Eastern Europe, and bringing them to England. Many of these children owed their spiritual lives to him as well when he took them into his school. It was he who hired Dr. Grunfeld, first as a teacher and later as a headmistress. It was under his supervision that she was put in charge of the evacuation operation to Shefford. At the gathering, his past *hatzoloh* work as well as his present day activities for the ill, were acknowledged and remembered. It was also an opportunity for friends and colleagues to wish him well with many more years of health and happiness.

Just a few days later, Dr. Grunfeld traveled to Antwerp to speak in honor of Sara Schenirer's *yahrzeit*. In her inimitable style and speaking manner, she was able to inspire her audience, leaving an indelible impression on all who heard her. She had a special gift for relating to the young generation. This special quality was especially evident during her trips to New York in her later years.

In honor of her eightieth birthday, a modest reception was arranged by her children for close family. She was surprised by the arrival of friends, past *talmidos*, as well as the women who attended her regular *shiurim*. One veteran *talmida* from her pre-war days in Poland also participated.

Dr. Grunfeld was the epitome of the way a *bas melech* should conduct herself, a true "Queen".

ת.נ.צ.ב.ה.

Adapted with permission from Hamodia (May 21, 1999)

בס"ד

רביצין יהודית גרינפלד עיה

Bais Yaakov D'Gur High School — Mrs. Altschuler

On Lag Ba'Omer, תשנ"ח, the world lost a unique and unusual person who made an immeasurable impact on Klal Yisrael in general and on Nshei uBnos Yisroel in particular. I am speaking of Rebbetzin Yehudis Grunfeld ע"ה who was one of Sara Schenierer's main co-workers. Before we close this school year, I would like to talk about this tremendous loss.

Some of you may have heard of her and others perhaps not. She was in her nineties and had been out of the public eye due to a stroke that she had about 5 years ago. To me personally, this was a unique loss. I grew up from my earliest childhood hearing about Dr. Yehudis Grunfeld from my mother who was a student of Sarah Schenierer in Cracow. Dr. Grunfeld came as a young teacher, from Germany, to help Sara Schenierer and became a legend amongst her students. My mother (Mrs. Rochel Kaimowicz - Greenbaum) used to talk about her with tremendous admiration, as she did about Sara Schenierer and her seminary experiences in those early pioneering days.

However, I was fortunate to have an added *z'chus*. Not only did I know about her from my mother, but I also met her and got to know her personally. I became close to her and her family and visited in her home in London. This was the house she lived in since W.W.II after she and her husband escaped from Europe and settled in London during the war years. She accomplished a lot for Chinuch in England as well, after her "Bais Yaakov" years, as those who have read her book "Shefford" will undoubtedly know. She was a wonderful, caring, loving, highly talented woman, a brilliant orator, master of languages, teacher, principal, devoted wife and mother!

When I first came to England to become a student in Gateshead Seminary, my mother personally contacted her, and told her that she had been her *talmida* in Cracow so many years earlier. I was witness to their reunion and she welcomed me warmly as the daughter of her former *talmida*. From that time on, she took me under her wing. During my years in England I was invited to her home many times. She always felt a special responsibility toward me since my parents were so far away in Australia. She treated me like an aunt or great aunt would, and I was profoundly inspired by her personality and her experiences. After my wedding, I was *zocheh* to continue this *kesher* on her visits to America at the invitation of her former students, Rebbetzin Kaplan ע"ה and other veteran teachers of Bais Yakov.

I even had the *z'chus* to have her as a guest overnight in my apartment in the early years of my married life. You will not remember, but perhaps some of the teachers here do. I once succeeded in getting her to come visit our school in the 16th Ave/42nd St. building. I was showing her around the building when she looked into a ninth grade window and said "I would like to go into this class". I remember that Mrs. Teitelbaum was teaching the class when we walked in. I could never have refused Reb. Grunfeld's request - she had such a regal air of authority about her! Mrs. Teitelbaum recognized her and stopped in mid-sentence, with the greatest respect, in order to allow her to address the class. I remember feeling a lot of sympathy for poor Mrs. Teitelbaum, when Reb. Grunfeld drew up a chair, sat herself down and practically ordered Mrs. Teitelbaum to continue teaching, saying that she wanted to listen to her! Afterwards she was full of compliments for Mrs. Teitelbaum. She had a tremendous sense of humor. I remember having to control myself from laughing during the assembly held in honor of her visit. She had decided to tell the students of Bais Yakov d'Gur High School about their principal, whom she had met as a young girl on the way to Seminary. She described to them the impression I had made on her and how eager I had been to meet my mother's legendary former teacher.

רביצין יהודית גרינפלד עיה

I have many, many personal memories of her that have come flooding back to me since her *petira*. But what are my memories compared to those of her students who were *zocheh* to learn from her during the formative years of the Bais Yaakov movement? She had been sent by such leaders as Moreinu Reb Yakov Rosenheim zt"l, one of the founders of Agudath Israel and Reb Shmuel (Leo) Deutschlander, to travel to Poland to help Sarah Schenierer. She grew up in a home of Rabbonim and *talmidei chachamim*. She had a sophisticated educational background and had attended the school of Rav Shamshon Refoel Hirsch, whose writings and commentaries had helped stem the tide of assimilation in Germany.

As we all know, the Jewish girls in Poland and other parts of Eastern Europe had also assimilated, in spite of the *Chassidus* and the *yeshivos* of the menfolk. The Polish girls were able to relate to the *hashkafos* of Rav Hirsch, and this was one of the reasons that Yehudis Rosenbaum, as she was then known, was such a successful messenger for this holy task. Her educational background, combined with her brilliant talents, charismatic personality, caring and devotion ensured her success. Of course her *mesirus nefesh* was the most crucial ingredient, for it is only when we are *moser nefesh* that *Hashem* grants us the most success.

She became totally involved in the girls' personal development, as she toiled over her *seforim* each night to prepare her *shiurim*, for she didn't have the abundance of teaching aids and *seforim* available today. She frequently traveled all over Europe to solicit funds and support for the fledgling movement that was so revolutionary in those years.

Her story is told in a number of places. All her life she jotted down speeches, memoirs, letters, and thoughts, many of which, several years ago, were combined into a book by Miriam Dansky. She was interviewed for the book "Daughters of Destiny" which appeared about 10 years ago and was published by the students of Bais Yakov Academy. This book records, amongst other memories, her impressions of Jewish life in Poland that she encountered during her travels. It is very interesting to read there of her visit to the home of the Imrei Emes and the *brachos* she received from him. Miriam Dansky's book mentions a special box of "treasures" that Reb. Grunfeld kept through all the years of her life in England. It contained mementoes, gifts, and letters from her early years in Poland. Reb. Grunfeld once showed me this box. It contained a *sefer* inscribed in Sarah Schenierer's own handwriting which she gave her as a wedding present. Another treasure that she had was a leather bound book where all the *shiurim* she had given in the Seminary were recorded in Yiddish and presented to her as a gift from her students. Each student wrote her name at the end of her section and the town from which she had come. Rebetzin Vichna Kaplan ע"ה wrote out all the notes on Shir Hashirim in the most beautiful handwriting and at the end she wrote "Vichna Eisen, Baranovich". They gave her this book because she had never really written down her own notes, but had jotted down her lessons on the backs of scraps of paper. This book was a loving testimony to their veneration for her.

I will close my words by reading you a very special letter that she wrote to the students of Gateshead Seminary 23 years ago, which I have in my possession. She wrote many, many speeches, letters and lessons during her life. She came from Germany, and managed to teach Polish girls in a Germanic Yiddish. She mastered other languages as well. During the war, she came to England and learned English fluently enough to teach, and become a headmistress. She continued to write and lecture for many years after that.

Adapted from the Closing Assembly Speech, תשנ"ח.

Reb. Grunfeld's Letter to the Students of Gateshead Seminary on the Occasion of Sarah Schenirer's Yahrtzeit-תשל"ד.

Dear Girls of the Gateshead Seminary,

I am moved to think that you too, like so many all over the world, gather on the occasion of the Jahrzeit of Sarah Schenierer, to be like a Kaddish for her נשמה and to gather strength and further inspiration from her memory. Sarah Schenierer, who never had a child of her own, has kindled the lights in thousands and thousands of נשמות all over the world by her own fire of devotion and strength and the number of those who, inspired by her, follow the paths that she has made, is ever growing and ever expanding. Anyone who wants to understand the words that we call out on Rosh Hashanah זכרנו לחיים מלך חפץ בחיים should see these Jahrzeit gatherings in London, in Gateshead, in New York, in Yerusholayim, in Bene Brak, in New York, in Philadelphia, etc., how the life of a person is carried on in its blessed influence, and the impact of it is still felt, although she herself has left this world nearly 40 years ago.

I am the messenger of those early days when Sarah Schenierer started this today's so great Movement with only a few girls in her own two barely furnished rooms. She was then without funds, without proper equipment, herself without teaching qualifications or teaching experience, but watching Jewish life around her, she saw the Jewish houses shaking on their foundations, in danger of collapsing because the corner stones were missing that holds every edifice together בנותינו פנינים מחוברות תהא תבנית היכל *"Our daughters are the cornerstones that hold an edifice together and they are hewn out strong reflecting the image of the Heichal."*

As for the girls, Jewish education and instruction, schools and youth groups were non-existent. She saw the girls getting more and more estranged from the spirit of their homes. She was haunted by the words being reported to her as coming from the Gerrer Rebbe: "I have thousands and thousands of Bachurim and I don't know whether there will be even 20 girls in this country who would be the right partners in marriage for these boys to build up Jewish homes." Sarah Schenierer saw what was going on; she saw the tears of her friends who had daughters, she took it to heart and here is where her historical uniqueness comes in. She decided to act. One woman alone without help, or experience, driven by the great desire לעשות רצונך בשמים מעל and spurred on by the vision that, given the right education, girls would hold the Torah aloft in the same spirit and the same loyalty as the Bachurim coming from the Yeshivot. All she did as a preliminary was to ask the ברכה of the Belzer Rebbe זי"ע. Once she got that, she had no more doubt that she would succeed. It was ברכת מזל טוב and therefore Almighty's blessing would crown it. How significant that Sarah Schenirer's Jahrzeit always falls in

the weeks where the reading of the Torah tells us about the building of the Sanctuary. There are in fact four פרשיות dealing with the instruction of how to build, and the execution of the plan - according to the Command of G-d. It tells us about the boards and the hooks and the sockets and the loops and the hangings and the curtains, all according to the Command of G-d, and G-d chose one, and put into his heart the wisdom and knowledge and guided him, and Bezalel joined up with another one and shared the glorious work with him. All this reminds me of the Sanctuary that Sarah Schenierer has erected, painstakingly, bit by bit, here a group, here a lesson, here a lecture, here an encouragement, a chain of small details carried on in devotion with משכן until the Mishkan was completed.

I was privileged to be with Sarah Schenierer in Cracov when she taught the first 50 girls, the pioneers of the now famous Beth Jacob Movement, the first volunteers who came out of their own accord, not drawn by the compelling power of a great movement as we know it today, without outward comfort, without any encouragement from the outside world. Sarah Schenierer herself was at that time unknown beyond her own pale. There was no success as yet linked with the name of Beth Jacob or with her own name. Like חלוצים these first girls jumped into the waves of one yet untested and unproven venture, accepting all the hardships that pioneers are faced with. G-d bless these first 50 girls who followed Sarah Schenierer into the wilderness, with the same devotion as they were taught by her. They really made the success of the Beth Jacob possible. I taught these girls myself; never ever have I met such response, such enthusiastic keenness and interest, such surrender to study and tuition. A lesson was never too long for them, as no one had a watch, a teacher would carry on sometimes for two hours or more but no girl became weary. They were entirely oblivious of the time. The knowledge that was imparted to them in a few hasty months of instruction was much below the present standard achieved in our Seminaries, but their spiritual discipline and devotion has remained unequalled. I met one of these first pupils the past year in May 1973 in Jerusalem. She came to see me, after 18 years, for the first time. This reunion with רחל קהתי wife of פנחס קהתי was a great experience for both of us.

To tell you the story of my years with Sarah Schenierer would take too long, maybe you can read the pamphlet that I have written about it and perhaps I will have a chance another time to speak to you.

I can never pass the occasion of the Jahrzeit without impressing upon those to whom I have the chance to address, the great part that Dr. Leo Deutschlander ז"ל educationalist and organizer, trained in Western Europe, has played in the development of Beth Jacob. Sarah Schenierer's desire to build up the school movement would not have led her to success without the guiding mind, the methodical experienced ways of Leo Deutschlander ז"ל who nursed with understanding, with love and with grace, this tender

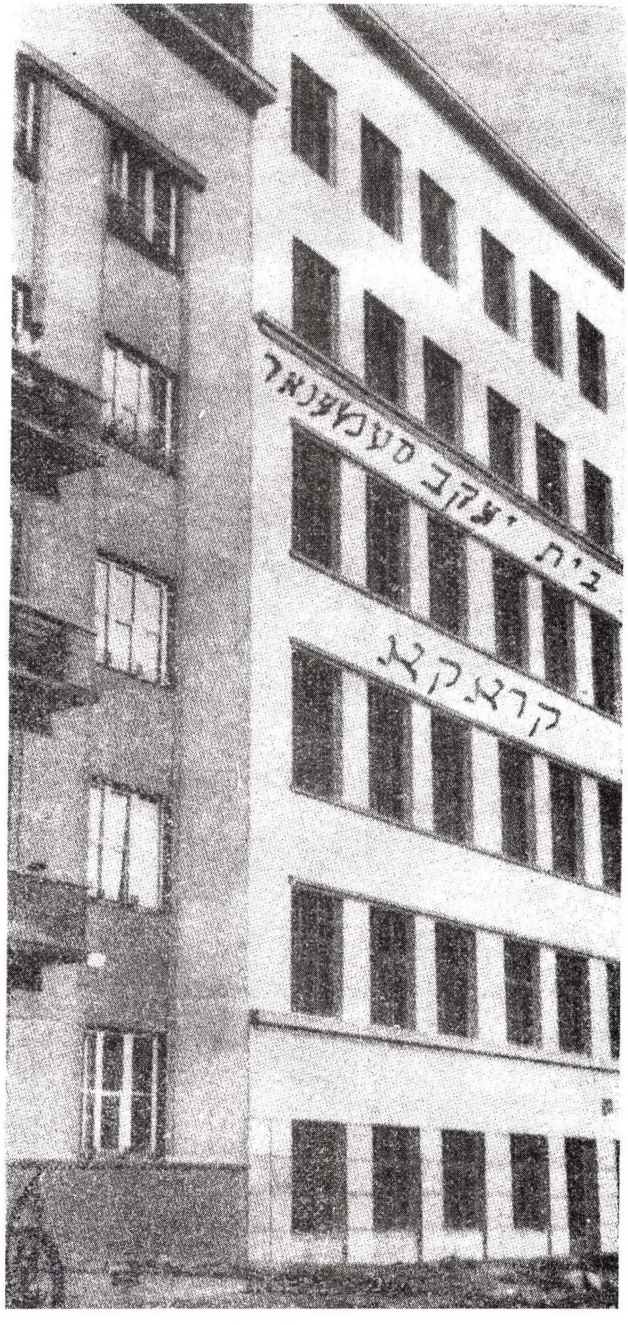
work into its fantastic growth. He too, died in 1935, aged 47, leaving no descendants at all. He too, like Sarah Schenierer, and together with her, leaves his devotion reflected in a glorious way.

When Sarah Schenierer parted from this world in 1935, her successor was Hanka Grossfeld ע"ה married to Reb Joseph Biegun ע"ה. She had been one of Sarah Schenierer's first and most difficult pupils- a girl with enterprise, adventurous spirit, lively ways, eager to enjoy life. She went to the Beth Jacob because her parents begged her to go-just to please them, reluctantly. She was captured gradually by the spirit that prevailed there and over the years she turned all her inclinations and gifts towards the Beth Jacob ideals. She grew in stature, in qualities of mind and character and picked up the task after Sarah Schenierer's departure. When Hitler over-ran Poland, she and her husband Reb Joseph Biegun went straight the way from which there was no return. May her memory be woven together with the one of the two masters that founded the work.

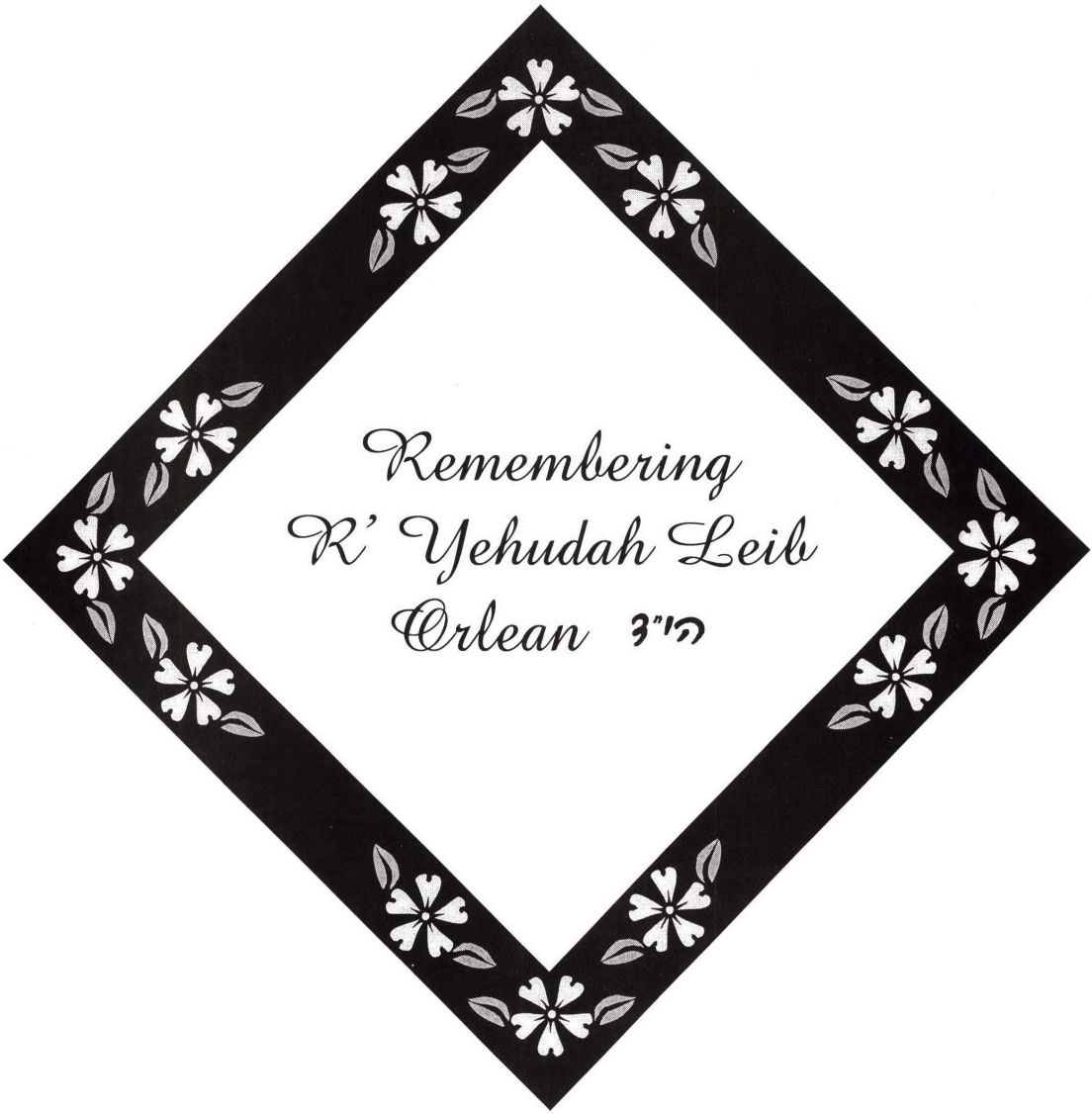
The story of Sarah Schenierer reveals to us how one woman in influencing other women, can shape and influence and strengthen our people's life at large. Her influence reaches men too. This is not entirely unknown to us. The indication of this is in the חומש.After משה had sung the שירה we read the words that Miriam took the musical instruments and she sang likewise: ותען להם Why is it in the masculine form להם and not להן? Surely Miriam did not sing for men? But when a woman influences other women, this influence is sure to reach the families, and with it, the world of men. Behind every child who goes to חדר, behind every בחור who goes to ישיבה, is a mother who encourages him-who cares for his welfare there, who is proud of him and is happy to do without his help at home, preparing the next tidbit for him when he comes home בין הזמנים and behind every young man who learns in כולל is a wife who wants him to learn, who is prepared to work so that he can sit and learn-as is a young girl who wants to marry a man whose desire it is to learn. The great trend towards learning that we witness today-that the ישיבות have more applicants than places of accommodation is to a very large extent due to the fact that mothers and wives are full of אהבת התורה through the education they have learned in seminaries and בית יעקב type schools.

It is שבת פקודי, the word פקודי brings to my mind וה' פקד את שרה. Indeed, Sarah Schenierer is remembered by the intensity of Jewish girls' Torah education all over the world and its blessed consequences.

תהי' נפשה צרורה בצרור החיים.



The Seminary building at Stanislawa 10 under construction.


Remembering
R' Yehudah Leib
Orlean ה"ז

CARRY ME IN YOUR HEART

Mrs. Pearl Benisch

Chapter 39

Any discussion of the Bais Yaakov Teachers' Seminary, already functioning at 10 Stanislawa Street, must make mention of Reb Yehudah Leib Orlean, who became its director in the early 1930s to help Frau Schenirer manage her fast-growing Bais Yaakov movement.

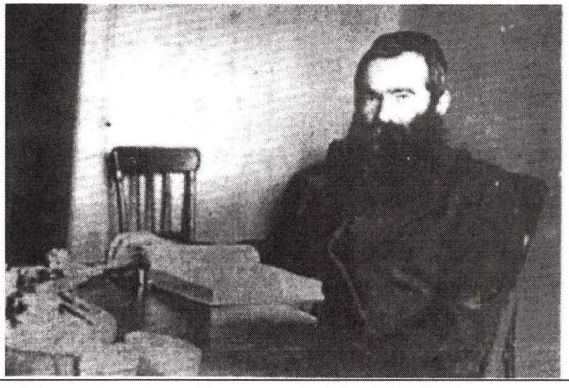
While still a young man in Warsaw, Reb Yehudah Leib was renowned as a great *talmid chacham*, a talented educator, and a gifted orator. He became involved in the Agudah movement after the Kenessiah Gedolah in 1923. A brilliant speaker and thought-provoking lecturer, he devoted all his talents to the shaping and development of Zeirei Agudath Israel, the Agudah youth organization. When the need arose, he and Reb Dovid Tzvi Silberstein, along with other Agudah activists, established Po'alei Agudath Israel (PAI), an Orthodox labor organization that aimed to combat the pressure of the powerful Socialist movement, which refused to offer work to Shabbos-observant workers.

As a leading figure in PAI along with his passionate activities to help struggling young men to find work and earn an honest living, Reb Yehudah Leib wrote the tract "*Tzu Zate und Tzu Hungerike*," as mentioned previously. This essay expounded on the socio-religious *halachos* that both Jewish employers and Jewish laborers must observe. In the tract, Reb Yehudah Leib stressed the obligation of Jewish employers to hire Jewish workers and treat them in accordance with a set of rules, and the duty of workers to give their employers an honest day's labor for which they were hired and paid.

Reb Yehudah Leib was a follower of the Gerrer Rebbe (the Imrei Emes), and in the late 1920s the Rebbe advised him to leave his promising career in the Agudah world in Warsaw and become the director of the Bais Yaakov Seminary in Krakow. "You are the ideal person for this position," the Rebbe emphasized, "and the Bais Yaakov Seminary needs you more than the Agudah does."

Thus, in an act blessed by the Rebbe, Reb Yehudah Leib moved to Krakow and took the helm of the Bais Yaakov Seminary. His brilliant mind, educational talents, knowledge of youth, and ability to understand their problems made him the most beloved leader of this crucially important women's institution.

The girls there spent hours discussing and pondering the creative ideas he expressed in each of his thought-provoking lectures. Each of them felt as though he was talking to her personally. Herr Orlean, as he wanted to be called, somehow eased their doubts and answered their questions before they asked. He shaped their minds and forged their characters.



The famous thinker and mechanech, principal of the Bais Yaakov Seminary in Cracow, R' Yehuda Leib Orlean hy "d, in his seminary office.
This picture was received from the Bais Yaakov veteran, Mrs. Miriam Lubling.

Even though more than sixty years have passed, I remember vividly one of his *Yahadus* lectures before Yom Kippur. He spoke about the *viduy* of *Al Cheit* in the Yom Kippur prayers, in which we enumerate and

confess our sins repeatedly and ruefully and beg our merciful Father for forgiveness. Regretfully we count out the forty-four sins and pledge to correct them. Herr Orlean expounded on every one of them in his original way, impressing upon us the duty of thoughtful, sincere repentance and responsibility to fulfill our obligations.

Among his comments, the most memorable was his mind-boggling interpretation of "*Al cheit she-chatanu... b'yodim u've'lo yod'im*". Ordinarily, this is translated as, "We regret the sins that we committed before You, knowingly and unknowingly. We understand our liability for transgressing a precept knowingly, but why are we responsible for sins we did unknowingly?"

"*Be'lo yodim*," Herr Orlean explained emphatically, "refers to sins of not knowing. We must regret those sins deeply. We are commanded to know. We live in a world where everyone is wrapped up in himself. He knows only how to satisfy his own needs, his own concerns. He is oblivious to everyone else. He does not care to know about others' needs or concerns.

"You're in the street. To be able to help, you have to know what's going on around you. A woman falls down. A child is lost. Someone cries in distress. An old man is confused. Someone needs help crossing the street; someone else needs help walking. A woman carrying a heavy load needs help, and so on. You are obligated to know.

"You live in an apartment house. The neighbor below you is ill and alone. She needs bread and milk. She is hungry and lonely. You pass her door and rush down the stairs. You did not know she needs your help. You should have known. You should have knocked on her door, asked how she is, and determined what help she needs.

"You have to repent and ask Hashem's forgiveness for the weighty sin of not knowing. It is your duty to care and to know where and when your help is needed."

This simple truth touched me so deeply that I remember it to this day. I taught it to my children, and they to theirs, and so on forever.

Herr Orlean's teachings, leadership, interest in and concern for others, and his constant striving to know their needs and help meet them, made a lasting, impression on his students and is still evident in the educational messages of the Bais Yaakov schools.

When World War II began, Herr Orlean and his family had to leave Krakow and return to Warsaw. Even then, however, he did not forget his beloved Bais Yaakov. With great sacrifice, he smuggled his weekly lectures to us. We gathered on Shabbos in small groups in private homes, to study his precious lessons. His words of faith, courage, and hope sustained us week after tragic week. The mere experience of waiting for his next letter, for another ray of light, made our bleak, gloomy lives bearable.

Unfortunately, even that small happiness came to an end. His treasured letters stopped coming. Herr Orlean could no longer smuggle them to us at any level of risk. Thus, we lost con tact with our dear teacher and mentor, and did not hear from him again until, in pitiful condition, we reached Bergen-Belsen. There we discovered that Reb Yehudah Leib and his family, as Swiss subjects, had been interned in the foreign citizens' compound of the camp. We tried to get in touch with him but failed. His compound was encased in a high brick wall; even the Germans in our part of the camp could not enter it.

After the war, when the doors of all camps were pried open, we made inquiries about Herr Orlean. To our immense pain and sorrow, we received tragic news. He was to have been released as a Swiss citizen, but was brutally murdered a day before the papers arrived, on *Chol haMo'ed Sukkos*. It was one day too late for his students' tireless efforts to provide the necessary documents in order to save Reb Yehudah Leib Orlean, director of the Bais Yaakov Seminary and leader of all Bais Yaakov schools in Poland, one of the greatest personalities of the past century, whose impact lives on in the Bais Yaakov movement to this day.

Hashem yikom damo.

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RAV YEHUDA LEIB ORLEAN, *HY"D*

A BIOGRAPHY

Translated and Adapted by Y.L. Perkal

By the early twentieth century, it was becoming increasingly obvious that the *chinuch* of girls in Orthodox Jewish Poland was a serious problem. While the boys learned in *chadarim* and yeshivos, while they were raised in *shtieblach* and influenced by the chassidic atmosphere, the education of girls from Orthodox homes was completely neglected. Consequently, the girls were greatly influenced by foreign languages and cultures. Thus an unbridgeable gap that distanced so many girls from their parents and husbands was created.

The Bais Yaakov movement founded by Sara Schenirer, *a"h*, declared war against this situation. The main headquarters for this *milchemes mitzva* was the Bais Yaakov Teachers' Seminary in its majestic building on the banks of the Vistula river in Krakow, and its head commander after Sara Schenirer passed away was Rav Yehuda Leib Orlean, the principal and main lecturer. He was the seminary's living spirit.

It is clear that he triumphed.

Rav Orlean succeeded in uprooting every trace of assimilation and semblance of foreign thought from his students' hearts. He saved them from the dangerous winds that were blowing into their worlds. He implanted in them authentic *Yiddishkeit*, Torah and *emuna*, a faithful love for their nation and everything holy. This included its language, or to be more exact, its two languages - the Holy tongue and Yiddish.

A natural outgrowth of all his efforts was a growing love for Eretz Yisrael that stirred the students of Bais Yaakov to join the 1930s *hachshara* movement that trained Orthodox youth for *aliya*. These training centers were very successful in preparing the girls for both the physical and spiritual struggles they would face in settling the Holy land.

Unfortunately, however, many candidates could not obtain entry to Eretz Yisrael. The British, who then controlled Palestine, issued very few entry visas. In addition, Agudas Yisrael had to fight for years with the secular Jewish Agency (who had better connections with the British) before finally receiving a small number of these "certificates," an amount so meager that at times all they could get was one certificate for more than one hundred *aliya* candidates.

Bais Yaakov students were always most active in the *aliya* movement. Even after World War II, Bais Yaakov girls who had survived the Holocaust led the fight for *aliya* that took place while they were quartered in the German DP camps. After having witnessed the massive betrayal of the European countries, they felt that the only place for them to live was among Jews in *their* land. It was also these girls who later became founders and activists of the Agudas Yisrael kibbutzim, refugee homes for girls (*beit chalutzot*), schools and children's homes.

More than Rav Orlean taught his students knowledge, he taught them a way of life. He was not just a teacher, he was a *mechanech*. Methodically and consistently, with focus and effort, he forged character. He knew that once a girl had strong character she could withstand the difficulties of the times on her

own. And so, he planted *middos* into his students.

Even in ordinary times, Bais Yaakov students were known for their *middos*. And in the frenzied, terrifying days of World War II, the students of Bais Yaakov - from the seminary in Krakow to the scattered Bais Yaakov schools everywhere - displayed *chessed* in indescribable ways. With extraordinary courage these girls excelled in the field of rescue even under horrific conditions. They sacrificed to help the downtrodden and oppressed, they shared their poor bread with the hungry although they were also starving at a time when one's life depended on a single slice of bread. Thus Bais Yaakov became a general aid-relief society throughout the ghettos and the camps, helping not only their own but any Jew in need – and who in those times was not in need?

Rav Orlean, who lived in the Warsaw ghetto and remained in constant contact with his students, could be proud. His students and his students' students were able to withstand the struggles. While other groups showed hard-heartedness and pettiness, his students bore the flag of loving-kindness and compassion.

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Rav Orlean.

When you looked at his deep, dark eyes sparkling with wisdom and sincerity, at his lips stretched into a friendly, philosophical smile, and then at his striking, long, black beard and traditional chassidic *kapote*, you could not help but wonder.

What was his power? Where did this chassidic young man, who never attended secular schools or universities, learn all that knowledge and gain all those qualities that made him one of the greatest educators in Poland?

To solve this puzzle, we must explore his roots.

Yehuda Leib Orlean was born in Warsaw on February 21, 1900 to a prosperous and pious family. His father, a Gerrer chassid was both a scholar and an honest merchant who provided his son with a religious education as was common in those times. Young Yehuda Leib was brought to *cheder*, where he was taught by one of the best – and most expensive – *melamdim*. When he grew older, he moved on to the Gerrer *shtiebel* on 5 Zamenhof Street.

The boy pored over his studies, delving into Chumash, Gemara and Poskim as was expected and accepted. On the benches of the *shtiebel*, he absorbed the special atmosphere and developed a relationship with the Rebbe, the Imrei Emes, *zy"a*. Rav Orlean would travel to Ger a few times a year, and he could always be found there on Rosh Hashana and Shavuos. After his marriage he dealt in business, dedicating his free hours to studying Torah.

However, Rav Orlean added his own flavor to his studies. Unlike others, he was constantly investigating the sources of what he was learning, always wanting to know what lay underneath. He was never satisfied with the basic explanation; he always wanted to understand everything better. It was not that he strayed from the traditional path of learning, but that he added to it. He studied the Rambam's *Moreh Nevuchim* frequently, and he knew the Rambam's *Shemoneh Perakim* by heart.

When Agudas Yisrael was established in Poland in 1918 (at first it was known as Shlomei Emunei Yisrael), largely due to the efforts of *Rabbanim* Dr. Emanuel Carlebach and Dr.

Pinchas Cohen of Germany, most of the Jewish activists in Poland began incorporating the organizational methods and conventions of the west.

But Rav Orlean went a step further; he delved into the ideological works of the Orthodox Jewish leaders in Germany, such as Rabbi Shimshon Rafael Hirsh and his grandson, Dr. Yitzchak Breuer as well as Rav Yaakov Rosenheim and Dr. Nosson Birnbaum. (Rav Orlean became the latter's devoted disciple, spreading his mentor's ideas far and wide).

Besides overcoming the difficulties of the German language, Rav Orlean also mastered the complex style of these writers when even those fluent in German did not find it easy to read their works.

Even more, he began delving into general literature that dealt with psychology and pedagogy, absorbing the philosophical ideas of the day. However he did not accept the contents of these books without first discarding anything that contradicted *Yiddishkeit*. On the contrary, any outside knowledge that he integrated into his traditional Jewish outlook was used to prove the truth of our holy Torah and its sacred traditions.

Rav Orlean published a series of booklets of Yiddish articles that were distinguished by their important, high-level content and their clear, polished style. These included: "*Der Farshvundener Gan Eden*," "*Yiddish Leben*," "*A Program*," "*Vas iz Mussar*," "*Sara Schenirer*," "*Cultur Program far Bnos Agudas Yisrael*," "*Yiddish un Hebraish*."

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Rav Orlean began his journey from the *shtiebel* to the outside world in the nineteen-twenties with his appearance as a lecturer at the first gatherings of the branches of Shlomei Emunei Yisrael (later to become known Agudas Yisrael) located throughout Poland.

The whole movement was just beginning to blossom; everyone felt the novelty. And Rav Orlean's appearance was an innovation in itself. He brought an original tone into routine meetings. His lectures were extraordinary. He did not repeat what everyone knew; he had the courage to express new ideas. Unlike many leaders, activists, speakers and authors who become so busy with public affairs they have no time to think, he was a lecturer of a completely different kind.

He did not draw his listeners with fiery passion but analyzed everything with cold logic. He did not amaze his audience, he convinced them. Even more, he did not discuss every last detail of his ideas; he inspired his listeners to think through the rest on their own.

He planned his speeches carefully. He did not rely on enthusiasm alone to fill any gaps and prepared his every word. Thus every lecture was a structured discourse, constructed with his talent for clarifying and explaining. There are speakers who fascinate their listeners almost magically, without thinking too much about what they are saying. Rav Orlean was not like that. He felt responsible for his words, aware that they had the power to influence others. He shied away from grand expressions and exaggerations. His language was pure, clear and compelling.

These qualities were even more obvious in his written works, his books and his articles that were worthy of being considered treatises. Rav Orlean viewed the printed word very seriously, feeling a serious responsibility for anything he wrote. He exerted himself to find

just the right words and terms. And he only wrote when a matter lay heavily on his heart, when he saw a great need to disseminate his thoughts.

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Two of his booklets drew special public attention. The first was "*Tzu Zate un tzu Hungeríke*" (For the Satisfied and For the Hungry) that came out in Warsaw in 1930, and "*Der Farshvundener Gan Eden*" (the Vanished Gan Eden) that appeared in Warsaw in 1936. In order to understand the content of these works, we must first understand another important facet of Rav Orlean's activities.

World War I and Kaiser Wilhelm's conquest of Poland led to various changes among Polish Jewry, including a change in values. New winds began blowing through public life, causing the Jewish community to also experience an economic revolution.

Before the war Jewish community leaders had usually been men of both spiritual stature and wealth. Now there was a new reality. Families who had been prosperous for generations lost their money and their positions overnight. New money lords who had grown rich during the war took their place.

All the unrest also led to other, far-reaching developments. Until now no one had questioned the accepted order of society, but now everything had turned upside down. People were no longer willing to accept the way matters were run just because "that was the way it had always been."

Most of the wealthy factory owners, especially in the industrial city of Lodz, did not employ Orthodox Jewish workers, and when they did, they did not always fulfill their obligations toward them. Part of the reason for this was because the factories worked on Shabbos (they relied on the *heter of shtar mechíra*). And since it was not possible to employ *shomer Shabbos* workers without causing *chílul Shabbos*, the Jewish factory owners hired only non-Jewish workers.

Now the young Aguda activists publicly denounced these "norms," which they viewed as a contradiction to halacha. It was for this purpose - to protest injustice and to demand proper working conditions according to Torah - that Poalei Emunei Yisrael was founded. This movement later changed its name to Poalei Agudas Yisrael when Shlomei Emunei Yisrael changed its name to Agudas Yisrael.

The founders, activists and members of this movement were not only workers. On the contrary, most of them were intellectuals, factory assistants and clerks. Among them were also chassidic young men who were deeply disturbed by the injustices they witnessed and saw it as their obligation to correct the situation.

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The founders of Agudas Yisrael were pleased with the inception of Poalei Agudas Yisrael. They viewed it as the suitable framework to attract the working masses, to enable them to express their protests and to institute fair and proper reforms. Agudas Yisrael itself had been founded on democratic principles. Its leaders were elected, and it was led by many talented young men, not necessarily wealthy.

Rav Yehuda Leib Orlean was among the founders of Poalei Agudas Yisrael, and he served as its first president. He was very active in its early years, especially in the creation of its ideology, but he also took part in its organization together with Leibel Fromm,

פּאַרלאַג „אונדזער בוך" וו

דערשינען די בראשור פון

י. ל. אַרלעאַן

דער פּאַרשווינדענער גן-עדן

(א וואַרט וועגן לוקסוס אוז מאָדע)

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אָן געלט וועלט דאָס נישט געשיקט!

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יהודה לייב ארי

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ת ר צ א

פּאַרלאַג „אונדזער בוך" וואַרשע

Avraham Mordechai Rogovi, Falk Landberg and others.

His articles about Poalei Agudas Yisrael were distinguished by their serious criticism of the prevailing situation, a daring analysis of what had brought it about, and a vehement protest against the screaming injustice.

The measured, quiet, calm Orlean harbored within him strivings for improvement and change. The force of truth inside him could not tolerate contradictions; he was never willing to give in to distressing situations. And yet his booklet, "*Tzu Zate un tzu Hungerike*" (Warsaw 1930), was not a fiery outcry. It was a logical and deep analysis of painful social problems that the author felt demanded an immediate solution.

His second work, "*Der Varshfundener Gan Eden*," (1936) discussed financial ethics. In it Rav Orlean denounced the luxuries that led to unnecessary spending, increasing people's financial burdens at a time when it was hard to earn a living altogether. He declared that all these luxuries originated from snobbery, from trying to make an impression through external and misleading appearances. His words were familiar. They echoed the tones of the *takanos* that had been implemented by the *Vaad Arba Haaratzos* centuries before.

Although Rav Orlean was a spiritual man, who was often immersed in reading and writing, he did not merely philosophize about lofty ideas; on the contrary, he studied the financial and social issues of the day and proposed practical solutions.

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And yet, Rav Orlean was first and foremost an educator. Education was his leading aspiration, his main goal. His other talents and activities were only secondary. His lectures, speeches and articles all had one common purpose – to educate.

While his energies and talents were split into so many areas, he could not find his place in *chinuch*. Once he was given the opportunity, he abandoned all his other occupations, exited the political arena and discontinued his organizational and journalistic work, even the leadership of Poalei Aguads Yisrael (where he had in any case begun to differ from his friends' opinions on practical policy). From then on he focused on only one thing – the administration of the Bais Yaakov teachers' seminary in Krakow.

Even prior to this he had already been involved in the Bais Yaakov movement and had served for some time as principal of the Bais Yaakov school on 37 Tvarda Street in Warsaw. He devoted his best efforts to this job, making this school a model for all Bais Yaakov schools in Poland. He had also lectured at the annual summer courses for teachers.[1] However he found his true life's purpose when he was appointed director of the seminary in Krakow in the early 1930s to help Sara Schenirer. He accepted the position only after a lengthy correspondence between the Gerrer Rebbe, *zt"l* (the Imrei Emes), and Agudas Yisrael leaders.

As he began instructing older girls who would go on to teach others, he enlarged his sphere of influence. And as he had always done he never relied on improvisation but prepared every lesson and lecture thoroughly. Both his written and spoken words were the fruit of much labor, even if his listeners did not sense it. For him, there was no doing something out of habit, because even when he was teaching a lesson he had already taught, he always learned it through again first.

[1] See endnote no. 5 to Rebbetzin Grunfeld's biography of Sara Schenirer earlier in this booklet.

Rav Orlean respected the intelligence of the girls he taught. Indeed, most of his students were bright and sharp, and in their sincerity and eagerness to know and understand did not spare him their challenging questions.

With such students his job was not easy- but Rav Orlean never took anything lightly anyway. He found much satisfaction in this sacred work, and his students viewed him not only as a teacher who imbued them with knowledge but more importantly as their mentor for life. Rav Orlean had their full trust; they consulted him with all their questions and private problems, and he gave each one his full attention, understanding, assisting and advising.

In this way he established a large circle of devoted students who maintained a connection long after they finished their studies, through the summer camps for teachers they attended in the Carpathian mountains. These fine girls filled with *emuna* and *Yiddishkeit* left deep impressions upon the hundreds of towns and villages where they taught.

The Bais Yaakov movement grew steadily. By 1937 it included a network of 250 schools containing approximately 38,000 students. Polish Jewry, the backbone of all Eastern European Jewry, had produced Torah geniuses, the methods of *chiddush* and *pilpul*, the movements of chassidus and *lamdanus*. Now during that last period before the Holocaust, it kindled its last flame - the Bais Yaakov movement. Rav Orlean was indeed the educator of an entire generation.

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And it was just during the horrific era of the German occupation that Rav Orlean rose to his greatest heights. Despite the inhuman conditions, his spirit did not break. On the contrary, he was strengthened and purified by the furnace of suffering and torture. In the face of decrees and danger and persecution, he stood firm against the evil oppressors. He kept up correspondence with Bais Yaakov teachers and students, strengthening weakened hands and broken hearts and saving many from the depths of despair.

When the war broke out in September 1939, the doors of the Bais Yakov seminary were closed since it was summer vacation. They never opened again. Rav Orlean, who had a wife and six children to support, remained without any source of income. In order to provide for his family's basic needs, he thought of resuming the business he had dealt in before he became a public person.

However, the Boyaner Rebbe, Rav Moshenyu Friedman, who resided in Krakow and with whom Rav Orlean was very close, persuaded him to continue his work as a teacher despite everything. The Rebbe felt that it was just during such a time that Rav Orlean's influence was necessary, and he created a special fund to provide Rav Orlean with a livelihood and to finance his activities. Later Rav Orlean also received support from the Joint.

Rav Orlean returned to his lessons in *Tanach* and *Yahauds*, and he also renewed his connection with Bais Yaakov teachers all over German-occupied Poland. This underground project was led by members of the Bais Yaakov administration from before the war: Asher Shapiro (former senator), Moshe Deutscher, Meir Heitner, Mrs. Lottka Scharansky and others.

It should be mentioned here that the main influence over all of them was the amazing Rav Yosef Biegun, whom Rav Orlean considered his Rebbe even though he was older than him.

Faithful to the motto of those days, "*ish es re'ehu yaazoru*," the Bais Yaakov movement became a large mutual aid organization. Their goal was to ensure that no individual would feel helpless and alone. They wanted to imprint on the public that the times were not only a period of mass suffering but also an opportunity to unite and help each other. Bais Yaakov teachers could be found in action everywhere, running soup kitchens, children's homes and the like.

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In January 1940 Rav Orlean was personally confronted by the accursed Germans when they burst into his house and carried out a brutal search. Although they found nothing suspicious, they beat him cruelly. This incident taught him that residing in Krakow was dangerous for a famous personality like him, and he decided to move to Warsaw. His family stayed behind temporarily and then moved to Wengrov, which was very close to Warsaw.

In Warsaw Rav Orlean was welcomed royally by his seminary students. He took a room in the same house as the family of the Beis Yisrael, *zy"a*, on 4 Kommitova Street, where he gave *shiurim* in *Mishlei* and other sefarim of *Nach*, as well as in Mussar and Jewish thought.

These sessions that were naturally held in secret were much more than just lessons. The teachers who had become students again demanded answers and solutions for the pressing, painful problems of those days, for the enigma of the general situation and especially for the classic question of "*tzaddik vera lo, rasha vetov lo*."

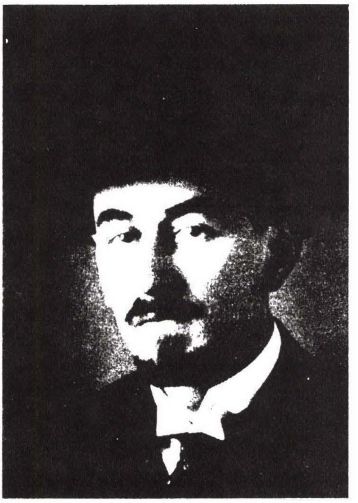
Rav Orlean, who was struggling with the same questions himself, did not have ready answers for everything. Since it had always been his way to search and investigate, to get to the root and not just to make do with simple study, now too, he searched for answers together with his students. And it was this striving for the truth that reassured them. Their *emuna* was strengthened, and *bitachon* overcame despair.

After many benches had to be added to his "classroom," Rav Orlean moved his classes to a larger room in the former Bais Yaakov school on Gensha street. Dozens of Bais Yaakov teachers and Bnos Agudas Yisrael members streamed to hear him and listened raptly to his speeches.

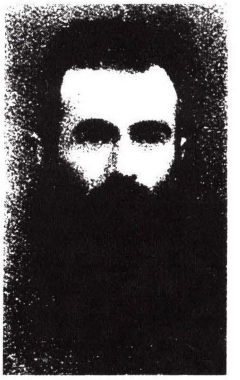
At this time there were children's homes in Warsaw that were meant to serve as soup kitchens where children were fed and occupied. Since real schooling was not permitted, lessons were carried out clandestinely and the children were taught under the guise of playing. On April 20, 1941, after much effort, the president of the Judenrat, Adam Czerniakow, managed to procure a permit from the Germans to open schools for five thousand children in the Warsaw ghetto. Among them were Yesodei HaTorah Talmud Torahs for boys and Bais Yaakov schools for girls.

It was at this time that Rav Orlean came out of hiding, and together with Alexander Zusha Friedman, Eliezer Gershon Friedenson, Avraham Mordechai Rogovi and Yoel Unger, he organized the Bais Yaakov schools. Rav Orlean devoted himself to this new project, supervising the curriculum and serving as a model lecturer. He also kept up a correspondence with teachers in smaller towns, advising and encouraging them.

Five Bais Yaakov schools were established in Warsaw during the war. Rav Orlean ran two of them personally, while the other three were run by Eliezer Gershon Friedenson (on 37 Nalevki street), Mrs. Rivka



Dr. Leo Deutschländer



Rabbi Yehuda Leib Orlean



Rabbi Yehudah Leib Orlean זצ"ל
Cracow, 1938

Alter-Rappaport, daughter of the Bais Yisrael, *zy"a*, (on 17 Klodna street), Mrs. Ravitz, wife of the journalist Yitzchak Ravitz, and Mrs. Erlich, wife of Yosef Erlich, a Zeirei Agudas Yisrael activist. These schools also served as soup kitchens for the children.

Until July 1942 the Jewish schools in the ghetto saved thousands of children from starving and wasting away. They were supported by the Judenrat and also by the Joint that was operating under the name of "Independent Jewish Aid" or "*Zidovska Samopomotz Spultzena*."

Besides Rav Orlean's hard work, he also devoted hours to davening and Torah study. Already in the first days of the ghetto, the Imrei Emes, *zy"a*, said about him, "Yehuda Leib goes up in *madreiga* from day to day..."

Rav Orlean had always clung to tzaddikim. There was no important matter, both private and public, about which he did not consult the Rebbe, whether in writing or face-to-face. And of course it goes without saying that he heeded the Rebbe's every word. He also formed a close bond with the Boyaner Rebbe, Rav Moshenyu Friedman, who resided in Krakow, and whose advice he sought regarding all the various problems that cropped up in his work in the seminary as well as his private affairs.

In the Warsaw ghetto he formed connections with various distinguished Rabbanim, especially Rav Menachem Ziemba, *Hy"d*. When deportations began, the Rav of Kolvil, Rav Aryeh Leib Landau, *rosh yeshiva* of Yeshivas Chachmei Lublin, invited Rav Orlean to stay with him in his room, and the two enjoyed many long discussions about Torah and Chassidus.

*

On *erev Tisha B'Av* 5702 (July 21, 1942), the Germans, may their names be obliterated, began the annihilation of Warsaw's Jews. They called this operation *iberzidlung* (resettlement). Rav Orlean's wife and five children, were then in the town of Wengrov, while he was in Warsaw with his daughter, Leah, a Bais Yaakov teacher.

At that time Rav Orlean was appointed supervisor of the communal archives, something that was meant to save him from death. Working under the archive's directors, he became part of a group that was organized especially for the purpose of collecting abandoned *sefarim* from houses whose residents had been evacuated.

Orthodox Jews were usually the first victims of deportation and murder, while other groups managed to find temporary positions to save themselves from death. Among the first deportees were many chassidim and scholars, the residents of Nalevki, Zamenhof, Moranovska and Dzika Streets. Their empty apartments were then inhabited by assimilated and secular Jews. When these new tenants cleaned out their apartments, they tossed out all kinds of things they didn't want including many holy volumes. Some of them even collected the *sefarim* along with the garbage and burnt them in their yards. It was a heartbreaking sight to see the holy volumes going up in flames in Jewish courtyards.

One day Yitzchak Guterman, *Hy"d*, of Lubavitcher descent and one of the administrators of the former Joint, passed such a scene and was horrified. He ran to the Judenrat with the terrible announcement: "Jews are making auto-da-fes! They are burning holy *sefarim*! How shameful!" He then related that while passing one of the bonfires he had picked up the first volume he came across lying on the ground, its edges singed, and saw that it was the *Sefer Chassidim*. When he opened it the first

thing he happened to see was an article discussing one's obligation of treating holy volumes with respect and love.

Although Guterman had distanced himself from his roots, he still remained loyal to his origins. Now he called for workers of the community archives to organize a group to save these *sefarim* from destruction and degradation. As part of this group, Rav Orlean did his work faithfully. He viewed it as a holy task, caressing the volumes and studying them.

While the few remnants of the Warsaw ghetto saw that their end was coming, they were apathetic and calm. Once the will to live had beaten strongly in their hearts, but when they saw there was no way out they became indifferent to their fates.

In the meantime Rav Orlean was told that his wife and five children had been killed. He was completely broken by the news and sought respite for his tortured soul in learning and davening.

*

On the last Simchas Torah in the Warsaw ghetto, 5703/1942, only a small group of about three thousand Jews remained from the huge masses of half a million Jews who had once lived in Poland's capital. About a minyan and a half of Jews gathered in the home of Rav Menachem Ziemba on 37 Nalevki Street for *hakafos*. Before reading from the Torah, they took out the scrolls from the *aron kodesh* and circled the table. They were all broken men who had lost their families, and their hearts were heavy. Among them was Rav Yehuda Leib Orlean.

Suddenly a boy of about twelve entered the room. This was a rare phenomenon since there were no longer any children in the ghetto – they had been the first victims to be murdered in Treblinka. The lone child took a siddur and joined in.

As the men trudged around with the Torah scrolls, Rav Orlean suddenly leaped toward the child and took him in his arms. Hugging both the boy and the Torah scroll he had been holding, he pressed them tightly to his heart and cried out heartrendingly, "A *yunger Yid mit der heilige Torah*" (A young Jew with the holy Torah)! He then broke into a long dance with the boy and the scroll, a joyful, chassidic dance, crying out all the while.

Spontaneously, the other men in the room formed a circle around the group of three, the renowned *mechanech*, the boy and the Torah. Everyone was shaken. Older men broke down in tears. And in the silence Rav Orlean's voice echoed without let up, "A *yunger Yid mit der heilige Torah*." All the boundless love for Torah beating inside the heart of the greatest educator in the Torah world, all his burning love for Jewish children to whom he had dedicated his life, and all the superhuman pain of a desolate, grieving husband and father were expressed so exaltedly in that dance.

It was the last dance on the last Simchas Torah of the last Jews in Warsaw.

*

In January 1943 when his last hopes to save his family were extinguished, Rav Orlean sent a plea for help to some of his friends in Switzerland, specifically Chaim Yisrael Eis and the Sternbuch family. Perhaps he and his oldest daughter could still be rescued.

At that time there was an opportunity of being saved by using South American passports that were sent from Switzerland to Poland. In February 1943 Rav Orlean received a Paraguayan passport. Before Pesach he and his daughter were taken to the Pabiak prison in Warsaw as foreign citizens, and on June 7, 1943 the group of Jews possessing such passports was transferred to Bergen-Belsen, to a special section reserved for foreign citizens.

There too, because of the special privileges given to foreign citizens, Rav Orlean found the opportunity to deliver lessons on *Nach* and to lecture on various topics in Judaism. He also frequently expressed his regret for not having done more for the *aliya* from Poland to Eretz Yisrael.

At first there was hope that the bearers of these passports would be exchanged for German prisoners being held in Paraguay, or at least that they would be kept alive in Bergen-Belsen. But then Paraguay declared that it did not recognize these passport holders as its citizens. The Germans deceived the innocent Jews and told them that they were being taken to Bergau, Switzerland as part of a prisoner exchange program.[2] In truth, they were transported to Birkenau – Auschwitz on Simchas Torah 5704/1943 (according to the Germans).[3] They too joined the millions who perished in the Holocaust of European Jewry.

And so Rav Yehuda Leib Orlean, *Hy"d*, was murdered – along with his dreams and ambitions.

The *mechanech* of the generation was taken along with his students and students' students, along with the glorious movement he had helped grow, and which he had tended with such sacrifice. He was taken along with all of Poland's Jews who had produced this movement, one of the greatest phenomena of Polish Jewry

[2] As documented by Mrs. Ruth Lichtenstein in her book "Edut".

[3] In her book, "Carry Me In Your Heart", Mrs. Pearl Benisch writes that he was murdered on *Chol Hamoed Succos*.





Two historical photographs: (a) the first Knessiah Gedolah in Vienna in 1923, (b) the Chanukas Habayis of Yehsivas Chachmei Lublin in 1930. R' Yehudah Leib Orlean Hy"d is in the center of both pictures.

A Letter to Rav Orlean, ז"ל

By Gita Sternbuch *

Translated with permission by Y.L. Perkal

My esteemed and dear Rav Orlean:

I begin my letter to you, trembling with awe. I want to write to you even though I know that all my words will never be able to express my feelings.

What words can describe a person like you?
What words can accurately portray your matchless personality?
What words can possibly depict your greatness and your blessed influence?

You sought the G-dly spark in every living creature and certainly in every Jew. You belonged to those unique individuals who set the highest moral standards - and actually live by them.

How does one speak about someone who lit up the world of our youth and revealed to us the true light of our lives? How does one tell of someone who labored to answer all the questions and doubts that plagued us?

From the day you left us - your students - you live on in us. You have remained our inner teacher, our inner guide. We continue to breathe in your unwavering *emuna* in *Hashgacha Pratis*. And you implanted in our souls the belief that in each one of us glow holy sparks that no foreign force can extinguish.

*

You may have left us, dear Rav Orlean, but you never stopped living in our hearts.

Thoughts of you accompanied us in our desperate struggle to survive. In our bitterest moments, thinking of you helped us endure. Our burned-out souls sought your help, and it was your *emuna* in *Hashgacha Pratis* that carried us through.

From you, Rav Orlean, we learned that to be a *Yid* means feeling the *Aibershter's* presence in every memory, every thought, every experience. You taught us that to be a *Yid* means believing that only with *emuna* can we survive. You taught us to bandage our pain with a *tefila* to Hashem and to feel grateful for everything Hashem gives us.

With you we learned that Hashem is omnipresent, and that we will hide our Jewish identities only if we forget our history.

You implanted in us a well of *ahavas Hashem* and *ahavas habriyos*; with you we learned to understand ourselves better. Every one of your lessons was a balm for our starving souls.

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* For biographical information on the author, see her essay "My Friend Rivka"

You made us understand our Jewish history better. You opened our minds and our hearts; you taught us to understand the concept of a *Yid.*

You ingrained in us the *midda* of *hakaras hatov*, to feel gratitude for every favor.

Dear Rav Orlean, you were not only our teacher, you were our Rebbe. You did not only instill in us Jewish knowledge, you awakened our souls. Our spiritual savior, you found the right language for a generation saturated with the poison of foreign cultures.

*

How I see you before me still, Rav Orlean!

I can picture myself, a young student from the big city of Warsaw, sitting in the fourth or fifth row, in the first class of Bais Yaakov seminary of Krakow. Strange faces surround me. It is my first day.

Suddenly the door opens. A man walks in, his face pale and covered with a long, black beard. We are captivated by the warmth and vitality in his eyes that embrace us with fatherly love. He stands there, his body slightly bent, as befits a true *yarei Shamayim*, one who never forgets the Creator's presence above him.

In an emotion-filled voice he begins to speak:

"*Bruchos habaos*! You have come to us as children, and you will G-d willing leave us as teachers. You will have to implant your own *mesirus nefesh* into your young Jewish souls. You will have to answer many questions. You will have to relay the entire pain-filled history of our people. You will be responsible for the future generations. You will have to learn that we are bound to a three-thousand-year history, and that we must draw our knowledge and outlook on life from our own sources.

"*Heilige kinder*, I envy you."

*

Dear Rav Orlean, we could not free ourselves from your shadow; we could not shake off your presence.

In the small, scattered *shtetlach* where you sent us, we carried your fire with us, impressing it upon thousands of minds and hearts of Jewish daughters. That same fire also gave us the strength to endure the bitter trials at the hands of the Germans, may their names be obliterated.

Rav Orlean, our dear father, you were a true chassid.

You were always joyful, you never needed anything and you never demanded anything. When we, your students, wanted to give you our meager stipends as our gratitude for everything you gave us, you always refused to take them. You were our wellspring of joy - joy in life and

joy in *avodas Hashem*. From you we learned the meaning of "*ivdu es Hashem besimcha*." You implanted in us *simcha*, *emuna* and *bitachon* that helped us remain alive.

You taught us that the way to *Hakadosh Baruch Hu* changes a person's actions and dealings. Every action can determine the future of our whole lives.

In every lesson, in every conversation, we felt as if we had been touched by the light of truth. You gave us a wonderful feeling that accompanied us and remained with us forever.

In our history classes, we fought along with you for the purity of our holy tongue in Egypt, we traveled through the *midbar* together and stood at Sinai with you. Each one of us experienced both the glory and the destruction of the *Beis Hamikdash*; each one of us went into exile with Rabbi Yochanan ben Zakkai…

You implanted in us the awareness that each one of us, each one in her own place, was playing a role in the future of our nation.

*

Dear, unique Rav Orlean:

You were torn from us in the Warsaw ghetto along with all the *Yidden* whom you loved so dearly. Your grave, unfortunately, cannot be found. But you, dear, unforgettable father - you live still.

Look around, dear father! All over the world, tens of thousands of *heilige Yiddishe techter* are learning Torah. Yes, *your* Torah – the same methods and the same spirit with which you instructed your pupils in the Bais Yaakov seminary in Krakow.

Yes, you live still.

You live in the hearts and minds of thousands and thousands of Jewish children.

And you will continue to live on.

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BALTIC SEA
Annexed by Russia
Vitebsk
Smolensk
Kovno
Vilna
EAST PRUSSIA
Gdańsk
PALE OF JEWISH SETTLEMENT*
Annexed by Prussia
Berlin
Białystok
CONGRESS POLAND
Poznań
Warsaw
Pińsk
Brześć nad Bugiem
Łódź
Radom
Lublin
RUSSIA
Breslau
Under Russian Domination
Zhitomir
Kiev
Łuck
Lwów
PRUSSIA
Cracow
GALICIA
Annexed by Austria
Braclav
AUSTRIA
N
100 mi.
BLACK SEA
PARTITIONED POLAND, 1815–1918
*Former Polish provinces only



THE SECOND POLISH REPUBLIC 1921–1939


From the Writings
of R' Yehuda
Leib Orlean ה"ז

A Jewish Leader

by Reb Yehuda Leib Orlean zt"l

Among the most outstanding Torah luminaries who helped establish Agudas Yisroel was the universally acclaimed Godol and Tzadik, the Chofetz Chaim, zt"l. The following article, written by Reb Yehuda Leib Orlean zt"l, gives an eyewitness report of just one glorious moment in the early history of Agudas Yisroel, which centered around the presence of the sainted Chofetz Chaim zt"l. It helps us gain insight into the development of Agudas Yisroel as a world Torah movement, as the First Knessiah Gedolah, which was held in Vienna in Elul 5683 (1923), forcefully demonstrated. It also portrays an incident which fully conveys the true meaning of Gadlus B'Torah.

The First Knessiah Gedolah - Hope and Apprehension

The First Knessiah Gedolah (World Congress of Agudas Yisroel) was an event of ranking significance for the entire Jewish world. In opposition circles, the original response to the event was one of condescending disdain. The very possibility of a religious congress of worldwide character was considered inadmissible. The Knessiah was represented as a provincial small town gathering accidentally transferred to a European metropolis.

At the outset, doubt was cast upon the likelihood of broad public interest in the Knessiah. The Jewish masses were too absorbed in their daily worries. The religious "intelligentsia," the fervently pious, and the Torah scholars, generally had little feeling for new forms of organization. In fact, the criticism coming from the nationalist camp struck strong responsive echoes in the religious camp. Mutual confidence was extremely weak. Every undertaking was accompanied by pervasive suspicion. One religious group was incited against another. The most prominent and active personalities were downgraded and besmirched. The honor of the Torah authorities was torn down. A fire of contention between young and old, man and wife, was kindled and fanned.

Could the poisonous food, which the "nationalist" press "supplied" the Jewish masses daily, remain without effect? Could the torrent of slander pouring down upon Agudas Yisroel vanish without trace? Would it still remain possible to sense the hidden intentions of those who incited hatred towards the builders of our organization?

These doubts "stole into" our thoughts as well. We, too, momentarily doubted our own strength. The number of delegates was, after all, of secondary significance. The Congress itself was of prime significance. It was necessary to give the world a true reflection of our vitality. It was necessary to display an accurate image of the historic people of Israel. It was necessary to give adequate expression to our need and our pride. To accomplish all this, we would need the most gifted of orators, organizers of exceptional diligence and know-how, and statesmen of rare shrewdness. As for the Congress itself, were we not terrified over the possibility that it might explode from within? There was much conflicting opinion amongst us. Where would we find the appropriate, generally acknowledged authoritative figure, to hold us together at some threatening moment?

While we doubted, our opponents were certain. Our failure was, in their estimate, unavoidable. Day after day, this was the foreboding, which the "nationalist" press drummed into the minds of its large number of readers about us. In a mood, which oscillated between

fear and hope, we entered the immense hall to attend the first major session. There were five hundred delegates from all corners of the globe, as well as two thousand guests; the hall was filled. It was my lot to be seated in one of the first rows, near the platform.

The curtain parts, the scene is majestic. In the center, the presidium; on both sides, two great wings in which the elite members of world Jewry is gathered - the most prominent rabbis, the most renowned Geonim, the most sainted Tzadikim, the most beautiful of Israel's human treasures. All are here. None shamed us. Spontaneously, an image forms in the mind of the Sanhedrin meeting in the Lishkas Hagazis (in the Bais Hamikdash). One begrudges his own eye the enjoyment of such splendor.

The first hammer blow is heard. Total silence pervades the hall. Hearts begin to beat in awe and joy simultaneously. It seems a dream. One's eyes roam from one end of the hall to the other - the soul is warmed. The Kibutz Galuyos in miniature. One sees "Klal Yisroel" with his own eyes - the laymen, the scholars of Torah, the young and the old, the masses and their leaders. For the moment you "separate" them from one another. You want to recognize them personally. Is not each of them a prominent identity, a personality of note in his own home? Another instant you "bring them together." You want to enjoy their imposing wholeness, to draw near to their wholeness and to be absorbed in it.

The Chofetz Chaim Is Introduced

At the presidium table, Dr. Pinchos Kohn appears: "The floor is given to the Chofetz Chaim who will be the first to extend greetings."

Pleasant anticipation fills the hall. The most popular name at the Knessiah. Dear to East European as well as to West European Jewry. Beloved by all. Everyone's rabbi and teacher. Who does not know him? Who has not turned to his Mishnah Berurah for the solution to some complex halachic problem? Whom has he not warmed and soothed with his gently affectionate words of admonition? What place did his works fail to penetrate? He belongs to everyone. He is the central figure of the Knessiah. He is the common authority for East and West. Who then should be first to extend greetings, if not he? But Dr. Kohn attempts to verbally motivate his choice.

"It is customary," Dr. Kohn adds, "at every Congress, to bestow upon the oldest delegate present, the honor of being first to extend greetings. It happens," Dr. Kohn triumphantly concludes, "to be our good fortune that our oldest delegate is the beloved Chofetz Chaim."

Pleased smiles appear on all faces. A good sign. Everyone's glances concentrate towards the right, where the small gray beard with the large satin hat is hardly visible in the mass of rabbinic headgear. Fingers point.

"There he sits, the Chofetz Chaim." But minutes pass, and he does not move from his place.

Foreign Observers - The World Watches

At that moment the two long tables filled with guests, placed between the platform and the delegates' benches, strike my eyes. Foreign faces; Gentiles, ambassadors, representatives of various nations, representatives of the press.

Their glances too, wander over the platform in search of "the world renowned Gaon," "the Jewish leader." They pick up the fragmented phrases of the delegates: "The greatest Rabbi," "the greatest leader," "the greatest Gaon. The assembly becomes more and more tense by the minute. The stillness becomes painful. Those seated close by run over to the aged Gaon and Tzaddik, bend over towards him, stand humbly, and plead. To no avail. He does not move.

Unhappy thoughts run through the mind. Who knows? Perhaps they, our opponents, are right? Perhaps he is not "with us" at all? Perhaps he came to the Knessiah with the intention of disrupting its proceedings, of protesting against Agudas Yisroel? He is still silent, because he does not wish to be troublesome at the "time of joy." The tension grows. The silence is oppressive, and the Chofetz Chaim does not move. Dr. Kohn is at a loss. Finally he reaches a decision. He leaves the lectern and himself runs over to the Chofetz Chaim. After a while we see the Chofetz Chaim led towards the presidium table by Dr. Kohn on one side and someone else on the other. The diminutive Jew with the illuminated face appears at the lectern. The assembly breathes easier. But the air is still as before a storm. No one knows what is happening. Heads are inclined, ears are sharply attentive. Everyone seeks to "catch" at least a word. But it is difficult to hear.

"...Why, why..."

The apprehensive faces of those seated on the platform, who do seem to hear each word, brighten up. They seem pleasantly surprised.

"How Little Torah I Possess"?

Dr. Kohn senses our perplexity and, immediately after the Chofetz Chaim concludes, he introduces the Lubliner Rav (R' Meir Shapiro zt"l) to convey the content of the Chofetz Chaim's remarkable greetings. The masterful orator, the beloved rising star of Polish Orthodoxy literally repeats the Chofetz Chaim's every word:

"I don't know why I am accorded the honor of being the first to greet the Knessiah. Why me? Is it because I am a Kohen? Is that an accomplishment of mine? My father zt"l was a Kohen, I am therefore also a Kohen. Is it because I am old? But that is a gift of Hashem - He granted me years. Is it because of Torah? How little Torah I possess:"

The clear voice of the Lubliner Rav, his precise diction, makes it possible for the entire hall, including even the non-Jews present to understand him without regard to language differences. The assembly is uplifted and affected beyond words. We are electrified. Tears of joy flow from our eyes. Words surge from our mouths: "Happy is the people which has such a leader." The Jewish soul has revealed itself. Whoever did not witness it personally, whoever did not gaze into the figure of the Chofetz Chaim while he spoke, cannot imagine such total integrity, such wonderful wholeheartedness fused with illuminated wisdom, such genuine humility side by side with extraordinary genius! One saw with the certainty of the senses, that such was the Chofetz Chaim's innermost conviction; that he lived with that conviction constantly. The Gaon in Halacha, the master of good deeds, the monarch of the spirit, the living example of righteousness - proclaims his poverty in Torah!

For Which Sin Are We Being Punished?

By: Rav Yehuda Leib Orlean, Hy"d

Translated by Y.L.Perkal

If you read a Jewish newspaper today, and if you are experiencing the Jewish tragedy like every other Jew, you might be momentarily shaken up, but unfortunately it doesn't last long. You draw your conclusions, toss some theoretical solutions into the air - but no more. You don't really concentrate on assessing the situation correctly. After all, time is pressing and you have so much to do.

It's true that it isn't easy. Our present situation is more complex than just another problem that needs solving. It is actually the axis upon which the wheel of world history turns. And so even if you truly don't know why we are suffering, why not at least give the matter a little more attention?

Do not rest! Find the problem. Investigate the root of the sin. Try to understand the reason for the punishment. Choose for yourself a path of repentance.

It isn't easy, you say? There are too many sins to bear? You don't know which sin comes first? Ask your teachers. Delve into our history. Dig until you get to the source. Just don't let yourself be apathetic. Just don't remain passive.

Let us try.

What is our sin? you ask. Open a Chumash. Hearken to the words of Hashem Who says: "*And on the day I make My account*," (*Shemos:Ki Sisa*), meaning that whenever a Heavenly accusation is raised against us, whenever we are punished, *Hakadosh Baruch Hu* adds to it the sin of the *eigel*. This is the ultimate Jewish sin that wears a different form each time but always contains that same foolish tendency. In a way, every spiritual decline reflects that historic sin committed by our nation.

The general sin of mankind at large can be analyzed in a similar way. Every deviation from the truth, every rebellion against the Creator has some connection to *cheit eitz hadaas*. The snake said to Chava, "*And you will be like G-d, knowing good and bad.*" It is true that that deviation was different, but the desire is the same – to deify mankind. To bestow upon man the understanding of what is good and what is bad. In fact, this is the basis of every secular idea: the deification of mankind, or perhaps the deification of self.

The time arrives for G-d to be revealed. The Jews merit to recognize His revelation through *nevuah*. The pride of self-centered man disappears from the horizon. G-dly grace reigns. Believing in other gods is no longer possible in Judaism. At times there are atypical individuals who expresses idolatrous ideas, denying the Creator's existence and following in the sinful ways of the nations. However the Jewish people as a whole no longer slips into idol worship; they stop believing in collective human power.

But the general sin of the Jewish nation emerges from another direction. Although they have lost their direct *bitachon* in Hashem, they do not submit themselves to an individual. Instead they choose a

power that displays supernatural abilities. And so, the Jews aren't denying their first faith; they continue to believe in Hashem - but they choose a new way of doing so by creating a god from a foreign, false medium that they feel is more suitable to the times.

After all, the Jews in the *midbar* were sure that Moshe Rabbeinu no longer existed. They needed a substitute to replace him, specifically a godly one - the golden calf. In the same manner, later generations exchanged our living Torah for the creations of foreign nations, the god of culture and science. And - they had no stronger basis for their blind faith in the modern god than *dor hadmidbar* had when they believed in the *eigel*. In fact, the golden calf was more alive than the alluring ideas of our times.

We can see the impact that the *eigel* had on the *dor hadmidbar* in the awe and amazement that Jews feel for every foolish innovation invented by the nations. The sin of the Jewish nation is not in deifying themselves but in serving foreign gods. No other people have been stricken with such a chronic weakness! In other nations, feelings of national pride and independence as well as the idolization of self prevent assimilation. In *Yiddishkeit*, on the other hand, there is either complete subordination to the Creator (for there is no place for anything else), or an abnormal subservience to every foreign concept and falsehood.

When other nations allow themselves to be ruled by foreign influences, they eventually decline and die out. Their collective force simply dissipates. Jews, on the other hand, are capable of such extreme assimilation that they even bestow their creative power on idol worshippers, leaving their imprint on the nations to which they try to belong. In every foreign philosophy, religion or influence, you can recognize the contribution of the Jews, or at least the typical Jewish admiration and subservience.

The *eirev rav* claimed that Moshe wasn't coming back. They wanted a new leader, even a Heavenly guide - but on the condition that it would be chosen with their consent. Mitzvos? Of course. But only if they could be logically understood.

The nations too have always felt the same way. It is true, they say, that you Jews don't believe in deifying the individual. You subordinate yourselves completely to your Creator and conduct yourselves only according to His will. But why tie yourselves to such blind obedience? Why isn't it possible to understand the mitzvos a little more?

The golden calf was made into a god by the personal consent of its followers. Without touching upon the deeper meanings of this sin, the golden calf signifies the desire for a logical explanation of the mitzvos.

On the other hand, *para aduma* is the mitzva that most symbolizes the ungraspable characteristics of our holy mitzvos. It symbolizes all the criticisms and complaints against *Yiddishkeit*: "What is the reason for it?"

Merely fulfilling this mitzva - that atones for *cheit ha'eigel* - is our triumphant answer to the nations, a symbol of the unique attributes of *Yiddishkeit*. "*Let the cow come and atone for the calf*" (*Midrash Tanchuma – Bamidbar: Chukas*). (In other words, may the cow of the *para aduma* atone for the calf of the *cheit ha' eigel*.)

A Jew cannot yield to Hashem's authority only because he personally feels that mitzvos make sense. *Yiddishkeit* demands total subservience to Hashem's will, complete subordination to the Torah and fulfilling its commandments at any price. Hashem tells Klal Yisroel (in connection with the mitzvah of *para aduma*), *"I have established laws, I have instituted decrees, and you have no permission to question..." (Midrash: Pesikta Zutrasi: beginning of Parshas Chukas)* It is only such a relationship that deserves the title of *avodas Hashem*.

Agreeing logically with Hashem's mitzvos is really the same as deifying the individual, worshipping man's intelligence. This kind of mindset may be acceptable for foreign religions, but never for *Yiddishkeit*.

And so what is the sin that has caused us to suffer so much? It is mainly because of the *eigel*. The euphoric enthusiasm, the unquestioning subservience to the modern golden calves exceed every limit, even bordering on psychosis.

Jewish morality is held up as an example, Jewish culture and fair-minded socialistic ideas are lauded and praised. There are those who openly admit to the greatness of the prophets, even believing in the moments of G-dly revelation. "But," they say, "those concepts belong to the past. They have no connection to today." Moshe is no longer living. In our present day they crown for themselves a new god, a foreign god. What is its nature? Its essence? Nothingness! Anything is suitable so long as it can be made into a god - because then they can understand it. It is in this way that our generation has sinned and continues to sin, perpetuating the *cheit ha'eigel* in a new version.

If you want a striking example of the typical Jewish veneration for anything foreign, the typical Jewish penchant for wild traipsing after foreign gods, just look at the renegade newspaper, *"Viad Literaksia,"* where the Jew is cursed in the worst way - even worse than the way they are cursed by the lowliest anti-semite. The Jew is flung into the mud and spit upon. Libels are invented to incite the public and to help even the worst Jew haters instigate all kinds of edicts by providing them with "proof" for their venomous beliefs.

And who finances this poisonous publication? Not the non-Jews, but Jewish youth that has shed its skin and is ready to sell itself for the "privilege" of producing a "literary" publication, who are possessed by the craving for fame in the world of literature and the arts. A group of degenerates who suck Jewish blood like water, who succeed in profiting and taking advantage of the feelings of inferiority that flicker within our youth so they can execute their satanic schemes. Isn't this most tragic?

The original sin of the golden calf can yet be explained in some way. After all, the *eigel* displayed signs of life, so to speak. But why isn't there a radical turning point *now*? Perhaps it is understandable that Satan's false vision of Moshe's *petira* blinded everyone, especially when the *eigel* was moving. But why the blindness today? Doesn't everyone see the vibrant Torah life bubbling within us? Don't they see with their own eyes how the gods have fallen? Why is it taking so long to reach the turning point?

What remains in this era to captivate the hearts of our youth? The "etiquette" and "refinement" of the nations that can be seen in their violent anti-semitism as they enthusiastically applaud our downfall and the terrible tragedy that has befallen us? Or perhaps the liberal secularism that has fulfilled its moral

obligation with a genteel-sounding response to the cruelty with which we are being treated? Or maybe the Russian communism that disconnects the Jewish soul from its source by cruel, oppressive means of the most fanatic kind, that murders millions because of a revolutionary plan that did not materialize? Or perhaps the scientific principles and genius that German philosophy enabled the blood-thirsty Nazis to develop?

The situation is clear. When a Jew assimilates into the world of the non-Jew, he brings with him the spirit of creativity that provokes the non-Jews around him, making them so jealous that their passionate hate turns into insanity. Germany is a living example of this. On the other hand when the Jew lives his own life, but in an indifferent and apathetic manner, without idealism and enthusiasm, again the world's hatred wraps itself around him. Germany is forcing segregation on the Jews, while in Poland the Jews suffer from assimilation laws. Each one finds its own way of expressing its blind, violent hate. And the situation isn't better anywhere else. Wherever you go you will find plenty of reasons to hate the Jews.

And so where are we headed at this hour? Isn't it time for the Jewish nation to cry out to Hashem in the words of Dovid Hamelech: "*How can I flee from your presence?*" (*Tehillim* 139:7).

Is there any other alternative except returning to the source? Isn't the present situation clear-cut proof that respect for *Yiddishkeit* depends mainly on how much we reflect original Judaism? Is there anyone who does not understand the prophetic promise: "*Then all the nations of the earth will see that the name of Hashem is proclaimed over You and they will revere You*" (*Devarim* 28:10)!?

We want the nations to respect us? But have we fulfilled the major condition that comes along with the promise? Does the Jewish nation bear the name of Hashem with pride? Do we really deserve to have the name of Hashem sanctified through us?

So for which sin is our generation now being punished? For the *cheit ha'eigel* that today wears such a ridiculous façade. We are being punished for both individual and national assimilation that diminishes and desecrates *kavod shamayim* among the Jews and the nations.

What are we lacking? Vitality. Substance. Originality. How will we attain all that? By going to the source. Try it! View everything in Torah and *Yiddishkeit* as something that cannot be questioned. Do not demand explanations. Do not try to personally approve the mitzvos. The G-dly commandments are far too superior for the human mind. Do not ask for reasons. Such questions are only fitting for those who never experienced the revelation. At the same time, examine closely everything foreign. Don't allow even a tiny penetration of external influence. Do not accept for yourself a torn, ruptured Judaism, but a complete and whole one. Drink blessed waters – but only from the source! Seek to go higher using only the means that belong to you. Strive for true originality. And then you can be sure that you will no longer seek the logical reasoning for the mitzvos, because you will feel it in your heart and soul. In this way you will atone for the *cheit ha'eigel*, and in this way you will pave the path to true *teshuva*.

Sarah Schenirer

by Reb Yehudah Leib Orlean

Translated and adapted by B. Paluch

Just as a factory must operate according to a structured plan, an educational institution must have a clear-cut mission. Each course requires a curriculum, usually drafted and prepared by qualified professionals. It is their job to create the plans, and to lay down the path for the school's direction. Only then can the academy open its doors.

Not so with the initial development of the Bais Yaakov movement. Sarah Schenirer, who initiated the movement, began her work without any specific plans. Her intuition guided her, and she knew it would not let her down. Her friends were not forthcoming with support, and fellow educators regarded her with scorn. But she ignored them all, and let her sixth sense lead her along her chosen path.

Today, the results of her bold, daring move are plain for all to see, and one thing is clear. Sarah Schenirer may not have had a structured blueprint, but through her incredible personal example, she created the very mighty structure of Bais Yaakov.

An Outstanding Personality

Sarah Schenirer was an outstanding personality with broad intellectual horizons. From childhood on, her head was always in her books. Her life was one long chain of independent study; progress in learning was a primary goal. Every moment of day or night was an opportunity to amass knowledge and wisdom. Until the very last minute when her eyes closed for eternity, her yearning to increase her knowledge did not cease. Her ears were always on the alert for a *dvar Torah*, ready to listen to anyone who could contribute to her vast store of information.

She was blessed with tremendous persistence. She could sit for hours bent over her sforim. Each sefer, each work of literature that found a place in her heart, did not leave her hands until she had read it through to the end, often keeping her up till the wee hours of the morning.

She never retired before midnight. Often, she sat and read until the sun's rays were peeking through her window. Concentrating on her books or notebooks, she was oblivious to the world. She wanted so much to know more, and even more. No subject bored her. She wanted to understand it all, and she scrutinized every topic with her deep, analytical mind.

The spiritual world was her only world. She thrived on every step of progress she made in her learning. Every obscure issue that she finally grasped after an extended struggle brought her immense pleasure. This was her spiritual nourishment,



צום גיעם שול-יאהר

דאַרפען אַלע בית-יעקב-לייט, אזוי גוט די
שוין עקזיסטירענדע ווי די נייע-ערעמנטע
פינאַנדערשיקען צו אַלע עלטערן די ווייכסטיגע
און נוצליכע פראַפאַגאַנדע-כראַשור:

וואָס דאַרף זיין מיט דער
יודישער טאָכטער?

ערוף צו די יודישע טאַטע-מאַמע, צו ערציהען
זייערע טעכטער אין די בית-יעקב שולען

פון שרה שענירער

מיט א פאַרוואָרט פון א. ג. פרידענזאָן

פריין פאַר 100 עקו. נאָר 11 זל. 50 עקו.
6.60 זל. ווייניגער ווי 7 עקו. פאַר 1 גילדען

וועלט נישט געשיקט
— אַלץ מיט פאַרטאָ —

געלט שיקען: פ. ק. ע. 67.797

Advertisement for a pamphlet written by Sarah Schenirer which appeared in a pre-war edition of the Bais Yaakov Journal



אין די חדרים-מיטן פון פרוי שרה שענירער ע"ה

פרוי ליעבען דעם אינגער העליגען, די נרויסע נפשית האט וועלען דעם גוטען
טעג פאר אירע פטירה.

געזאמלטע שריפטען פון שרה שענירער ע"ה

איבם פוך פערשיידענ זי איהר לעבען און שאפען, מאמרים וועלען
עלע יודישע יום טובים, וועלען דער התחלות.
פאפולערן קוסינער וועלען וייער מיט צעהנדליגער בילדער פון דער
יודישער קוסינע. אין אלופספרוך.
בעשרייבונ. אין מיטען פילד פון דער נרויסער מחבר'טע ע"ה.

דאם בוך ארן — פרייז 2 גילדען מיט 25 נראשען.

120 קיטען

BAJS-JAKOW ŁÓDŹ, P. K. O. 67.795.
Konto Rozrachunkowe kartoteka 15.

Kilińskiego 44
אדער

Advertisement for the sale of Sarah Schenirer's "Gesammelte Shriften" which appeared in Dos Yiddishe Togblatt No. 147 כ' אדר ב' תרצ"ה March 7, 1935

and it sustained both body and soul. It was the only nourishment she needed. All else was meaningless.

Exceptional Character

It is rare for a person of such high intellect to also possess a magnanimous nature. Generally, it is enough to merely approach such a person and request a small favor, to ask him to extend himself only slightly to assist a person in need, in order to expose his lack of sensitivity. When the intellect is so well-developed, very often the person's emotional development is incomplete. The person might also be an elitist, for whom the problems of common people are entirely irrelevant. Tzedakah and chessed, concern for others - these are for laymen. In their minds, men of the spirit cannot be bothered to attend to such mundane issues as encouraging the downtrodden and providing for the poor. The enlightened individual, who sits in the halls of learning, does not feel he has to lower himself to the level of the plain folk. Their time is too precious to spend on such unpopular pursuits. There are enough ordinary people around, they think, who can do the legwork.

But Sarah Schenirer - the higher she ascended on the intellectual ladder, the more sensitive she became to the misfortunes of others, the more diligently she carried out her duty to constantly provide for the destitute, encourage the downcast and bring relief to those in suffering.

Her life was a chain of worthwhile deeds alongside her incessant growth in the worlds of knowledge and wisdom.

Quintessential Mother

Anyone who knew Sarah Schenirer well, and was aware of her influence on Bais Yaakov, could well appreciate her tremendous sacrifices for the sake of the community.

Sarah Schenirer raised the banner of learning to undreamed of heights. She did all in her power to enrich her students with unlimited knowledge. But at the same time, in the midst of a fascinating lesson, or while in deep discussion, she was prepared to drop everything and take up a new tzedakah case, or hurry to do a favor that she could best fulfill.

כפה פרשה לעני וידיה שלחה לאביון. When there was chessed to be done, Sarah Schenirer was always willing and ready to help. This was not the time to contemplate the greatness of learning, or to think of her personal status or busy schedule. Inasmuch as her approach to chinuch was through honing the intellect, her personal example demonstrated the supremacy of chessed. The purpose of increasing one's knowledge, in the final analysis was to appreciate the value of chessed. Tzedakah, she would stress, is the most elevated middah of all. No matter what form the tzedakah takes, from dropping a few pennies into a pauper's cup way to organizing a major fundraising effort that will support countless institutions, she encouraged her students to do it themselves, rather than delegate the task to others.

בלעטער פון מיין טאג־בוך

שרה שענירער

(זעה ב"י זשורנאל נומער 49)

V

פון דעם ניי־געגרינדעטען ארטאדאקסישען מיידל־סעמינאר בין איך. וואס אנאסת נישט איבריג צופרידען געווען. די פעולות פון יודישקייט, וועלען זיי בעשטימט זיין שפעטער אליין שטאלצע מרענער פון די אייבּיגע יודישע אידעען!

„וואָרף אווּעק די מאַשן, זאָג דיך אָפּ פון דיין שנידער־מאַך און קלייד־ער מאַך גוּט, נעם זיך בעסער נייטהען אַן שפּיּ־קעווען מלבושים מאַך דער נשמה. מאַך דער יודישער נשמה אַז זי זאָל זיך בעשיצט פון די אפּיקורסישע נעפאהרען". — אווי האָט מיך אַ נעדאַנק נעאָמט צו דער וויסטערער ארבּייט, צוניוּ־ צוואַמלען קליינע קינדער און זיי אָנהייבען צוערשט צו בע־ קענען מיט'ן שמע ישראל...

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צו מיין פרייד האָט שוין קיין שיעור נישט נעקענט זיין... הגם מיין נעלט־בייטעל איז נעווען זעהר מצמצום. האָב איך דאָך אין דער נרעסטער אייל־עניש זיך נעגריים אויף דער ריזע אוּן וועג איך בין אַנגעקומען קיין מאַרינבאַד. בין איך נלייך אַוועק מים מיין ברודער צום בעלזער רב זצ"ל. אוּן מיין ברו־ דער, וועלכער איז דאָרט א בּן־בּית נעווען, האָט אין זיין קווישע צום רבין נעשריבען: „...זיי ווילען דרין זיין די יודישע סעכסטער אין יודישען וועג" אוּן פון צדיק'ס הייליגען מויל האָב איך נעהערט די ווערטער: „ברכה והצלחה". די דאָזיגע ווערטער האָבען אויף מיר נעווירקט ווי דער מייערסטער באַלזאם אוּן אריינגענאָבען א דערפריש־ דען מוט אין אַלע מיינע אדערן. די בּיה פונ'ם נרויסען צדיק האָט מיר אַליין טוּין נענאָבען האָפענונ־ אויף דער סאַר־ ווירקליכונג פון מיין שטרעבען... ווי אַזוי עס איז דאָן צושטאַנד נעקומען? די ערשטע שול „בית יעקב" – אין קומענדיגען קאַפיטעל.

פון דעם ניי־געגרינדעטען ארטאדאקסישען מיידל־סעמינאר בין איך. וואס אנאסת נישט איבריג צופרידען געווען. די פעולות פון יודישקייט, וועלען זיי בעשטימט זיין שפעטער אליין שטאלצע מרענער פון די אייבּיגע יודישע אידעען!

„וואָרף אווּעק די מאַשן, זאָג דיך אָפּ פון דיין שנידער־ מאַך און קלייד־ער מאַך גוּט, נעם זיך בעסער נייטהען אַן שפּי־ קעווען מלבושים מאַך דער נשמה. מאַך דער יודישער נשמה אַז זי זאָל זיך בעשיצט פון די אפּיקורסישע נעפאהרען". — אווי האָט מיך אַ נעדאַנק נעאָמט צו דער וויסטערער ארבּייט, צוניוּ־ צוואַמלען קליינע קינדער און זיי אָנהייבען צוערשט צו בע־ קענען מיט'ן שמע ישראל...

און אַז מיין פּלאַן צו גרינדען א רעליגיעוע סעכסטער־שול איז שוין פון נעדאַנק נישט מעהר ארויס, האָב איך זיך נאָך נעפּרוּבט אַנ'עצה האלטען מים מיין ברודער. וואָס האָט דעמאָלט נעוואוינט אין פּעטש־לי (שטעטיין). דער ערשטער ענטפער זי נער איז נעווען, ער האָט מיך אויסנעלאַכט...

„צי וואָס טוּיג דיר זיך ארומשלאַנען מיט פּראטי־ען־ אוּן וועג כ'האָב אויהם דערווּיף נעענטפערט, או איך וועל פון מיין צי שוין נישט רעזיגנירן, שרייבט ער מיר: „נו, קום קיין מאַרינאַי־ דא וואוינט איצט דער בעלזער רב וצ"ל ודעם היינסיגען בעלזער רבינס מאַכער), וועלען מיר הערען צי דער צדיק־הדור וועט דערוויף מסכים זיין.

צו מיין פרייד האָט שוין קיין שיעור נישט נעקענט זיין... הגם מיין נעלט־בייטעל איז נעווען זעהר מצמצום. האָב איך דאָך אין דער נרעסטער אייל־עניש זיך נעגריים אויף דער ריזע אוּן וועג איך בין אַנגעקומען קיין מאַרינבאַד. בין איך נלייך אַוועק מים מיין ברודער צום בעלזער רב זצ"ל. אוּן מיין ברו־ דער, וועלכער איז דאָרט א בּן־בּית נעווען, האָט אין זיין קווישע צום רבין נעשריבען: „...זיי ווילען דרין זיין די יודישע סעכסטער אין יודישען וועג" אוּן פון צדיק'ס הייליגען מויל האָב איך נעהערט די ווערטער: „ברכה והצלחה". די דאָזיגע ווערטער האָבען אויף מיר נעווירקט ווי דער מייערסטער באַלזאם אוּן אריינגענאָבען א דערפריש־ דען מוט אין אַלע מיינע אדערן. די בּיה פונ'ם נרויסען צדיק האָט מיר אַליין טוּין נענאָבען האָפענונ־ אויף דער סאַר־ ווירקליכונג פון מיין שטרעבען... ווי אַזוי עס איז דאָן צושטאַנד נעקומען? די ערשטע שול „בית יעקב" – אין קומענדיגען קאַפיטעל.

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פיה פתחה בחכמה ותורת חסד על לשונה. She started with learning, but she emphasized that *lo hamidrash ha'ikar ela hamaaseh.* This was her motto, and she personified it in her daily life. When she tested her students, she expected them to tell her how the material they had covered had affected their behavior. She had to be sure they understood the idea behind the Bais Yaakov that she had built with such *mesirus nefesh.* "גדול התלמוד שמביא לידי מעשה," she would quote. This was the goal, and it was for this reason that she invested so much effort into her schools.

She had no intention of turning out a generation of girls who were mere scholars. That was not how she envisioned the outcome of her dream. A thirst for knowledge was not enough, and she demanded of her girls that they be women of action. It was imperative that they learn how to translate their accumulated knowledge into fulfillment of their missions as wives and mothers of Klal Yisrael.

Thus, she laid the foundation of Yiddishkeit, as well as the basis for all future offshoots of Bais Yaakov.

Accomplishments

The *matzav* of *chinuch habanos* that Sarah Schenirer encountered in Poland was like a rocky, uncultivated field. Although she was about to attempt something that had never been done before, that had no model in our Mesorah, she knew it was crucial. And so she began to build from scratch, transforming her movement from its modest beginnings to a powerful empire.

Her efforts did not always meet with support, respect and warm smiles. Many were the times she was ousted with disdain by frum communities, leaving her to lament their apathy. She decried their neglect of the education of their daughters, and exhorted anyone who would listen to heed her pleas and not allow the girls to go to ruin.

Often she was forced, despite her modesty and humility, to visit with community leaders. She had to present her case, describing the girls' situation as she saw it. And the more she saw, the more it pained her.

Still, the people she turned to for assistance, especially in the beginning, turned her away. They had no idea what was happening in the streets. They had no concept of the catastrophe befalling our nation. But Sarah Schenirer was determined, and again and again she persuaded, cajoled, explained and clarified, awakening the slumbering leaders from their blissful dreams and begging them to accept the only solution that could divert disaster.

And even those who did consent to take her side, hardly understood the incredible urgency of the project, and were not forthcoming enough with the assistance she required. They simply did not understand; they did not feel the disintegration of Klal Yisrael upon their own flesh, as she did.

Again and again, she spoke to great men and chassidim, quoting Chazal and Midrashim that supported her position and repeating the words of the Gedolim who supported her, in order to get her Bais Yaakov schools started on the right foot.

Only once she lifted curtain, did the frum world begin to appreciate and recognize what Sarah Schenirer had done. Now they began to respect her and trust her absolutely. Still, even once she had achieved her hard-earned acknowledgement among the majority of the population, there remained individuals who would not capitulate, and continued to place obstacles in her path. They used every means at their disposal to restrain the movement and limit its scope.

Even as the schools flourished, the struggle continued.

Innate Modesty

Tznius, a simple word with a multi-faceted connotation. Any attempt to define it would fall short of its noble character. In it lies the beauty and purity that shape man's personality. The concept of tznius in Tanach, as well as in the words of Chazal, is a general term encompassing many areas: tznius among society, tznius in our actions, tznius in our speech, tznius in our dress.

For spiritual giants, tznius is a lifestyle. It affects all aspects of their lives, reflecting their greatness in all that they do. Tznius restrains one from conceit, mediocrity, superficiality, pride, and the pursuit of physical comfort. Tznius protects one's sense of refinement.

What is the meaning of tznius to a Jewish woman? For her it is more an intuition than a concept, more integral than just another character trait. Refined dress and social interaction are merely external expressions of the tznius she carries inside. For the Jewish woman, tznius is second-nature, an inseparable part of her being.

Indeed, Jewish women have adorned themselves with jewelry throughout the ages, but this was not their primary source of beauty. Their true diamonds were their modest ways. A Jewish woman was valued according to her tznius. She was proud of her unassuming manner. The most outstanding figures in Tanach and Talmud are presented to us in the glory of their modesty, raised to the greatest heights in the merit of their modest manners. Sarah - tznius, Rachel - tznius, Yosef - tznius, Moshe - tznius, Shaul - tznius, Esther - tznius. This chain of our mesorah from generation to generation, Torah and royalty, all embodied by tznius.

שקר החן והבל היופי. Chazal tell us, there is no middah better than tznius. The greatest blessings in our lives are in the merit of tznius.

Direction for Life

One who appreciates the G-dly gift of tznius can comprehend the greatness of Sarah Schenirer. After World War I, at a time when the Jewish streets reached the peak of *hefkeirus*, who should appear on the scene but Sarah Schenirer with her lofty project. What was her strength? Was it philosophy? Was it the arts? Cheap entertainment? She

drew on none of these. She girded herself for battle with the ancient Jewish weapon: tznius.

Did she launch a propaganda campaign first, to make tznius the "in" thing? No, she did not. She did not need to undertake research and investigation, to convey her "message of tznius." To her mind, this was all unnecessary. Deep within, she sensed that Klal Yisrael still pulsated with the values of its rich, timeless past. She counted on the secret of Klal Yisrael's eternal existence. She saw only the beauty of our nation and the perfection that could be ours. Everything was in place, she needed only to unearth it, polish it, and behold its natural shine.

And all along, the whisper in her heart repeated its call: tznius. Tznius led to the birth of our exalted nation. She saw how tznius led to the formation of a nation that yearns for *Mashiach*. In the merit of tznius we were endowed with *Nevuah*, *Malchus*, *Kehunah* and the presence of the *Shechinah* among us.

This was the dictum she relayed to her students. This was the inheritance she bequeathed them before her passing. How demanding her standards were when it came to tznius! She would not relent a hairsbreadth. With all the charisma of her dynamic personality, she insisted on perfection in tznius. With an eye to the future, she fully grasped the direction in which the modern secular world was headed, and she refused to compromise on tznius to even the slightest degree.

For the sake of Jewish families, for the sake of the Jewish future, in order to prepare our nation to greet *Mashiach*, it was imperative to continue in the ways of our previous generations, precisely, without compromise, without change.

There is only one Torah that Am Yisroel has kept with intense devotion for centuries, regardless of the shifting winds and the difficult vicissitudes of history. This is her legacy. With her passing, she bequeathed us with Eternal Life.

◆אונזערע פיאנערינס...◆

(איינדריקען און נאטיצען פון די לעצטע עקזאמענס אין סעמינאר) — פון **שרה שענירער**

... און ווידער האבען 22 לעהרערינס געענדיגט דעם סעמינאר-קורס און אקאדעמישן אין אמעריקא. עס איז באמת נעווען א פרייד צו זעהן דעם גרויסען עראפלאג, מיט וואס עס האבען זיך אויסגעצייכנט די תלמידות. די נעלונגענע תשובות, וואס זיי האבען נעגעבען אויף די נע-שפילטע פראגען, זענען נעווען די שענע פירות פון ווייר אונ-ערמידליכען צוויי-יעהריגען פלייס אין סעמינאר.

בשת דער גאנצ-ער שמחה, האס מיך אבער פארט א פיין-ליכער רעיון בעהערשט: צי מיהלען באמת די דאזיגע יונגע פיא-נערינס, דאס גרויסע פערטרויען, וואס איך און פיל אנדערע לייגען אויף זיי ארויף? צי פערשטעהן זיי טאקע, דאס גרויסע אחריות, וואס זיי נעמען אויף זיך אצינד אלס ערציהערינס פון א ניי יונג דור? צי וועלען זיי איין שפעטער ביישטעהן די נסיונות, מיט וועלכע דאס לעבען וועט זיי פרובען?

און א שטיפע תפלה האס זיך אויף מיינע ליפען בעוועגט: א גרויסער און דערבארמדיגער בעשעפער אין הימעל! העלף צו זיינע נעטרייע קינדער אין ייער הייליגער ארבייט. זאלען זיי נישט דארפען צוטיפ נעפרובט צו ווערען אין ווערטער פון אונזערע חכמים "הבא לטהר מסייעין אותו", זיי האבען דאך דעם גוטען רצון, העלף, זשע צו רבונו של עולם, אז פון דעם גוטען רצון זאלען קומען גוטע און שענע מעשים!

און א הרב דר. פנחס כהן און ר' זושא פרידמאן האבען אין ייער שלום-ווארט אין גליהענדיג ווערטער מעורר נעווען די לעהרערינס פאר זייער גרויסער מיסיע. וואס ווארט אויף זיי, האב איך מיטגענומען אז זיי ערע אלעמענט העדצער אין זיי מיט א הייליגער שבועה דורכצונעמען, די זיי אנפערטרויסט אמתען מיט'ן שטארקסטן מסירת-נפש צו בעזאכען.

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אין די טיף-ערנסטע שימונג פון דעם בחינה-זאל, האס זיי שוין נישט פערלאזט א נאנצען סאנ. אין קליינע גרופעס זענען זיי אנדערגענאנגן, אינערשטמענדיג זיך וועגען גרויסען אחריות וואס דער כלל-ישראל גיט זיי איבער...

און איך האב זיי דערמאנט א פאר בעדאנקען, וואס זיי האבען נעהערט פראזיאהרען בייט דער פריהונג פון ווייערע עלטערע חברטעס, וויל דיזאזיגע ווערטער זענען נעווען דירעקט, וויי עמיר וועלט נעקענט לייענען אין די טיפסטע קאמערן פון מיין הארץ... איך האב זיי דערמאנט וויי ה' ארלאזן האט דעמאלט נעזאגט:

"אז איהר קענט ערנען און בעלערנען, דאס האב איך בייי דעם עקזאמען נעזאגט, אבער אז איהר ווילט אויך קענען ערציהען די יונגע קינדערישע נשמות... אז די פראגע האט בשעת דער נאנצער בחינה בעשעפטיגט מיין הארץ. איך האב אין זעהאט די יונגע כהנים אין בית-המקדש. היינט, ווען דאס בית-המקדש איז ליידער חרוב, איז יעדעס יודישע הויז, יעדעס יודישע הארץ א בית-המקדש... די כהנים האבען נעהאט די פליכט צו היטען די קדושה פון בית-המקדש... און היינט ליגט אויף אייך, די דאזיגע גרויסע הייליגע פליכט! איהר נעהט יעצט ארויס אין דער וועלט בויזן מקדשים.

איידער דער כהן-גדול איז נעגאנגען צו דער עבודה האט מען איהם נעפרעגט: "אפשר איז דא עפעס פרעמדעס אין דיין הארץ? אדער אפשר האסטו נאך נישט אלעס נעגוי אויסגעלערנט? בע-וועג דו האסט נאך נישט אלעס נעגוי אדורכגעלערנט בע-שולדיגען מיר דיך נישט, אבער אפשר איז עפעס "פרעמדס" אין דיין הארץ, וועסטו פראואוטוירדיגען דיין הייליג ארבייט" — איהר נעהט אצינד ארויס אין דער גרויסער ווייט וועלט!

ריינע, קינדישע נשמות וועט מען איבערגעבען אין אייער האנד. איהר דארפט אויסבילדען די דאזיגע יוגנע ריינע נשמות אלס מענש-ישראל. פון איין איז אפהענגיג די צוקונפט פון יוגנעז דור! ווי שרעקליך וועט זיין אייער זינד, ווען אייער הארץ זאל חס"ו נישט זיין אינגאנצען ריין, נישט אינגאנצען איבערגעגעבען צו אונזער הייליגען עדאנק...

בעדענקט אייך, נישט ארבייטענדיג מיט'ן אמת'ן ריינעם הארץ, פערדארבט איהר חס"ו די ריינע, אונשולדיגע נשמות! א, די קינדער פיהלען גוט, ווען אייע-ע נשמות זענען ח"ו צעריסען... נישט גאנץ... נאר וועהרטער. וואס בעהעלן פון הארץ קענען אריינגיין אין הארץ! איך האף אבער, אז אייערע ערציהונג זענען ריין, נאר מיט'ן הייליגען תורה-ליכט בעלויכטען און מיט ריכ-טיגען יראת אהבת השם וועט איהר צוגעהן צו אייער ארבייט, צו דער גרויסער הייליגער עבודה פאר ג-ט און ישראל"...

איך האב זיי שוין נישט נעווארנט מעהר דערמאנען, איך האב עפעפיהלט דעם טיפען איינדרוק, וואס מיינע עראינערונגען האבען אויף זיי נעמאכט, האב איך נאר פערעגדיגט דערמיט, אז כ'האף דאס די אלע נעפיהלן, וואס בעהערשען זיי אין דעם מאמענט וועלכען זיך טיף אין ייער הארץ אייגקריצען און ווען דער שטראם פון דער צייט וועט זיי וועלען טראגען מאמענט-מיט-ריסטן, זאלען זיי זיך דערמאנען דעם יעצטיגען מאמענט, און דאס קול פון נאמנות זאל שרייען צו זיי: האס איהר פערגעסטן, וואס איהר האס איין אין הארץ צוגעזאגט דארט... און ראבקא... אין הויכען וואלד? שעהמט איהר אייך נישט?...

און ווידער א שטילקייט, מ'הערט דאס הארצקלאפענדיש פו יעדע איינצינע... בלי נשמע קולם...

און פרוי וואשטאוש רעדט מיט גליהענדע הייסע ווערטער, זי ערקלערט זיי זייער גרויס מיסיע אלס די פיאנערינס אין א נייער בעווענונג, וועלכע האט איבער דעם אלמען צי'ל, דאס תורה-פראגראם איינצופיהרען אין יודישן לעבען... יעדעס ווארט קריצט זיך טיף איין אין די הערצער פון די יונגע צוהערערינס..

און ווידער א שטילקייט... נאר די קוקט צו שט'יל..

און זיי, מיינע ליבע תלמידות?... אזוי ווי זיי וואלטען בנביאה נעפיהלט, וואס סהט זיך אין מיין הארץ, האבען זיי זיך סטיכיש אנגענומען פאר די הענד, נעמאכט א גרויס ראד און מיט בעפרט צו עזזונגען: "וטהר לבנו לעבדך באמת"...

יא, וטהר לבנו לעבדך באמת... האבען אויך מיינע ליפען נעשעפטשעפט און ווידער איז א נעדאנקען-כוואליע מיך בעפאלען: "צי ברויכען נאר אס די קינדער דאס צו וויסען, דאס צו בעטען? צי ברויכען נישט. אלע... אלע יודי-ש מאמעס יצדען טאג זיך נעבען א ך זיי וחשבון, אז זיי זענען סאי-זיי-ערע קינדער פער-אנשוואהרליך?... צי ברויכען זיי זיך נישט פרענען, צי ס'איז נישט בהנאלסען זייער הארץ, דער "פרעמדער" נעדאנק, אז זייער קינד זאל זיין הויפטזעליך א "מענש" צווישען מענשען, א מאדערנע, היינטיגער מענש... און דערביי אויך א שטיקעל יוד...

נו, און איהר אלע איבריגע יודישע מיידלעך, צי איז שוין נישט די הכסטע צייט, איהר זאלט פרשטעהן, אז אייער גליק איז אין אייערע הענד.

ווי אזוי? אלעס "פרעמדע" אריסרייסען, אלע מצות מיט גליהענדער בעגייסטערונג ערפילען...

עבדו את השם בשמחה!

און די אויסגעוועקסטע פיינעלער, האבען מיר פערווינדערט נאכגעשעפטשעט: עבדו את השם בשמחה!...

This article appeared in a pre-war edition of the Bais Yaakov Journal



Announcements and messages of grief printed in Dos Yiddishe Togblatt
No. 147 כ' אדר ב' תרצ"ה March 7, 1935
and No. 149 רמ"ז אדר ב' תרצ"ה March 10, 1935

די גרויסע בוי פון פרוי שרה שענירער ע"ה

פון אונזער קראקאווער קארעספאנדענט

פריוואט האט זיך די פרוי שענירער ע"ה באשפרעט אכצעהטאכט, אבער קיינער האט זיך נישט געוויגט צו זי באשטעטיגען וואס אזוי שטארק אז ריידט. נאר אין די סוטשעשטאלן זענען ביז איר שוועסטער פון אמעריקע אדער אנדערע ערטער אין אירופע ארומגעפרעגט אפילו פון די פלעגט אין דער אלגעמיין. שפעטער האט זי נעשטארבן פון הסרת, אין עם האט זיך פיל אויסגעוועזוהה. ליכטע נישט בעפארשטאנד. (20 סהדוט מארן זיך ליכטערונגען האט זי זיך אויפגעשטעלן די הערר אין נעוויסען זיך דערלאנגען) וי לויט צו ווינקל לכבוד שבת. פלוצלינג האט זי זיך אומגעוויגן בען צו שרייען שלעכט און מיט די וועלט, "מאנעזיי אין הימל הלוף מיר" האט זי אויסגהויבן איהר רייכע כשרע נשמה.

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דאס יידישע טאגבלאט" 147

פרוי שענירער ע"ה נעשטארבן

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№ 144 B זיבעטער יאהרגאנג
Opłata pocztowa uiszczona ryczałtem

פרייז 15 גראשען

Dos Judisze Togblat

היינטיגער נומער האט 6 זייטן

דאס יודישע טאגבלאט

אבאנאמענטס-פרייז

[illegible]

אנאנסען-טאריף

[illegible]

שטורמישער פראטעסט געגען חילול-שבת אין תל-אביב

10 פערזאן פערוואונדעט און צעהן — ארעסטירט

תל-אביב (יט"א) שבת איז אין ... [illegible]

פעדלענגערט דאס געזעץ-וועגען לאקאטא-יען-קיוז אין ארץ-ישראל

[illegible]

אבגעזאגט דעם שטרייק אין ירושלים

[illegible]

די גרויסע לוי' פון שרה שענירער ע"ה

גרויסער טרויער צוליבן טויט פון דער שעפערין פון דער ב"י-באוועגונג

קראקא (טעלעפאניש).

[illegible]

ב"ה יארשא מאנטאג

Front page of Dos Yiddishe Togblatt No. 144
March 4, 1935 כ"ט אדר א' תרצ"ה


From the Writings
of R' Alexander
Zushe Friedman ה"ו

בה"י

Rabbi Alexander Zushe Friedman, zt"l

The Beloved Activist Of Polish Jewry

By: Joseph Friedenson

Of all my father[1]'s good friends in the Warsaw Ghetto, the one I remember best is Rabbi Alexander Zushe Friedman *Hy"d*[2]. He is known to the world for his classic anthology of *Verter* (short commentaries) on the *Chumash: Mayana Shel Torah (Der Torah Kval)*. I had known him personally since my childhood, as he was a frequent guest in our home In Lodz, and he always *farherred* (tested) me when he visited us.



It is no exaggeration to say that Rabbi Zushe Friedman was beloved by all in Jewish Poland. He was a *Gadol baTorah*, a *boki* (thoroughly knowledgeable) in *Shas* and *Poskim*; in his youth he was the youngest student in the Yeshiva of the Sochachover Rebbe, the *Avnei Nezer*. Although he never became a *Rav* or *Rosh Yeshiva* by profession, he continued to learn; all his life he was a *baal mechadesh*, creative in Torah thought.

Yet his popularity in the Jewish world was not due to his unquestioned greatness in Torah; it was mainly a result of his leadership qualities and active participation in Agudath Israel in Poland. He was *the* spokesman of the Polish Agudah, second only to the Lubliner *Rav*, Rabbi Meir Shapiro, as its most effective, popular speaker. His every speaking tour, particularly in the Polish countryside, was an event. People listened to him spell-bound for hours at a time, and his presentations invariably had depth and originality. He was also a talented writer and superb administrator.

For nearly 29 years, he was the organizing force behind the huge Agudath Israel movement in Poland, and the right hand of its president, Reb Itche Meir Levine (son-in-law of the *Imrei Emes*). At the same time he headed the widespread *chinuch* system of over 600 *chadorim* overseen by the Polish Agudah.

But it was in the Warsaw Ghetto that his true glory emerged. It was there that I had the *zechus* to observe him close up. As I recall, Reb Zushe was appointed to the Warsaw *Judenrat* after the Germans took over. But he was somehow able to free himself from the assignment, and instead devoted his energies to organizing aid for the large numbers of *Rebbeim, Rabbonim, Roshei Yeshivos*, and *askonim* who had

fled their hometowns to seek refuge in Warsaw and were subsequently trapped in its Ghetto.

Earlier on, Rabbi Zushe had gained the confidence of many circles outside Agudath Israel as well. Thus the Warsaw *Judenrat* and the American Joint Distribution Committee (whose previous director, David Guzik, was still clandestinely active), amongst others, entrusted him with hundreds of thousands of dollars to help these refugees. It was not easy to be the provider for hundreds of refugee families who had arrived in Warsaw penniless, with only the clothes on their backs, and who of course could find no means of sustenance for themselves in the Ghetto. It required limitless patience and sensitivity. Only a person of Rabbi Zushe Friedman's stature could have done it in such a noble, *mentchliche* manner.

A frequent visitor to his quarters, I was invariably amazed at the inner resources he summoned for dealing with so many embittered souls. When I compared him with the executives of other organizations doing similar social work in the Ghetto, the contrast was striking. Other disbursers of funds became transformed into arrogant bureaucrats. More than once I saw professors standing at the doors of young functionaries (even their former students), kept waiting for days for an "appointment." But Rabbi Zushe Friedman showed not a sign of self-importance. He could have easily have obtained an office in the "Jewish Self-Help" building and surrounded himself with secretaries and lackeys as the other officials did. But he would not countenance *Rabbonim* and *talmidei chachamim* coming to a public office to stand at the door with hat in hand. So from his own modest apartment he worked *bechein, bechessed uv'rachamim* – with charm, love and kindness. His door was open to all, and his heart even more so.

When he was disbursing aid to each of the hundreds of families, no recipient ever felt that he was receiving a favor. Reb Zushe would lower his eyes in embarrassment if anyone tried to thank him. One might even say that he felt guilty to be the giver and others the takers. In fact, when elderly folks or people of stature were involved, he personally delivered their stipends to them, in their homes.

I have mentioned here only a single aspect of Rabbi Zushe Friedman's activities in the Warsaw Ghetto. Actually, during the four years In the Ghetto he did much, much more. Just as he had headed the *chinuch* activities in the pre-war years, so did he do so in the Ghetto – first officially when the Germans tolerated them, and later, underground. But that's a story for another occasion. It was the dignity that Reb Zushe personally projected and that he helped preserve for his clients that remains most vivid in my memory.

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[1] My father, Reb Eliezer Gershon Friedenson, *Hy"d*, was active in the *kehilla* of Lodz. a leader In the World Agudah Movement, one of the founders and a leader of the Beth Jacob Movement in Poland and edited *The Beth Jacob Journal (for* adults) and *Kindergarten* (for children).

[2] In spite of his stature as an outstanding *talmid chacham*, he insisted on being called "Reb" or "Mr." rather than "*Rav*," since he held no official rabbinical position.

שרה שנירר ע"ה

כ"ז באדר תרצ"ה

אלכסנדר זושא פרידמן הי"ד

מַצֵּבָה
לשרה שנירר ע"ה

אִישׁ מָצָאתִי - אֶחָד מֵאֶלֶף
וְאִשָּׁה - אַחַת מִנֵּי דוֹרוֹת.
בְּחָכְמָה, לְלֹא תַגְמוּל וָחֶלֶף
הֶעֱלָתָה בַּלְּבָבוֹת אֵשׁ מִדּוּרוֹת.

אִשָּׁה, בִּשְׁנוֹת-חַיִּים קְצָרוֹת
הֶחֱזִירָה הַצְּנִיעוּת לְאָהֳלֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל,
הִרְבְּתָה לִפְעוֹל לִתְקוּפוֹת וְדוֹרוֹת,
הוֹפִיעָה כְּאַחַת מִנְּבִיאוֹת אֵ-ל.

אִשָּׁה - אֵם לַאֲלָפִים וּרְבָבוֹת,
אֵם - מְלַטֶּפֶת וּמוֹכִיחָה.
בְּלַהַט דְּבָרֶיהָ נִשְׁבּוּ לְבָבוֹת,
לַהֵט אֵם אוֹהֶבֶת וּמַשְׁגִּיחָה.

לְלֹא חֵן מְזַיֵּף, לְלֹא הֶבֶל-יֹפִי,
הָאִירָה מַחֲשַׁכֵּי הַלַּיִל,
וּבְאֵשׁ-קֹדֶשׁ, בְּמִדּוֹת לְלֹא-דֹּפִי,
קָנְתָה שֵׁם עוֹלָם כְּאֵשֶׁת-חַיִל.

אִשָּׁה, קָמָה בְּדוֹר חָרְבָּן וּמָגוֹר,
וְיֵעוּדָהּ - רַק לִבְנוֹת וּלְהַגְשִׁים.
נִדְמָה, אָפְסָה תִּקָּוָה מִן הַדּוֹר,
אוּלָם "שָׂרָה מְגַיֶּרֶת אֶת הַנָּשִׁים".

זִכְרוֹנוֹת הַעֲרָצָה נֶאֱמָנִים
יְלַוּוּ אֶת נִשְׁמָתָהּ הַגְּדוֹלָה.
בְּמֶשֶׁךְ מֵאוֹת דּוֹרוֹת וְשָׁנִים
יִזָּכֵר שְׁמָהּ בְּכָבוֹד וּתְהִלָּה.


From the Pen of
Esther Rosa
Heitner ה"ז

Esther Rosa Heitner

Born in Lodz, 5666 (1906)
Murdered in the Kshonzsher Ghetto 5702 (1942)

The daughter of a poor chassidishe family, Esther Rosa was educated in a Polish public school but was drawn into the Bnos Agudas Yisroel Youth Movement, which originally began in Lodz. Together with her older sister Reizel, she traveled to Krakow to become one of the earliest talmidos of Sarah Schenirer's newly established Bais Yaakov Seminary. In 1923, when she was 18, she was sent as the founding teacher for the school in Bendin (Bedzin in Polish). There she established one of the largest and most outstanding Bais Yaakov schools. Throughout the years, she was active in the Bais Yaakov movement as a pedagogue, instructor, lecturer, and also as a writer. Her literary output included poetry, sketches and stories which appeared regularly in Bais Yaakov journals and in the magazine "Kindergarten". She went by the pseudonym E. Shoshana. After her marriage to one of the Bais Yaakov activists in Krakow, she used her married name, Esther Heitner. During the Nazi occupation, she escaped to Kshonzsh-Vielki (Ksiaz-Wielki in Polish) and when the Kshonzsher Ghetto was liquidated in 1942, she was shot in the *auszidlungs platz* (place from which they were deported).

מיין האַרץ האָט לידער אַ סך...

אסתר פאַיא-הייטן לפ



א.

מיין האַרץ האָט לידלעך אַ סך.
פונם אַלטן הייליקן תנ״ך,
פון דער ריינער תורה, –
נאר זינגען טוט עס אין דער שטיל,
ווען עס איז מיט בענקשאַפט פול
צום אייביק-גוטן בורא.

ב.

איך ווייס פון שבת-שטיבלעך,
מיט אידישע מיידלעך,
וואָס זיצן שטיל ביים טיש.
און זייערע אויגן הימלען-טיפע
רופן צו שבת-מנוחה,
לויטערע ווי מאַרגן-טוי, און פריש.

ג.

דער אַלטער סידור זאָגט צו מיר,
וואָס געלע בלעטער אַן אַ שיעור
אין אים זיינען געבונדן –
גענל פון טרערן זיינען זיי,
פול מיט ווייטיק און געשריי
פון אַלט-נייע וואונדן:
״ס׳האָט דיין עלטער-באָבע נאָך –
ביי מיר פאַרגעסן אין דער יאָך
אין אַלע צרות און פיין:
און געלעגן כ׳בין אַליין
געווייקט פון איר געוויין; –
און געפילט ווי זי האָט זיך שטאַרק און ריין
געלייטערט פון מיין תוכן.״

ד.

די וועלט זי איז מיר אָזוי גוט און ליב,
אַז זינגען כ׳וואָלט נאָר שטענדיק אַן אַ שיעור,
און כאָטש דער הימל וועלט אַמאָל אויך טריב
איך ווייס, אז ג-ט ער קוקט אַראָפּ צו מיר
און שיקן וועט מיר באַלד א זון,
וועלן אויך טריב יעצט איז –
אַ שניי פאַלט שטיל און דין.

ה.

כ׳האָב געהערט מלאכים בעטן
פאַר די קינדער פון די יידן,
זיי ליגן ריינע, צאַרטע,
נישט געזיגנדיגט און די וויגן,
זיי וואַקסן ווי די בליטן,
צו אַ הייליק ריין שטרעבן;
כ׳האָב געהערט מלאכים בעטן:
זאָל ג-ט באַשיצן זייער לעבן!

ו.

איך האָב אַ שטיבעלע,
ס׳קלענסטע אויף דער וועלט;
און דאָרטן ברענט און וואָרעמט טאג און נאכט.
איך שרעק מיך נישט פאַר פינצטערקייט און קעלט,
פאַר שוועכט, האַרמאַטן און קיין מאַכט;
דאָס שטיבעלע עס קען מיר קיינער נישט צעשטערן,
און לייכטן וואָרעמן פאַרווערן.
דאָס שטיבעלע עס איז פון מענטש,
וואָס מיט אידישע אמונה ג-ט האָט עס געבענטשט.

ז.

דער וואלד, דער טאל,
די בערג, דער טייך,
וואונדער אין א צאל,
דערציילן זיי אייך:
אין לבנה-שיין די געבאדענע נאכט.
גריסט אייך פון דעם,
וואס האט דאס אלץ געמאכט.

ח.

ס׳פינקלט אויפן טיש דער בעכער,
ס׳רויטלט זיך דער ווײַן –
אין מיין הארץ עס קלאפט היינט העכער
ביים שבת-ליכט שיין.
מיין מאמע האט איצט שטיל געבעטן
פאר אירע קינדער אין ארץ ישראל:
זיי זאלן נישט אפטרעטן,
פון ג-ט פון אמאל;
אונזער ליכט זאל נישט ווערן צוגענומען,
נאר דער שבת ער זאל שוועבן
איבער אונז אין גאנצער פראכט;
באלייכטן זאל ער אונזער לעבן
אין דער לאנגער גלות-נאכט.

ט.

איך ליב דיך, מיין לשון,
כאטש ביסט געווארסן אויף פרעמדער ערד,
כ׳ליב דיך מיין שפראך,
ווייל ביסט פון ג-ט פאר אונז באשערט.
כ׳ליב דיך ווען ווײַנסט, קלאגסט,
און ציטערן כ׳מוז ווי אין קלעץ,
ווען פרעגסט ווי א קינד: פארווואס?
פארווואס אזוי ביטער די וועלט? –

י.

לאנג די נאכט,
פאר דעם וואס וואכט,
מיט האפענונג און מורא;
לאנג די נאכט,
פאר דעם וואס טראכט:
ווען וועט הערן מיך דער בורא?

צו שרה שנירער

פֿאר זשורנאלן פֿון ניו יאָרק – א מתנה

געלט? איך דארף עס נישט!
איך וויל עס נישט פאר מיר!
עס שיקט מיר גאלד פון הימל,
די זון שוין אין א שיעור.

זילבער גיט מיר די לבנה,
אין א שטילער נאכט.
בריליאנטן א מתנה,
דער שניי האט מיטגעבראכט.

די ביימער האבן מיר א פאלאץ
אין זייער שאטן אויפגעבויט.
די שטילע וואסער-טיפענישן,
זייערע אוצרות אנגעטרויט.

און איך גיי ארום געקרוינט שיין
פון דער געטלעכער גבורה,
צופיסנס פון אייביגקייט-טראן,
צו זינגען מיט אלעס די שירה.

מודה אני

ווייל פון טיפן שלאָף האָב'ך ווידער דערוואַכט,
צום טאָג געקומען פון דער פינצטערער נאַכט
זאָג'ך: מודה אני!

ווייל כ'זע ווידער אויף הימל שיינען די זון,
צווישן לעבעדיקע ווייטער איך בין –
אַ דאַנק, מודה אני!

מיינע אויערן פאַרנעמען די טענער פון לעבן,
צום ריינעם הימל מיין אויג טוט ווייטער שוועבן
מיט אַ מודה אני!

דיין געבאָט, ג-ט, ווייל איך דערפילן,
ווייל איך דיך זע, ווייל איך דיך פיל,
כ'זאָג דערפאַר הייס און שטיל:
מודה אני! מודה אני!

ערב שבת

די מאַמעשי געהערט:
די שטוב אויסגעקערט;
גאָר פיין צוגעראַמט
מיט גאָלדענעם זאָמד!

דער טיש צוגעגרייט
דאָס טישטעך פאַרשפרייט,
און לייכטער געשטעלט –
די מאַמעשי קוועלט!

זי צינדט אָן די ליכט,
פאַרדעקט דאָס געזיכט;
עס שפיגלט זיך אין ווייַן,
פון בענטשליכט – אַ שיין!


From the
writings of
R' Eliezer Gershon
Friedenson ה"יד
and R' Elimelech
Shteier ה"יד

THE FIRE OF IDEALISM

By Rabbi Eliezer Gershon Friedenson, *Hy"d*

Adapted from an article written in the early summer of 5695/1935 and published in the "Bais Yaakov Journal". Rabbi Friedenson was the renowned editor of this highly regarded, popular literary journal. It served as the voice of both the Bais Yaakov movement and the Bnos Agudas Yisrael in pre-war Poland.

The Jewish world is continually astounded by the swift growth of the Bais Yaakov movement, and people often try to understand what was behind the tremendous success of Frau Sara Schenierer, *a"h*, our "giant among the masses". Certainly, much time will pass before we will fully grasp the reasons for the stunning achievements of the Bais Yaakov movement.

It is possible that the cause of this phenomenal growth is simply that it couldn't have been otherwise. The hour of *cheshbon hanefesh* in the *chareidi* world had to arrive, revealing that the unprecedented assimilation among young Jewish women had become intolerable. Klal Yisrael could not afford to lose entire generations. Something had to be done to rectify the situation; after all, we were promised that *netzach Yisrael lo yishaker*. Thus, when the Bais Yaakov movement presented itself, the Jewish nation finally arose from its lethargy. *Yidden* lovingly embraced the concept of Bais Yaakov, standing behind it with boundless loyalty.

Yet, there is one point that begs to be clarified, especially now, after the *petira* of Sara Schenierer, *a"h*, who was the first to raise the flame of the candle we now call Bais Yaakov.

How did we reach this summit? What power was at work to bring acceptance to the movement across a broad Jewish spectrum in so short a time? How did it expand from strength to ever greater strength; from a tiny schoolroom to a magnificent network housed in modern, fully equipped buildings, with hundreds of local schools and Bnos branches, a monthly published journal, original textbooks, a body of Torah-oriented children's literature and more?

The only explanation is that it is the strength of Sara Schenierer's idealism.

Those who stood by when Bais Yaakov was in its infancy and followed the step-by-step development of the movement know that it was all made possible by the pure, selfless idealism of Sara Schenierer and her first students. These pioneers suffered hunger and want, lived in cramped quarters, traveled to far-off towns and cities in commercial wagons and broken conveyances, not for self-aggrandizement but purely *l'sheim shomayim*.

Even later, when Bais Yaakov became an accepted part of Jewish life and a select few made a living working in its institutions, the fiery idealism that energized Frau Schenierer continued to warm the hearts and fuel the activities of all those who carried her banner. By 1933, close to three hundred new schools were established.

By now, the Bais Yaakov system has reached a point when few new schools are being founded, a circumstance that calls for us to strengthen our idealism and redouble our efforts.

The same holds true for the Bnos movement. For years its organizers toiled selflessly, out of pure idealism. Our job is to renew that idealism constantly. We must never allow ourselves to make demands sparked by egoism. We must continue to work purely for the benefit of the *klal* even when this or that detail doesn't meet our expectations. We must strengthen ourselves to work conscientiously and with fiery devotion to further our ideals.

To give Sara Schenierer the true honor she deserves without compromise, it behooves all of us to continue working toward the realization of her dream and to infuse each communal undertaking with her fiery idealism.

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שרה שנירר ע"ה

ר' אלימלך שטייער הי"ד

Born in 5667/1907. At a very young age, he became a member of Tzeirei Agudas Yisroel and began writing poetry and stories in frum publications. Later on, he joined the editorial staff of the daily newspaper "Dos Yiddishe Togblatt" in Warsaw. He was the co-editor of the Hebrew weekly "Darkeinu" in Warsaw (from 1935)and often wrote in the Poalei Agudas Yisroel Press under the pseudonym "Elitzur Hasofer". The "Bais Yaakov" Publishing House in Lodz published a book of his poetry in 1937 under the title "Mentschen Funem Dor." During the war, he was active in the Warsaw Ghetto, with his wife Sarah Bochner, a well known Bais Yaakov teacher. He was killed in a Nazi concentration camp near Dembitz in 5703/1942-43. Hashem yikom damo.

ס׳איז אַ צייט פון בין־השמשות געווען,
מענטשן האָבן זיך מיטאַמאָל דערזען – אויסגעלייזט,
די מלחמה איז אַוועק און האָט שקיעלעטן איבערגעלאָזט –
שקיעלעטן פון פלייש און גייסט.
און די מעסערס האָבן פון בלוט נאָך געראַסט,
ס׳זיינען וואונדערלעכע זאַכן געשען.

דאָס פנים פון דער וועלט איז געווען אַזוי:
ווי אַ שטיק רוי פלייש צעגריזשעט אָפּגעשינדן,
ערשט אַרויסגעשלעפט פונעם פיסק פון אַ הונט –
ערשט אַרויסגעזען די וועלט.
ווי אַ שמאַטע פון אַ פאָן, וואָס האָט אַ גאַנץ באַצירט
אין אַ רעגן־טאָג, און ס׳האָט די פאַרב זיך צעשמירט –
האָט אויסגעזען די וועלט.
ווי אַ הילצערנע סטאָדאָלע, פון פייער אָפּגעברענט,
אָפּגעלעקט דעם דאַך און אָפּגעזענקט דעם פונדאַמענט –
האָט אויסגעזען די וועלט.

אין שטעטל האָבן יידן געבלאָנדזשעט נישט געוואוסט קיין באַשייד;
ס׳האָט די וועלט זיך עפעס ווי אין אַ קאַראַהאָד געדרייט.
זיינוויל שוחט, וואָס איז געווען אַ בקי אין דער פאָליטיק –
ווי, להבדיל, אין יורה דעה, הלכות שחיטה –
האָט פאָרט נישט פאַרשטאַנען ווי אַזוי
סיי פראַנץ יאָזעף, ירום הודו, און סיי דער צאַר, ימח שמו
האָבן ביידע אַ מפלה געליטן –
היינט־זשע, ווער דען האָט געהאַט אַ זיג?

פון פראָנט זיינען די זעלנער געקומען צוריק
און די אָדלערלעך אין זייערע היטלען זיינען געווען אָפּגעפליקט –

ווי אויסגעקראָכענע פעדערן ביי אַן עוף.
אינדרויסן, נעבן שקאָלע, האָבן פוילישע סטודענטלעך
געמאַכט מושטרען, שפּאַצירט אַראָפּ און אַרויף,
אויפגעשפרייט אַ רויט-ווייסע פאָן און געזונגען:
"נאָך אין פוילן נישט פאַרלוירן" –
בקיצור: אין דער לופט איז אַלץ ווי אויף הייוון געווירן...

אין קלויז, בין מנחה למעריב, האט מען זיך געסודלט פאַרשידן:
הנה, ס'האָבן זיך פאַרזאַמלט אַלע אומות העולם אָפּגעבן ארץ ישראל פאַר יידן;
ענגלאַנד איז אַ מלכות-חסד און אַ מיניסטער באַלפור איז דאָרט פאַראַנען,
און אַלע מלוכות זיינען דערויף באַשטאַנען...

האָבן יידן זיך וויכוח'ט אין קלויז.
"מען וועט דאַרפן זאָגן הלל" – האָט מנדל משכיל געשריגן;
בלויז זיינווייל שוחט האָט געשוויגן:
וער וויסט דען היינט וואו-איין וואו-אויס?
ס'האָבן יידן אין די בין-השמשות'ן סודות'דיק געשמועסט.
ס'האָבן זיי ערע בליקן געבלאָנדזשעט אין וויטז;
מ'האָט אין חלום געשוועבט, און דעם פתרון נישט געוואוסט,
האָט מען געפליסטערט: משיח'ס צייטן...
און יונגוואַרג האָט געפלאָטערט –
ווי אַ פאָן אויפן ווינט.
וואָס וועט קומען וויטער?
און וואָס איז אַצינד?

ס'האָבן קלויז-בחורים אין מיט'ן שיעור-עיון
געמאַכט אַ קנייטש אין דער גמרא – און געלאָפן אין פאַראיין;
דאָרט האָט אַ רעדנער געשטורעמט קעגן גלות-פּיין
און אַזוי פאַטעטיש גערעדט וועגן – די בערג פון ציון.
יונגע מיידלעך מיט שליפעך און צעפ
האָבן אין די אוועגטן פאַר'חלומ'טע שפּאַצירט,
מיט בענקשאַפט אין די הערצער און חלומות אין די קעפ: –
צווישן "עשטטש פאלסקא" און "עוד לא אבדה" האָט דער וועג געפירט.

ס'האָבן צעפלאָסענע האָפענונגען אין דער לופט געשוועבט:
צווישן מיצקיעוויטש'ן און באַלפור'ן האָבן זיך די חלומות געוועבט.
און די פאַרהאָרעוועטע טאַטעס, די קרעמערס,

וואָס טראָגן אויף זיך פון גלות דעם גאַנצן לאָסט,
און די פרומע מאַמעס, וואָס טראָגן ליבשאַפט גאַנצע עמערס –
זיינען פלוצים געוואָרן אַזוי ווייט, פרעמד און פארהאַסט.

האָבן טאַטע–מאַמע מיטאַמאָל דערשפירט: ס׳גייען די קינדער פאַרלוירן –
און שטילע תחינות האָבן געפלאָסן מיט קוים–פארשטיקטע טרערן.
און דעמאָלט האָט זיך באַוויזן אין שטעטל –
זי, די פרוי, די לעגענדע...

ס׳איז אַ טריבער אוועגט געווען, ווען זי איז אין שטעטל געקומען,
ס׳האָט קיינער נישט געוואוסט פון וואַנען זי האָט זיך גענומען.
אָבער ס׳האָבן באַלד אַלע וועגט געהאַט אויערן:
אַ פרוי, אַ מלומדת געקומען, וואונדער איבער וואונדער: –
ראַטעווען יידישע מיידלעך, וואָס גייען פאַרלוירן.
צו דעם וועקן דעם יידישן שטאָלץ ביי יידישע קינדער.

ס׳איז די ווייבער–שול געווען פול געפאַקט.
און די וועלטער האָבן געטריפט פון איר מויל:
אז ס׳וועלקן די בלעטער, זיינען די שטאַמען אָפּגעהאַקט" – – –
דאָ האָט זי וויך געשטראָפט, דאָ האָט זי געדונערט מיט גרויל;
האָבן ווייבער זיך צעווייגט אויס התפעלות:
"ס׳טייטש, זי האט דאָך זיי פון מויל אַרויסגענומען דאָס אַלעס –
די קינדער – זיי זיינען פארפרעמדט פון ג–ט און טאַטע–מאַמע;
אַז ס׳וועלקן די בלעטער, זיינען ווירבלדיק די שטאַמען".

צומאָרגנס, אין מיטן העלן טאָג, האָבן טאַטעס די געוועלבער פאַרקלאַפט
און פאַרשעמטע געדרופן אויף דער שנעל אַן אסיפה:
זיי, יידן חסידים, תלמידי חכמים האָבן זיך נישט געכאַפט
וואָס אַ יידישע פרוי האָט דערזען: ס׳איז די צייט פון אַ שריפה!

צומאָרגנס פון יענעם טאָג, האָט מען אַ שטיבל געטומען –
מיט אייגענע הענט, בענק פון בריטער צונויפגעשלאָגן;
ס׳זיינען זיך יידישע מיידלעך אין "בית יעקב" צונויפגעקומען,
און פון דאַנען האָט זיך ג–ט׳ס קול אין יידישע שטיבער צעטראָגן.

ס׳איז געווען אין יענע טעג אַ טייל פון גרויסן חלום:
און די פרוי איז געווען שרה שענירער, עליה השלום.


Reflections of
Bais Yaakov

REFLECTIONS OF BAIS YAAKOV

Reprinted from "To Vanquish the Dragon" with permission from the author, Mrs. Pearl Benisch

In her book "To Vanquish the Dragon," Mrs. Pearl Benisch recounts her memoirs of World War Two, especially focusing upon the heroism and bravery of the talmidos of Sara Schenierer. Their loyalty to Torah in the darkest conditions and their acts of chessed during those hellish years shone out in a world of madness and evil.

In the opening chapters, she describes Krakow, where she grew up, right before the outbreak of the war. Here she gives us a glimpse of the activities of BNOS, (Bnos Agudas Yisroel Youth groups) a branch of Bais Yaakov, that provided extra-curricular and chinuch activities for the girls younger than Seminary age. Also, in all the towns where Bais Yaakov had been established, BNOS provided extra-curricular activities and extra shiurim.



IT WAS THURSDAY EVENING IN KRAKOW, the last day of August, 1939. The heat in the house was unbearable. Even opening the windows wide brought no relief; it was as stiflingly humid out side as inside. The lovely tree across from my window stood still, rigid, its branches pinned by the heavy air as if caught in a vise. Even its leaves were motionless, resigned to the gloom of the moment. They typified the entire atmosphere: heavy, uneasy, suffocating. No air.

They were calling up the reserves. The inevitable was upon us, but it had come sooner than we had expected. We had not believed that Hitler would dare to attack Poland. Not now, we thought naively, not after the Allies' assurances. But today the very air exuded worry and uncertainty as the threat of war hung over Poland. Suddenly we were struck by the seriousness of the situation.

The city was engulfed in panic. People ran frantically to and fro, trying to unite their families-come what may, let's not be separated! Children and young people were returning from vacation and summer camp to join their parents. We too had to cut short our vacation, urged by our concerned parents to rush home at once. We did so reluctantly, not recognizing the urgency of the moment.

We were young and carefree, and had spent the last two months in a different world. Every summer we girls organized a Bnos camp in the mountains. This year we had rented several huts in a small village in the Carpathian region. What freedom we had enjoyed in the bosom of nature, taking in the breathtaking scenery all around, breathing the fresh, crisp air, quenching our thirst with water from an icy spring that poured forth and rushed down the stony hill, so eager to give of itself.

We arose each day at daybreak to pray together with awakening nature, filled with the awe of its great Maker. Then, after breakfast, our day of study began: delving into Tanach and the teachings of our Geonim and the great masters of musar. Those summers taught us to appreciate the people around us, to admire their values, to respect their differences. We learned how to live and how to give; how to love God and enjoy the beautiful world He created.

One night we set out early for the long hike to see sunrise at the summit of Mt. Tatra, highest of the Carpathians. Hours passed as we climbed the mountain, ever rising, fighting the odds. Every successful ascent brought the joy of accomplishment, the pride of man conquering nature. The higher we climbed the more our spirits soared, until, thrilled with expectation, we reached the summit in time for sunrise. There we stood, taut, anticipating the wonder of a new day being born. We watched light fighting darkness, the sun struggling through the night to come alive. First a little ray of light pierced the gloom, then it grew into a hemisphere of fire spreading purple-crimson over the horizon. It grew and grew, until the Queen of Light in her full golden splendor burst from the womb of darkness, heralding the advent of a new day, a better day.

Just as that sunrise was young and full of enthusiasm, so were we. Fighting the darkness of the world with the light of Torah. Hoping for the great day of peace, when hate and bigotry would turn into love. Waiting for a new day to emerge from the darkness. Trusting that the awareness of God would embrace the entire world and wrap it in His eternal light.

We burst into song, one tune after another. Together with King David, we sang the sweet melodies of his Psalms. Songs of praise: "How great, how mighty are you, God! The Heavens proclaim Your glory." Songs of joy: "The earth is filled with Your kindness." And songs of heart-rending prayer: "Whence will salvation come?" we asked. "From God, the Creator of heaven and earth," we answered. It seemed as if the whole universe were joining us, echoing the song of trust and hope: "God will cast His light on us as surely as the brightness of day illuminates the darkness of the night."

This was my first summer as a head counselor in the camp. I reviewed my every mistake, full of ideas and plans of how to improve things the next time around. But the next time never came. Instead, we plunged straight from the world of dreams and hopes into the harsh reality of life.

* * *

As we approached the train station we could see that it was mobbed, the ticket offices besieged by anxious travelers. The waiting rooms were packed with people sitting on benches, on their luggage, and on the floor, waiting for trains that were hours late, their nerves frayed by the unbearable tension. Children wailed and adults screamed at each other at the slightest provocation. At long last, a train arrived. People raced from all directions, leapfrogging each other, wielding elbows, howling uncontrollably. The train, overcrowded to begin with, was a horror now. People hung from the windows, grasped door handles, clung to parts of the locomotive. Children lost their parents; parents lost their children. Crying. Screaming. A nightmare.

At last, I reached home. It was good to be with my family again, to feel secure under my own roof after the ordeal of the trip.

But now I mused: times were very hard for us Jews even before the threat of war arose; how much harsher might the future now become? Anti-Semitism was on the rise. Poles wouldn't hire Jews, and powerful propaganda urged them to boycott Jewish stores and Jewish-made merchandise. "*Swoj do swego po swoje*" was the slogan: "You to yours for yours." Jewish stores were picketed, and we were shunned in every possible way. New Polish cooperatives mushroomed to accommodate the customers. Riots in the universities against Jewish students were frequent, even

though a strict admission quota kept our numbers to a minimum. The N.D.K., a Polish youth organization, threatened Jews at every possible occasion. Kosher slaughter of cattle had been outlawed several years earlier, so Jews in the large cities were deprived of beef. (In the villages slaughtering went on in secret, but even when such meat was brought into town we didn't buy it, not being sure of its kashrus.) We were still able, though, to enjoy poultry, as we were permitted to shecht chickens-for the present. Whatever the future holds for us, I thought with dismay, it will not be "good for the Jews." Even in my worst dreams, however, I never imagined how gruesome it would be.

* * *

I was jolted from my reverie by someone outside calling "Petchka," my nickname. I ran to the window and saw Feiga Zelicka, my teacher and friend. I was shocked to see her here. She lived in Lodz, a large industrial city, hundreds of miles away from Krakow.

"Why are you still here?" I asked, alarmed. "I was sure you were in Lodz already. What's wrong?"

"I'm on my way back from the railroad station," she answered, her voice strained and tired. "I finally sent the last few girls off home, thank God. It wasn't easy, you know. Back and forth to the station all last night and all day today. But I had to make sure all the girls boarded the trains safely."

I contemplated her drawn face, her compassionate, tired eyes, and my heart sank.

"Why didn't you go home?" I asked. "One of the teachers here would have taken the girls to the station."

A smile spread across her face. "Do you really think I could have done that? Would I leave before I saw the last girl safely off on her way home?"

Knowing the answer already as I did, I was embarrassed for having asked.

"I'll go tomorrow, God willing. I'm too tired now," she added.

I pressed: "Is there still a train to Lodz tonight?"

"Yes," Feiga admitted, "but I didn't pack. I've got much still to do, and I'm tired."

"Feiga, go tonight." I was firm. "Who knows what will happen tomorrow? I'll help you pack and we'll make it in time. Let's hurry."

I gave her no chance to argue. I rounded up a few sacks and some packing materials and joined Feiga outside. Just a block away was the Beth Jacob Seminary where she taught and lived.

Here it was. The sign still said Stanislava 10. But was this dark, abandoned building the Beth Jacob Seminary? It had always been filled with the joy and laughter of throngs of bustling girls. The windows, flooded with light, had carried the sounds of study and prayer, of music and song, into the street. Now the drab structure stared at me terrifyingly with its dark windows like empty eye sockets.

Stanislava 10 had housed a unique institution, the first and only Beth Jacob Teachers' Seminary in all of Eastern Europe. Founded by Frau Sarah Schenirer twenty years earlier, the Beth Jacob system started with five girls and grew into a movement of more than 25,000 students, with schools throughout Poland. This new building in Krakow was Frau Schenirer's pride and the realization of her far-reaching dream — a residential teachers' seminary where young women learned and lived her ideals. Here they were prepared to go to the far corners of the world and spread the light

of Torah, of love of God and fellow man, the Messianic dream.

The Seminary was the nest where Frau Schenirer's fledglings grew wings and learned how to transcend pettiness. In time, they spread those wings and flew all over the world. In large cities, small towns, and tiny villages, these 16- and 17-year-old girls took up teaching positions and, despite their tender age, became not only teachers of children but respected leaders to whom the community turned for guidance and inspiration. But once the Beth Jacob teacher acquired the status of an exemplar, she had to meet the community's expectations. Those young teachers faced a hard life, and Frau Schenirer knew it. She was always there with a letter or a visit, crisscrossing Poland to bring the young pioneers her support and encouragement.

Now the nest stood desolate and dark. Where were the fledglings now? Whither had they been dispersed? Who knew if they would ever come back? A violent chill rocked my body that steamy summer evening as I faced the war's first destruction, caused by its mere threat.

We switched on the lights and went up to Feiga's room. All the doors were open; the piles of debris everywhere attested to the panic in which the girls had left. I gazed at my friend. She had spent a long, hard day coping with the pressure of her responsibilities for her girls, and the strain showed on her tired face.

No time for reflection or pity, I ordered myself: we have to get to work. Feiga gathered her belongings and packed them neatly into her suitcases; I stuffed her bedding into the sacks I had brought, compressed it with all my strength, and tied the bundle with some string. We were ready.

"It wasn't as bad as you thought," I said.

Feiga nodded gratefully. "I'm such a shlemazel today — I would never have made it without you. How can I ever repay you?"

We dragged the bundles and suitcases downstairs and I looked for a coach. That was no easy matter: they were all busy today. Finally, we hailed a horse and buggy driven by a congenial man who took us to the station. There the chaos was even worse than it had been the previous day. Strenuously we forced our way through the screaming crowd.

The train to Lodz finally arrived, hours late. The mob surged forward, people stepping over each other and elbowing their way toward the train. It stopped, but the cars were full and the conductors refused to open the doors. Quickly I studied the train.

"The windows are open, Feiga!" I cried. "Climb in!" I helped her clamber up the wall of the car, and an anonymous pair of hands pulled her inside. After her came the bundles and luggage. By this time, people were crammed into all the windows. I lost sight of Feiga, but I could still hear her calling me.

"How will I ever repay you? How will I ever...? How...?"

The scene was a jumble of people and parcels, squeezed into an unrecognizable mass, running with sweat and tears — tears of parting, of worry, of uncertainty: will we ever meet again?

The conductor sounded a long, startling blast of the whistle. The locomotive shot out puffs of thick, black smoke, and the train began to move. Slowly, slowly the wheels turned, as if too heavy to move. Now the train gathered speed. I followed it until I could no longer; then it was gone...

* * *

[AUTHOR'S NOTE:] The building at Stanislava 10 had been erected through the indefatigable efforts of Dr. Shmuel (Leo) Deutschlander, a rare personality: scholar, educator, writer, and poet. His Tehillim shiur was a scholarly masterpiece, every time presented with a poetic flair that captured the minds and hearts of his students. If this were not enough, he was also a capable fundraiser. The building was the product of his unstinting efforts for, and limitless devotion to, Beth Jacob.

However, his lasting gift was the instrumental role he played in materializing and developing Frau Schenirer's revolutionary idea of Torah education for girls into a powerful world wide Beth Jacob movement.

Dr. Deutschlander found great help, both as an educator and as a fundraiser, in the person of a young professor, Dr. Judith Rosenbaum. He persuaded this sophisticated young lady to leave the comfort of her Frankfurt home and the distinguished circle of her family, and come to a primitive Polish Carpathian village to help Sarah Schenirer realize her dream.

In this village, in 1925, Dr. Deutschlander had organized the first Beth Jacob Summer Seminary, where a rigorous two-month program taught forty-nine girls to become pioneers, spreading their new knowledge and enthusiasm to girls all over Poland. Young Dr. Rosenbaum was to join the staff not only of this intensive summer course but also of the newly-established Beth Jacob Seminary in Krakow.

The going was rough for the "Fräulein Doktor," as she was lovingly called. "I was inexperienced in teaching," she remembers, "and needed all night to prepare the lessons for those girls, to satisfy their intelligence and answer their bright questions. After a few days, I approached Frau Schenirer, ready to give up a task too difficult for me.

"'Stay another day or two,' Frau Schenirer urged me. And I stayed; not for a day or two, but for five years, because I realized that in this Carpathian village history was being made, and I wanted to be part of it."

She met the challenge, and the joy. She became not only an influential teacher; her wisdom and force of personality made her a most beloved mentor. The girls absorbed her unique enthusiasm for Torah along with her inspiring lectures, and went on to become the pillars of the Beth Jacob movement, spreading its ideals to every corner of Poland.

After five years, Dr. Rosenbaum (now Dr. Grunfeld) had to leave Poland, but she remained ever ready with advice, love, and encouragement for her Beth Jacob girls. Her support for and involvement in Beth Jacob remained as strong as ever.

If Dr. Deutschlander was the spine and substance of Beth Jacob, Frau Schenirer was its emblem and soul. She was the very embodiment of everything she taught us. She radiated love. Her dark eyes, like two black diamonds, burned with compassion and joy. Hers was the joy of worshiping Hashem, of absorbing all the beauty and goodness in life, of boundlessly giving her time, her life, her possessions, herself. She gave to her children, to her people, to every human being. She inspired her pupils with her personality, and her personal example taught them the unique joy of giving.



BNOS, AN OUTGROWTH of the Beth Jacob movement, was an extension of its educational program. Through it, the Beth Jacob ideals were translated into everyday reality. It was a strong, lively organization;

its Krakow chapter embraced five hundred members who were active in all areas of Jewish community life.

Bnos provided its members with a rich and varied program of Judaic studies to satisfy the ever-growing thirst for knowledge in those times. From 7:00 to 10:00 in the evening, one could find numerous groups engrossed in the study of Tanach, musar, and other subjects of Jewish thought. Other members were working on committees created to fill the needs of the organization and the community.

There was a very active Tzedakah Ferband to dispense charity and kindness, a social committee that planned Bnos events, an editorial staff publishing a monthly magazine, and a fundraising committee to provide for the Bnos summer camp.

As a branch of Agudath Israel, Bnos participated in many of the Agudah's activities. In turn, the Agudah sponsored Bnos projects, such as "Ohel Sarah," a girls' "hachsharah" program (preparation for aliyah to Eretz Yisrael).

One of the Agudah's last accomplishments for Bnos was Chavath Shmuel, a summer seminary organized by Rabbi Eliezer Gershon Friedensohn, patron of Bnos and editor of the Beth Jacob Journal. In 1938, the first instructors' course for Bnos leaders took place in Ruda Pabianicka near Lodz. It was attended by delegates from all over Poland; I was fortunate enough to be one of them. Mrs. Tzila Orlean, a lecturer in the seminary, was also the leader of this rich intensive course. The most prominent educators and Agudah leaders contributed to the success of this program. Unfortunately, this promising project was repeated only once, in the summer of 1939. Then-like everything else-it was brutally cut off.

* * *

Even under the circumstances of invasion, we gave up neither our activities nor our social commitments; we continued to pursue both in small groups that met in private homes. Renia Finkelstein's home became the center of Bnos activities. She had her own room (a rarity in Poland at the time), which became our office, where we met, made decisions, and planned our social and relief work. Even before the war, Renia had been in charge of the Bnos Tzedakah Ferband, which was comprised of two girls from each Bnos group. Sad to say, the Jews' grim economic circumstances even then kept the Ferband very busy. Those teenagers collected and delivered forty meals every day to Jewish patients in various non-Jewish hospitals in Krakow, bringing joy and encouragement to the sick. Others went from door to door collecting food-fruit, bread, bits of challah, anything edible-which they then wrapped up and delivered to the needy.

One of the young Ferband activists, a member of the group led by Balka Grossfeld, was 16-year-old Pesia Hornung. One day I met her racing down the street in the direction of a flower shop, a parcel of food in one hand and a bag of fruit in the other.

"Where are you running?" I asked her. "And how can you manage to carry all that stuff?"

She smiled. "I'm managing, as you see. I'm on my way to see a sick girl in Lazarza Hospital, and I thought I'd bring her some flowers to lift her spirits." Lazarza Hospital was on Koppernika Street, all the way across town.

In the evening the same girl returned to the same hospital on Koppernika Street to bring her patient fresh orange juice, because this was the only way she would take her medication.



On a summer seminary camp in the thirties (standing, l. to r.): Toska Neiman, Bashah Leiser, Ruchka Schanzer; (seated) Feiga Zelicka (l.), Rachel Luria (r.).



The first graduating class of Beth Jacob summer seminary, 1930: Dr. Judith Rosenbaum (Grunfeld) (ctr. row, 3rd from r.) was the mentor and spiritual leader of this group that grew to become the pillars of the Bais Yaakov movement.



A group of Beth Jacob teachers in the Bnos summer camp (seated, l. to r.): Hanka (Grossfeld) Biegun, Ida Bauminger, Gittel (Teitelbaum) Pass; (standing) Frymcia Zuckerbrodt, Esther Teitelbaum.

Now, with the war on, the Ferband became even busier, mobilizing all Bnos members to meet the challenge.

Several classes for small groups were conducted during the week, and lectures were held on Shabbos. We were fortunate to have Mrs. Tzila Orlean to teach us Tehillim. She described to us the beautiful landscapes of Eretz Yisrael-its mountains, its valleys, and especially the breathtaking Yam Kinneret, the harp-shaped Sea of Galilee, its blue-green water embraced by rugged hills. She told of King David's pain and suffering, at the same time conveying his faith, his hope, and his triumphs. Mrs. Orlean's lessons were sources of strength and support for us.

Once a week we studied Chumash with Frau Biegun, one of the intellectual pillars of the Seminary and a matchless teacher of Chumash and Jewish thought. It was a privilege just to listen to her lectures as her extraordinary mind probed the depths of whatever subject she chose. She insisted that we follow her thoughts, peppered us with stimulating questions, and refused to settle for answers that fell short of her expectations. We loved those discourses and they left an everlasting impression on us.

We had the additional privilege of receiving occasional essays on current affairs by Herr Orlean (brother-in-law of Tzila Orlean), dean of the Beth Jacob Seminary, who, together with his family, had managed to return to his hometown of Warsaw. Even now, his messages were as timely, encouraging, and supportive as ever. They filled us with strength and inspiration, and we looked forward impatiently to receiving them. However, they had to be sent in secret to avoid Nazi interference. As time passed, this channel of communications became increasingly uncertain and dangerous. Despite all of Herr Orlean's efforts-and he tried everything-the essays came less and less frequently, until they stopped altogether.

Thus, for an all-too-brief period of time, we found shelter and sustenance in these great people, who radiated strength and support, faith and hope.



Among the many episodes which showed the heroism of Bais Yaakov girls in "To Vanquish the Dragon", Mrs. Benisch recounts how she met Tzila Orlean in Birkenau and how together with her talmida, Tillie Rinder , helped save as many people as she possibly could. We recount here three episodes from the book:

Suddenly we heard our first names called out, this time in a friendly, unofficial way. We looked around and recognized Tzila Orlean. Yes, this was the "Tzila" of whom we had heard so much in Plashow. With her was Tillie, a beautiful blonde teenager, Tzila's student and our friend, with whom we used to spend summers in camp. Behind Tillie was Toni Katz of Teshin. They had heard that a transport had arrived from Krakow and came to see what they might do for us.

"Good Shabbos, girls," Tzila called as she approached, her unique, soft smile spread across that bright face. "Good Shabbos," she repeated, those two words reflecting all her joy upon seeing us alive.

"Good Shabbos." How do those two words sound in front of a towering chimney belching fire and clouds of black smoke? How do they sound when said amidst the stench of burning human flesh?

But it was Shabbos in the whole world, including this living inferno. Even here, God, it was Your holy Shabbos, and Your children remembered it in the authentic "shamor v'zachor" way. The candles Tzila lit every Friday eve dispelled

the darkness of the night and reminded the inmates that Shabbos had come to Birkenau. Even in its hell they kept Your commandments as much as possible, regardless of the sacrifice involved. "Good Shabbos,' Tzila said.

But what, I wondered was so good about Shabbos here? One glance at Tzila's face told me. It's good to see you alive. It's good to be alive, even inside this sack of skin and bones. It's good to stay human in this bestial world, It remains "Good Shabbos" as long as one feels hope and faith and the Divine spark inside.

I breathed freely and answered, "Good Shabbos."

* * *

As we marched back to the barracks, a little beam of sunlight tore through the chill and rain. Aunt Sabina, her friend Mrs. Rosenberg, and her friend's daughter Leah fell upon us, kissing, hugging, crying, and laughing with joy. Aunt Sabina thanked Rivkah, knowing the crucial role she had played in bringing her case to Tzila's attention. Nobody, however, knew how the rescue had been done, under the nose of Mengele, who had personally made the selection.

[NOTE:] Many years later, at a wedding in Israel, a young woman leaped at me and smothered me with hugs and kisses. Seeing that I did not recognize her, she cried, "I'm Leah Rosenberg! Don't you remember?" We soon became the center of attention, Leah retelling the story to a growing audience, I telling her about my Aunt Sabina, remarried and settled in Florida, and her two sons, who had survived and lived in New York. But about the miracle that saved them Leah could tell me no more than Sabina. What, in fact, had happened that day? Tzila was loathe to discuss it. But one day, visiting her, I insisted: "I must leave the story to posterity." She relented. Here is her story:

"When Rivkah told me about the twenty women who'd been selected, I saw no way to get even three of them out. The only way we'd ever saved people was before a selection. We'd hide the files of the sick before Mengele drew up the death roll. But once it was drawn up, he either put them on a transport going straight to the gas chamber or sent them to Block 25 to await their end. From there it was virtually impossible to get anyone out, especially if he'd been selected by Mengele himself. You couldn't even try.

"To make things worse, Mengele had visited the infirmary unexpectedly the day before, without any prior warning or hint, and had selected two of my cousins, who were sick in the infirmary, for the transport. So they were also in Block 25.

"My conscience gave me no rest. After all, I'd saved Pesa from Block 25. Maybe there was something I could do, something I'd never tried before. My mind worked feverishly. The situation was very sensitive; most of the people there had been selected by Mengele himself. With whom could I intervene? Who would dare interfere with Mengele's orders? But I could accept no excuses. I looked out of the window; it was raining heavily. I saw Oberscharführer Dr. Klein walking back and forth in front of the infirmary, his eyes on Block 25. He must be in charge of the condemned, I thought. I marshaled all my wits and ran out to him.

"Herr Oberscharführer!' I called. 'Yesterday a couple of my patients who were already on the way to recovery were mistakenly included in the selection and sent to Block 25. Two of them are my cousins. Can you please release them?'

"I cannot do it; ich habe Angst — I am afraid,' he admitted. 'I'm new here, I must follow orders. Please leave me alone.'

"I went back to my work, but I couldn't rest. Dr. Klein was still out there in the rain, dripping, pacing back and forth. I knew that Klein was not yet as hardened as the others; it was worth another try. I ran out into the rain and stopped him. Encouraged by the way he had said 'please' to me, I pleaded my case again.

"Please, didn't I tell you to leave me alone?' For 'you' he used Sie, which you use in German when addressing someone as 'sir' or 'madam.' So he hadn't been entirely corrupted yet; he still treated us like human beings. I kept entreating him.

"Finally he screamed, 'Leave me alone!' Even so, I felt he was more afraid than angry. He still was not hardened to his position as a doctor in Auschwitz.

"Looking at things objectively, I could not press my point any further. But an inexplicable drive pushed me to act against common sense, against all logic, and against my very life.

"On the way back to the infirmary, I met our SS Aufseherin, the woman doctor in charge of all the hospital blocks. She had seen me talking to Dr. Klein. God put a thought in my mind: go ahead, take advantage of the situation, and whatever happens, happens. Trust God.

"Frau Oberscharführerin,' I addressed her, 'I just spoke to Dr. Klein and asked him to release a few girls from Block 25 who got there by mistake. Could you please arrange for their release?'

"Of course,' she said. 'I saw you speaking to Dr. Klein. Please follow me to the office.'

"She went up to Bronka, her secretary. 'Tzila will give you some numbers. Check them out and have them released on my orders.'

"Bronka did as told. First she struck out my cousins' numbers. Then I told her to cross out the names without numbers who had arrived on yesterday's transport. That would ensure your aunt's release. Bronka crossed off all these women and some others in between and sent the list to Block 25 for release. It was the largest group ever released from the Dead Block."

I could not believe my ears. Who, in the very bowels of Auschwitz, would dare to perform an act of such temerity under the very nose of the pacing Dr. Klein, who had just turned her down? Yet, Tzila had not flinched for a moment. She had put her life on the line to save others.

I still wonder: How, on the soil of Auschwitz, on the ashes of the crematoria, in the pits of human decay, could human great ness attain such incredible heights?

Tzila had answered my speechless astonishment thus:

"Many miracles happened to me in Auschwitz; this was one of them."

* * *

One time Tillie could not stand it anymore. Without telling even Tzila, she clambered up to the window of Block 25, forced it open, and distributed water and food. She did all this under the noses of the SS sentries. Angels are invisible.

"A student grows taller than the teacher," was Tzila's comment after hearing this story. And so it was. When both of them lay in the infirmary, delirious with typhus fever, one of their friends came by with some sugar water, euphemistically called "juice."

"Tzila, Tillie, have a cold drink." She handed the bottle first to Tzila, who drank thirstily and then gave the rest to Tillie.

"I don't need it," said Tillie. "You finish it, dear."

"Oh no," Tzila objected, her mind wandering in the grip of her illness.

"At least take another sip," Tillie urged. "I can't. If I begin, I won't be able to stop; I'll finish it all." Seeing that her mind was clearer than Tzila's, she finally accepted the cup — and hid it under the covers. An hour later, when the nurse came over, she asked her to give it to Tzila. Not realizing what she was doing, Tzila finished the water. Tillie had none; angels do not drink.

One day the Blockälteste of the Dead Block brought Tzila a scribbled note: "Come see me in Block 25." It was from her friend Pesa Sheroshewski, who had arrived in Auschwitz hungry and parched just a few days previously. When she had heard that Tzila was here she had come straight to the infirmary. The two friends embraced. Tzila did what she could to revive Pesa, then introduced her to Dr. Anna, who embarked on a long conversation with her. Suddenly Tzila saw what time it was, and broke in to warn Pesa, "Rush back to your block; you will be late for Appel!"

Since then she had not seen Pesa. And now this naive request, to "see her" in Block 25. How did one get in? And if one did, what would happen when the truck came by for pick-up? The SS men were under orders to haul away anyone found in side, no questions asked. Who would risk going there?

Tzila would. She put on her white coat and asked the Blockälteste to take her along.

The girl gaped at her in disbelief and tried to discourage her. "Do you know what you're doing, Tzila?"

But Tzila did know. The Blockälteste, aware that no argument would undermine Tzila's determination, silently led her the short distance from the infirmary to Block 25.

"Here we are," the Blockälteste announced. "I'll tell the watchmen that I have orders to let you in."

They crossed the threshold of death and found Pesa squeezed among the masses of condemned souls. Seeing her friend in this state, Tzila burst into tears.

"What are we going to do now?" she mourned. "How did you get in here?"

"An SS man caught me when I ran from you to the evening Appel," Pesa answered calmly. "I was late, as you feared I would be. Don't despair, just get me out of here."

"You're new in Auschwitz; you don't realize where you are. How can I get you out?"

"Don't waste time. Just go and do what you can; God will help you," Pesa answered with assurance. With that, the Blockalteste walked Tzila out of the block.

Tzila thought it over, praying for a miracle. How can I get Pesa out of the Dead Block? I've never heard of it being done before.

Returning to the infirmary, Tzila spoke to Dr. Anna. "Block 25 is packed to the brim, ready for extermination. Dr. Anna, help me save my friend!"

The Jewish physician, who had been impressed by Tzila's witty, intelligent friend, thought fast. "Ask the secretary to write up a request for a nurse for me. Tell her to use official stationery; I'll sign it. The rest is up to you. I wish you luck," she added.

A general request for a nurse, mentioning neither the name nor the whereabouts of the candidate, offered a very slim chance. Still, wasting no time, Tzila had the letter written and signed. As she ran back to Block 25 she whispered a prayer, her heart heavy with dread. What SS officer in his right Nazi mind would consider the

request of an inmate physician? Who would release a Jewish nurse without German authorization under any circumstances, let alone from the condemned block? Yet Tzila felt a flicker of hope — miracles sometimes happen.

There, at the entrance to the Dead Block, she approached the SS sentry, presented the letter, and, in her beautiful German, explained the matter. The infirmary was in dire need of a nurse, and one of the inmates of the block was a nurse mistakenly brought there; and she gave the Nazi Pesa's name and number.

He opened the heavy door and let her in, and that was half of the miracle. Now she prayed for the other half: to walk out of there with her friend.

Pesa Sheroshewski was saved, and became another powerful beacon of light in Birkenau, saving people from starvation, despair, and loss of faith.

[NOTE:] Pesa was one of the first to reach Eretz Yisrael and publicize the survivors' story, awakening the Jewish community there to the plight of the DPs. With her oratorical and literary talents, she inspired the Jews of Eretz Yisrael to work for the realization of the survivors' dream — to settle in the Holy Land.



Chavat Shmuel, 1938 (standing, far r., 2nd row): our leader, Tzila Neugreschel (Orlean); (3rd row, r.) Rozia Dym; I am in the top row, far right.

Rebbetzin Tzila Sorotzkin ע"ה

*R' Yosef Friedenson**
Translated and Adapted for Publication by Sorah Shapiro

Rebbetzin Tzila Sorotzkin, the wife of Hagaon Rav Elchonon Sorotzkin zt"l, was recently *niftar* in Yerushalayim. She was an elderly lady, well into her eighties at the time of her passing. I do not know precisely how old she was; I only know that when I was still in *cheder* Tzila Orlean was already widely known in Poland. She was a famous luminary of the Bais Yaakov Seminary in Cracow, one of the first and most distinguished students of Sara Schenirer, a"h. She was well educated; a deep thinker, and a leading mentor of hundreds of young teachers in Poland. She was part and parcel of the soul and the spirit of the glorious Beis Yaakov movement.

I was shattered at the news of her passing. I have always looked upon her as the Heroine of Auschwitz. Rebbetzin Sorotzkin's many meritorious deeds included her saving my wife's life. She also played a major role in helping me survive the bitter years of the Holocaust, and we were in no way the only people she saved in this way. I feel I have every right to describe her as a great heroine, not only because of the legendary accounts I heard from others, but also as a result of incidents I witnessed with my own eyes or even experienced myself.

First Encounter in Birkenau

I shall never forget my first encounter with the Rebbetzin (then Mrs. Tzila Orlean) in the women's infirmary in Birkenau. It was a Shabbos afternoon, and I and some other Auschwitz slave laborers were paving the road near the infirmary. A *heimisher Yid* approached me and said that he had heard that inside the infirmary, there's an inmate named Orlean, who could be the daughter or sister of Reb Yehuda Leib Orlean[1] and we should seek her out.

To me his words seemed a godsend. Contacting an Orlean was a stratagem that could lead to uncovering the whereabouts of my wife, whom the Nazis separated from me on our arrival in Auschwitz. (In fact, finding my spouse was my primary purpose for requesting that the barrack supervisor assign me to work in this area.)



Krakow, 1935. Chana Grosfeld (l.); Tzila Neugreschel (Orlean) (r.)

I began checking one infirmary barrack after another. Everyone knew the name Orlean, but no one knew where she could be found. Gathering courage, I marched into the hospital's main office. I no sooner crossed the threshold when a tall, stately woman blocked my path, shouting "'Raus! Vas suchen sie hier?" (Get out! What are you looking for here?)

"I'm looking for Mrs. Orlean," I answered meekly.



Herr Orlean, the director of the Krakow Seminary. The photo was sent to Tzila Orlean in Auschwitz.

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[1] Rabbi Orlean, a prolific writer, was the educational director of the Bais Yaakov Seminary, and - along with Sarah Schenirer - the spiritual pillar of the Bais Yaakov movement. Tzila had been married to his brother, who had perished before the events recounted here.

On hearing the name Orlean, she mellowed into contrition. "You'd better go back to work," she said with some deference. "You're not allowed to be here. Just tell me where you work. I'll find her and send her to your group."

About half an hour later a young lady strode over to us and said, "My name is Orlean. Is someone looking for me?"

"Yes," I answered. "I am. My name is Friedenson."

"Friedenson!" she exclaimed. "From Lodz? There's a Friedenson here, and I didn't know about it? How can it be?"

"Yes," I answered. "I'm the son of Reb Eliezer Gershon Friedenson. You should know me. You were at our house for a Bais Yaakov conference in Lodz. It was about eight or nine years ago."

"Of course I remember your house. And also your mother and two young boys. Are you one of those boys?"

"Yes," I said, "but I'm not a young boy anymore. I'm already married. I was brought here with my wife."

"Have you seen her?" she asked.

"How can I see her? I'm not allowed to leave this base. I don't know if there was a *selektion* of the women when we arrived, or where she might be now. All I know is that the women who were brought from Starochovitz are in Block 25."

"Block 25?" she paused to reflect. There was a time when Block 25 had been the last stop before the gas chambers. "I know the block supervisor. She's a shrew! But wait, I have an idea!"

Turning on her heels, she disappeared. Two minutes later, she returned, flaunting a piece of paper. "I accomplished something," she proclaimed proudly. "I told the head secretary that I must escort someone from Block 25 to the infirmary. Here's the pass. If your wife is in Block 25, I will bring her here."

It didn't take long, and Rebbetzin Tzila, presenting the pass, brought my wife to the infirmary for "treatment." When I saw her the next day I asked her if she hadn't perhaps jeopardized her job ... and maybe even her life ... to obtain my wife under false pretenses. I shall never forget her answer: "Here in the camp we are constantly being beaten and punished for no sin. Should I then be afraid of being penalized for doing a *mitzva*?"

For that favor - and, needless to say, for all the others - for proving to me that my wife was still alive, I have remained grateful all my life. During the next six months, Rebbetzin Tzila provided my wife with clothing, medical care and moral support She brought her into the fold of Bais Yaakov students who worked under her supervision at the infirmary.

But this is not the main focus of my essay. What I want to stress is how the Rebbetzin also cared for complete strangers, people with whom she had no connection.

Promoting Pikuach Nefesh

After she had helped me find my wife, she asked if I would be returning the next day. I said I didn't know; it depended on the barrack *kapo*.

"Try to come," she said. "Tomorrow is Sunday, and the Germans won't be here. There'll be lots of food, enough for you and whomever you wish to bring. You could use a nourishing soup."

It was predestined that my *kapo* sent me back there the next day. As Rebbetzin Tzila had recommended, I brought a guest, a *Chassidisher* young man, who had come from Lodz only a few days earlier and whose piety had made a strong impression on me. All skin and bones, he struck me as a deserving candidate for some nourishing food.

Rebbetzin Tzila was waiting at the barrack door. Lunchtime, she brought us two brimming bowls of boiling, freshly made soup. I'm not ashamed to say that I was carried away with joy by the mere sight of the hearty broth, but my friend was beside himself with anguish. "Do you see what's swimming around in this soup?" he asked apprehensively. "It's *treife* meat! I'm not going to eat this! It's not for me! I overcame the temptation in the ghetto until now, and I'm still living..."

His words brought *Rebbetzin* Tzila to tears. "You don't want to eat?" she cried. "Have you forgotten where you are? You're in Auschwitz, in the concentration camp, and this soup can keep you alive. You're not allowed to say you won't eat. It's *pikuach nefesh*, and the Torah says *'u'vocharto ba'chaim* - choose life.' Eat, eat! You must eat! It's a *mitzva* to eat! A number of *tzaddikim* here said so. There are many religious Jews here who never ate in anyone's house, but here in the camp they eat everything... It's a *mitzva* to eat! Over there [pointing to a neighboring barrack near the fence] is the Novominsker Rebbe from Warsaw. On your way out, stop in to see him. He'll tell you whether or not it's a *mitzva* to eat!"

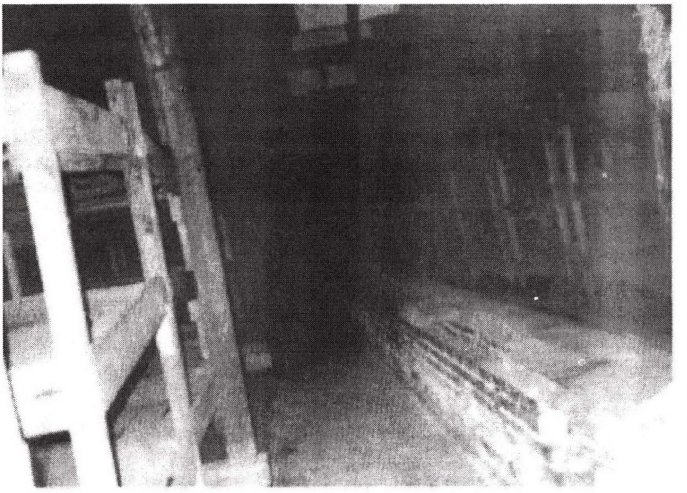
I can't recall everything Rebbetzin Tzila said in her long *drasha* about *pikuach nefesh*, but I do remember how delighted she was when my friend took spoon in hand and began to eat. She waited until he finished, then handed him a piece of bread, saying, "I had this for you when I saw you, but I withheld it. I knew if I gave it to you, you wouldn't eat the soup.

Now that I've convinced you to eat the soup, take this also, and may it be to your good health! Remember, in Auschwitz you can't afford to be overly righteous!"

Inhumane Conditions, The Human Touch

Twice again I was privileged to cross paths with Rebbetzin Tzila in Auschwitz. On both occasions, she helped several of us through serious difficulties. Shortly after that, I lost my work assignment in the women's camps, and I lost contact with both her and my wife, until after the war.

After the liberation, when I was reunited with my wife, I heard from her and from others who were close with her for many months in Auschwitz, numerous accounts of her magnanimous deeds - how from her infirmary barrack she organized a legion of Bais Yaakov girls to care for the weak and sick, and to fortify their own faith with lighting Shabbos and Chanuka candles, *davening* whenever possible, and so on.



The inside of our barracks at Auschwitz. Along either wall are the three-tiered bunks. Running down the center is the brick oven that was never fired.

A virtual spiritual beacon of Bais Yaakov, Rebbetzin Tzila felt a sacred responsibility to nurture the "children of Sarah Schenirer." She thirsted to take newly arrived Bais Yaakov Students under her wing, to set their hearts to rest, and, primarily, to assure they remain steadfast in their ancestral faith. To keep their moral fiber intact, to retain their *mentschlichkeit*, not to become *farlagert* (tainted by the camp), as she was wont to say, presented a formidable task, as the appallingly squalid conditions tended to harden the hearts and pollute the speech. Sapped by starvation and frightened by the licking tongues of the crematoria, an inmate usually developed a savage self-centeredness which brought him to see and think only of himself (consistent with a statement of *Chazal*, that impoverishment *"ma'avir es ha'adam al daato v'al daas kono"* - causes a person to violate his own will and the Will of his Creator). Multiply that by famine, filth, foul odor, affliction, flogging, constant fear for one's life, and the proximity of the gas chambers.

Rebbetzin Sorotzkin however, never cringed before the challenge. She proclaimed that precisely there, in that hellish abyss, one must strive to intensify one's refinement, sensitivity and Jewishness. Under her guidance, the girls developed into models of virtue and modesty, smoothing the path of the suffering throughout those grueling years. In fact, many of the women and girls in the various camps had completed their "active duty" and graduated her "basic training" in Auschwitz. They served time with her in Birkenau, where they were infused with her spirited and unflinching heroism. Later, when they were sent from Birkenau to Stutthof, Mauthausen, Bergen-Belsen and other women's camps, they went armed with the weaponry of her influence.

It is only partially true that Rebbetzin Sorotzkin accomplished so much because of her special status. Providence had so divined that she come to Auschwitz from Slovakia when she attempted to escape from Cracow in 1941. Auschwitz was not yet an extermination camp, but somewhat of a "respectable" concentration camp. With her advanced education and mastery of languages, she was engaged first as a nurse in the women's infirmary and then as secretary in the main office.

She saw this promotion as a calling to "*lemichya shelochani*" (sent by the Creator to provide for others), as she rededicated herself to her imperiled brothers and sisters. For hundreds, she was the embodiment of a "*malach moshia*".

I described earlier how she implored the Chassidic young man to consume the unkosher soup. How astonished I was later to learn that she herself

ate no *treif* during the entire length of her stay. One could rationalize that in the infirmary there was no dearth of food, and she could easily bypass the *treif*. But the truth was that even those who had food in Auschwitz always went hungry. Her determination to avoid *treif* was a formidable challenge requiring superhuman strength. An even greater feat, perhaps, was not expecting others to do the same.

The Breadth of Her Influence

Rebbetzin Sorotzkin's humanitarianism was not limited to singular or sporadic favors. Her work, as my wife has always told me, embodied a secret, coordinated and all-encompassing *chessed* mechanism that functioned as a lifeline to her grieving kinsmen.

How did she do it?

With the influence that came with her work assignment, she planted her students in strategic positions: in the kitchen, bread and clothing commissaries, and barrack management, as well as in "nursing." These placements served a dual purpose: to lighten the burdens of daily life for her assistants as well as for those they assisted. She taught the girls not to exploit their position for their own self-aggrandizement but to aspire to loftier ideals: to give of themselves and their resources ... shoes and warm garments for those who had to work outdoors in the bitter frost ... bread and soup for the weak... caring doctors for the sick… To run this 'organization' required herculean strength, which her assistants soon discovered she more than adequately possessed.

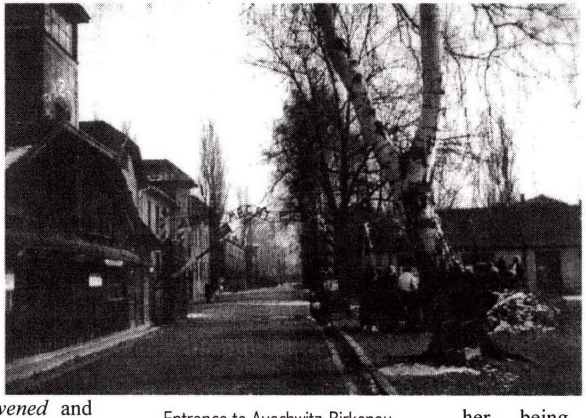
There is no question but that her boundless reach, extending indirectly even to the men, of which I was only one, is attributable to the high level of respect she earned at the top echelons of administration, particularly the infirmary's female Jewish and non-Jewish doctors.

That she could enlist the personnel to pursue an agenda unrelated to her work assignments was in itself a marvel, especially daily, since the officials were obviously not her compatriots. She lived in a world unto herself where she *davened* and did *mitzvos* as at home, never compromising her ideals. Even the most refined of the female doctors were not "her type." One could never imagine her commingling with them ... yet they somehow responded to her every request.

I can offer but one explanation, and that is the *pasuk*, "*Vera'u kol amei ha'aretz ki Sheim Hashem nikra alecha v'yaru mimeka* - that the nations will see that the Name of the Creator is called upon you, and they will be awestruck by you." It was no doubt her erudition and wisdom that not only impressed but enchanted the high-ranking women. But I am even more certain that it was her *yiras Shamayim*, modesty, majesty, and innately spiritual mien that inspired her beholders to yield to her drive to give shelter to the shattered.

Not only were the camp inmates touched, but also the Nazis. Once, mustering courage at a *selektion* in the infirmary (*selektions* there were frequent), she approached a Nazi and successfully convinced him to reduce his quota of girls and women. When later asked how she summoned the nerve, she explained that some thing in his face reflected a bit of *menschlichkeit*. Since unlike the others, he didn't shout, threaten, beat anyone or evoke fear, she simply appealed to his conscience by saying, "You know what will happen to the girls you are taking. You probably consider them unproductive and therefore worthless, but you are making a mistake. They are not as sick as they look. There's hope for all of them." With that she won her case, and he discontinued the *selektion*. (I heard this remarkable story from Mrs. Ita Moshkovitz from Boro Park who worked with her for a few years in Birkenau.)

There's another possibility as to why Rebbetzin Sorotzkin won so much respect from the doctors. When she was yet a nurse, prior to being appointed secretary, when the hospital was still a place for helping and curing the sick, the doctors and barrack officials gazed in wonder at her selfless devotion to the ill. That served as a forerunner to her being promoted to an administrative position. As



Entrance to Auschwitz-Birkenau

secretary, she found even more favor with the powers-that-be for extending her hand to the sick. (This account also warrants credibility, as the following narration from my wife will demonstrate.)

A few days before the liberation by the Soviets, a report spread that the Nazis had fled. They were no more to be seen in the watchtowers, barracks, mess hall or other places where they would make their daily appearance.



"Fresh Air School" at Rabka
Cilla Orlean (Neugroschel), at far left, giving a shiur. Judith Rosenbaum is seated in the front row, fourth from right (wearing dark dress with white collar).

Stunned by the news, the frantic inmates scurried to the commissaries and food and clothing lockers to still their hunger for food and other necessities.

What did the Rebbetzin do at that moment? Since it occurred to her that when the mothers went to avail themselves of "*bizas* Auschwitz" (the spoils of Auschwitz), they must have left their offspring unattended, she enlisted a few helpers and rushed to the children's barrack. There they found the young ones alone and frightened, eyes transfixed with shock and grief, dirty and disheveled, an offensive stench from their clothes, wailing for their mothers. Rebbetzin Tzila and her crew rolled up their sleeves and plunged into washing, de-licing, disentangling and grooming every last child until the wee hours of the morning.[2]

A Belated Tribute

A number of years ago, on a visit to the home of Rabbi Elchonon and Rebbetzin Tzila Sorotzkin in Yerushalyim, I nonchalantly mentioned to the Rav that I would like to write about the Rebbetzin's *maasim tovim* and *niflaos* - her wondrous good deeds, but he discouraged me, saying, "Don't think it's because I'm such a *borei'ach min hakavod* (one who flees from honor). I personally, would take pleasure in having everyone know what a *tzaddeikes* my Rebbetzin is, but I know it would displease her. With all her good deeds, she feels remorse. She is still crying over the friends and students she lost. She feels she did very little. To write about her would only generate new suffering and pain. It's best not to."

But now that Rebbetzin Tzila and Reb Elchonon are in *Gan Eden*, I can be *mekayem* the *mitzva* of "*l'farseim osei mitzva* - to publicize those who do mitzvos." Likewise, I hope to give others an opportunity to do the same.

May her memory be a blessing.

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[2] It is a fact that in death-permeated Auschwitz, where thousands of children were gassed daily, there was a children's barrack with dozens of mothers and children, most of whom were obviously Jewish. Within a time frame of two years, the Nazis had so brutally murdered more than one and half million children, many from that very camp. Why did the Nazis find it expedient to maintain a children's barrack, yet for Jewish children? No one really knows.

TILLA RINDER–YAGEL

A tribute written by a friend of the nifteres, Mrs. R. Pinkusewitz from Antwerp.
Translated from the Hebrew Hamodia by T. Bornstein.



A full year has passed since you took leave of this world, Tilla, (5745) and yet how difficult it is to enunciate those words, "Tilla is no longer here". No longer will we see you. No longer will we hear your warm and heartfelt greeting that bore no evidence of your suffering even in your most trying times.

You left us Tilla, and we remain bereft, with a searing pain in our hearts and a deep longing for you to return and fill the void, the gaping hole that you created with your passing.

Your close family who are inconsolable, whom only Hashem can comfort, escorted you on your final journey. But they weren't the only ones. You were accompanied by all those who survived Auschwitz because of you. You were accompanied by all those whom you helped and cared for constantly. By the poverty stricken widow for whom you secured a tranquil life, arranging that her rent be paid on a steady basis. By the blind couple whose every need you took care of – providing them with all they required and devotedly helping them raise their child...

Everyone in Ramat Gan knew that the way to make Rabbanit Yagel happy was to provide her with *tzeddaka* money to distribute. She knew who was in dire need of the cash. She knew who needed a donation of used clothing. She always concerned herself with making sure that the yeshiva was clean. She insisted on setting the Shabbos table for the yeshiva *bachurim* every week and refused to entrust the honor to anyone else.

You humbly asked not to be eulogized, but – *HOW?* How can we conceal from the public, especially from the young generation, this magnificent portrait of an *aishes chayil*, a true woman of valor!?

Isn't it worthwhile that they learn from all the tales told of your greatness? How you kindly greeted and accepted every human being. How you warmly invited the poor into your

home. How you sensitively treated your cleaning lady. How you modestly conducted your life. How you naturally performed all your benevolent deeds despite the extraordinary *mesirus nefesh* they so often required.

To catch a glimpse of your greatness, it would be sufficient just to read what our dear friend Pesya Nashilski wrote about her meeting with you in Auschwitz. Your whole life was one long, continuous saga of kindness and magnanimity. Even in your last hours, you urgently asked that all those that you cared for in your lifetime, should not be forsaken and forgotten.

You were our source of pride. You were the paragon – the role model of a true Bais Yaakov student and member of Bnos Agudas Yisrael, from prewar Poland.

You and Esther Shtiglitz-Katz came from the town of Seshin to us, in the summer camp of Bnos in Krakow. Then, in the summer camp, we already caught a glimpse of the holy spark in your soul that shone through your pure, clear blue eyes. You were always so modest. You and the righteous Esther both later endangered your own lives to help others in Auschwitz. I myself and countless others owe our lives to you.

The two of you will meet up there in the higher world. All that you prepared and toiled for in your lifetime stands ready. "*Hane'ehavos vehane'imos bechayeihem uvemossom lo nifradu*"- the beloved and the pleasant ones, in their lifetime and in their death, were not parted. The goal of your lives was *Ahavas Yisrael*, unadulterated love for your fellow Jews, and the pleasure of *ruchniyus* is your reward.

You were but a young girl when *Hakodosh Baruch Hu* tested you with difficult *nisyonos*. Hashem granted you an important position in Auschwitz, and you used it to save other people's lives by risking your own. So many others stumbled, and in trying to save themselves resorted to lowly means.

We will never forget, dear Tilla, our first meeting in Auschwitz. We arrived at the camp on Friday, a weary group of friends, teachers, and counselors from Bnos. We stood before that new innovation of the "Angel of Death", the "sauna." You, the experienced old timers, knew that "sauna" meant "*selektzia*". And that meant that Dr. Mengele *yemach shemo vezichro* would be there, and with a flick of his thumb he would determine who would live and who would die. You knew that your dear friends and acquaintances would be arriving on these transports, and you risked your lives for us. You and Tzila Orlean-Sorotskin, immediately began to signal to us how to avoid falling into Mengele's trap. Suddenly we heard a soft, quiet whisper; we had no idea where it was coming from. *"Stand – Stand at the right!"* On that side you had "inside" people to help us.

It was a dreadful danger for you to approach the rows of newcomers in broad daylight, for it was strictly forbidden for old timers to converse with new arrivals. But you risked your lives to save us. And we, despite all the inconceivable pain and suffering we had endured until then, were infused with an intense, burning desire to live and merit to be reunited with our loved ones.

It was a clear, still day. Silence reigned. We stood in rows, each of us immersed in our own anguished thoughts. The moment of judgement was approaching. The moment that would bear the verdict - which of us young girls, wretched remainders of huge families, would survive? Would the sun still shine for us, or Heaven forbid...

And there I was standing pensively when I suddenly felt something being placed in my hand. Then, through the mists of my dark, morbid thoughts, a soft whisper penetrated, "Good Shabbos, Rivka!" By the time I grasped what was happening, my benefactor had disappeared.

It is impossible to forget the incredible *taam*, the comforting sensation of hearing that "Good Shabbos" blessing from a friend that I had not seen for many years, a student of Bnos like myself, who had not changed even in Auschwitz. She still carried, deeply implanted in her heart, the intense power and holiness of Shabbos. And with these sacred sparks, you tried to bolster our courage, raise our spirits and instill in our souls the hope of a better tomorrow.

You endangered your life, my beloved Tilla. You wanted us to see you, to show us that even in Auschwitz it is possible to remain alive if that is the *Ribbono shel Olam's* will. You wanted to encourage us that Hashem would not forsake us either.

You procured for us, your friends, a comb and a trifle of soap. Only those who experienced the *gehinnom* of the concentration camps can fathom what veritable treasures these were. It is so difficult to describe the overwhelming relief that those two small items wrought upon their recipients. The comb and soap were passed from hand to hand, eliciting showers of gratitude and blessings upon you, the noble soul who had acquired them for us.

You didn't view your good deeds as a favor, an account to be kept. You saw it as an *obligation* to help your friends. You endangered your life to save not only us adults but also scores of little children.

Your life was hanging on a hairsbreadth. Had anyone even caught a whiff of your activities, all would have been lost. But Hashem had other plans. He wanted you to live and do more good.

We too, were granted life. We have not forgotten and will never forget you, Tilla, and all the other selfless individuals who helped us in those difficult years. You helped us not only in Auschwitz itself, but also when we were sent out on the way, the sun beating mercilessly down on us, the hunger pangs gnawing at our empty stomachs. You and Tzila, *tibadel lechaim,* remembered to send along some bread to offer some respite on those forlorn paths.

Providence spared you to serve as proof, to demonstrate how much good a person can do on this world. Who can describe the *yiras Shamayim* so deeply ingrained in you? Who can describe your extraordinary *tznius* or your utter selflessness?

Your sister Feigush who was in a different camp recounts how upon hearing that a transport of girls had arrived from Auschwitz, rushed over and asked them: "Do you perhaps know my sister Tilla?"

"Tilla!" they exclaimed, "We have a *letter* for you from Tilla!" Tilla had hoped that they would meet her sister in the other camp and had sent along a letter to her. There were several torn pieces of paper, which they managed to piece together and amongst other things, the letter read:

> *"Dear Feigush, Remember our origins. Conduct yourself as befits a Jew. Help the elderly people. Help one another. Strengthen yourself as a Bas Yisrael. Strengthen yourself as a human being!"*

While she read the letter, all the girls stood around and wept. Feigush describes what a powerful impact this letter had. Bais Yaakov girls languishing in the concentration camp united under its influence. Although even before that, the *chinuch* of Bais Yaakov was firmly entrenched in them and emanated from their very beings, now they became even more determined in their convictions to remain firmly rooted in the *chinuch* they had received in their home. They fasted on Yom Kippur, even though they still had to do their usual backbreaking labor. After work, one of the girls who remembered the *tefillos* prayed out loud, and all the others repeated the verses after her and cried. On *Pesach* they didn't eat a morsel of *chametz*.

They arranged for as many potato peels as they could get their hands on, and what they still lacked, they supplemented with...hunger. In all the concentration camps, the *talmidos* of Bais Yaakov heroically conducted themselves in this manner.

Feigush told how her own life too was saved, thanks to Tilla's far-reaching influence. When she arrived at Bergen-Belsen, she met the one in charge of the block, a kapo from Auschwitz. This woman described what Tilla meant to everyone in Auschwitz and therefore declared that she would protect Feigush who was still a tender girl. And she helped save her life - all because of Tilla.

Yes, Tilla, if we were to tell the tale of your greatness, it would be a story with no end. Your mother-in-law *a"h* had three daughters of her own, but in her old age chose to stay with no one but you. You cared faithfully and tirelessly for her all those years with extraordinary patience. For an ailing *bachur* in yeshiva, you baked something special that was good for his health. And on your sickbed, when you had no strength left to even move your arm, you still instructed others how to distribute all the contributions brought to your house.

It is virtually impossible to describe in writing your extraordinary *aidelkeit*, your remarkably refined soul. In your last days when you were suffering terrible *yesurim*, your family wanted to order a nurse to care for you. And you answered: "Okay, you can call a nurse, but you must make sure that she takes the time to eat, and don't disturb her during her meal. These nurses work so hard..."

When your sister came to help you, feed you, or simply to sit with you and try to ease your pain and make you forget your difficult situation for a bit, you would often send her away from your bed and show her that in another bed lay a patient who needed water. And over there, another patient had to be fed... *Oy*, Tilla, *your* needs always came last!

You even forbade summoning doctors unless it was urgent. You claimed they had enough work, they were busy, and you weren't the only one in the world.

You were an unparalleled *baalas middos*. It was evident even in your youth. Your sister Feigush tells of your extraordinary goodness as a child even before the war.

In Auschwitz they called you the "White Angel," and indeed, throughout your life you couldn't tolerate any wrongdoing. You lived to ***be*** good and to ***do*** good.

Until your last moment you never troubled anyone for your own needs. It is symbolic, not coincidental, that your passing from this world was at a time when there would be almost no *shiva* to sit for you. It mirrored your life.

Your deeply-rooted, unwavering *emuna*, your profound understanding of the meaning of life and the meaning of death gave you the ability to accept the destiny that was decreed upon you.

I will never forget how I stood at the threshold of your house during the last few weeks of your life before your hospitalization. I saw how the pain seemed to have eased a bit, and as I swallowed the tears that threatened to engulf me, I reflected on the *passuk*; *"Oz vehadar levusha vatischak leyom..."* - your entire life was preparation for the *yom acharon*, for your final day.

All our heartfelt *tefillos* and supplications were to no avail. You left us Tilla, and we remain with aching hearts, but with hope that your memory will carry on and will never be forgotten.

לעילוי נשמת מרת רבקה יוכבד אלתר רפפורט הי"ד

בתו היחידה של כ"ק מרן האדמו"ר הביית ישראל זצוק"ל

L'ilui Nishmas Rivka Yocheved Alter-Rappaport, *Hy"d*, only daughter of the Bais Yisrael, *zy"a*

The Bais Yisrael's oldest child and only daughter was born in 5677/1917, amidst the turmoil of World War I. He named her Rivka Yocheved after his grandmother, mother of the Imrei Emes, *zt"l*. From her childhood, Rivka was known for her extraordinarily sharp mind. Her father personally supervised her *chinuch*, seeing to her *tznius* and *yiras shamayim*. When she grew older, he sent her to the Bais Yaakov Seminary in Krakow, where she soon became famous for her gifted talents and rare power of influence. Her countless acts of *chesed* became her trademark, one she later passed on to her own students, constantly imploring them to improve themselves in this area, which is the *midah* of Avraham Avinu. Not surprisingly, Rivka was considered one of the exceptional forces of the Bais Yaakov movement.

On the fourth of Nisan 5698/1938, she married Reb Aharon Hakohen Rappaport, *Hy"d*, son of the wealthy Reb Yisrael Yosef Rappaport, *zt"l*, of Bilitz, and one of the most outstanding students of Yeshivas Chachmei Lublin.

During World War II, desperate attempts were made to save her from the claws of the Nazis. She was successfully transferred from the Warsaw ghetto to the Vitel detention camp in France, but was later deported to Auschwitz, may Hashem avenge her blood.

After the war, survivors related astounding tales about her modesty, her devotion to help others even at the risk of her own life, and the strength of her *emunah* and *bitachon* that never left her even in the darkest moments.

Dr. Hillel Seidman, in the "Warsaw Ghetto Diaries," writes how he met her in the Shultz shop, a factory in the Warsaw ghetto where many Rabbanim and distinguished personalities found work so they could acquire a work card and hopefully avoid deportation.

" I was told that Rivka Alter-Rappaport worked in the shop's kitchen. Besides for the regular twelve-hour workday, she worked a few nights a week so she would not have to come in on Shabbos. She also worked one night for Yocheved Levin-Alter, sister of Reb Yitzchak Meir Levin and daughter-in-law of Reb Meir Alter, *Hy"d*, to free her from working on Shabbos as well.

" 'To me, it is clear,' she said. 'I don't work on Shabbos. What's the worst that might happen? Who says I must live? In any case, I will not sell the Shabbos.'

"Rabbanim would have surely allowed her to work on Shabbos, since saving one's life takes precedence over keeping Shabbos, but she wasn't one to ask."

MY FRIEND, RIVKA

IN THE CAMPS WITH THE DAUGHTER OF THE BAIS YISRAEL

by Gita Sternbuch
Adapted and translated, with permission,
by Y. L. Perkal

The author, Gita Sternbuch,(nee Eisenstadt) wife of Reb Eli Sternbuch, was a prominent Bais Yaakov teacher in her younger years. During the war, she led a Bais Yaakov group in the Warsaw ghetto. Not long before the Warsaw ghetto uprising (Pesach 5703/April 1943), Mrs. Sternbuch was among those who received South American passports from the Sternbuch family in Switzerland. At first, the Germans honored these papers, deeming their holders foreign nationals. They were not deported but detained in the Warsaw prison and then sent to a detention camp in Vitel, France. Here, hundreds of foreign nationals were held so they could be exchanged with German nationals in other countries. Since the camp was run by the Red Cross, conditions were much more humane than in the German concentration camps. In Vitel, Mrs. Sternbuch met her childhood friend, Rivka Alter-Rappaport, with whom she had attended Bais Yaakov in Warsaw and later, Bais Yaakov Seminary in Krakow. She too had been issued a South American passport. In April 1944, the Germans discovered that these passports were forged and had merely been distributed by the consul in Switzerland without valid backing. All the Jews in Vitel were sent to Auschwitz, but Mrs. Sternbuch saved herself at the last minute by hiding. In this article, she describes her friend, Rivka, who was deported, Hy"d.

Vitel Detention Camp, South France, Summer 1943

We are sitting, Rivka and I, in a blooming garden, talking. It is a hot summer day, the kind that dazes one's senses. Our broken hearts are swept away by this dream world of chirping birds, gurgling stream, and rustling leaves. We fall silent.

Suddenly, I ask, "Rivka, did you hear? The Poles who arrived today say that the Warsaw ghetto is burning. Smiling all over their cursed faces, they've been describing the tall columns of smoke and fire that are rising from the ghetto streets, accompanied by shots and explosions.

"What do you think, Rivka? What does this all mean? The ghetto is burning along with the people! Rivka, say something! Don't keep quiet. I know what your silence means. It often says more than a thousand words - but now I need a word from you, Rivka."

She remains silent and I am choking here in this "paradise." The scenic nature around us tries to convince us that the world is running as usual. But it's all a lie, a false illusion planted by a tumultuous world. For me there is only a mirror of hell in which I see but smoke and fire.

"Do you hear me, Rivka? They're burning, burning! Have you ever seen people burn, Rivka? Look around, Rivka. The trees, the flowers, even that cow over there in the field are so content. Why doesn't the world crumble into tohu vavohu? Why don't the waters cover the mountains and flood the world? Why doesn't the sky fall and shatter into thousands of pieces? Why doesn't the earth rise up and consume the false harmony? Why? Why?"

Rivka is silent. The truth is, I'm no longer waiting for her to answer. Her gaze is sunken, withdrawn. The fire of the ghetto burning in her soul is expressed in her silence.

It is a silence she received from her great father, the Bais Yisrael, *zt"l,* along with that special attentiveness to every sigh, every pain and every stifled tear. She didn't only inherit a gift for listening but more important, complete identification with everyone she meets.

Even in kindergarten, we would run to Rivka with a bloody knee and indignant tales of injustice. She never rebuked anyone; her presence alone drew out the best and finest in people.

It can only be that she inherited this strength from her holy ancestors, the Chiddushei Harim, Sfas Emes, Imrei Emes and Bais Yisrael, *z"l,* a strength that instilled in her young soul an extraordinary power of influencing others. She was raised with the inborn ability to feel another's burden. At an early age, she learned to bear within herself pain, anguish, and anxiety for others. She repressed her tears in a silence that soon became a silent shout. I believe that I was among those privileged to understand her silence. I could almost touch her fathomless pain that was never expressed even in one word.

*

A young couple approaches us - Reb Chaim Leibush Berglas and his wife, Alta. He is a famous student of the Lubliner Rav, Reb Meir Shapiro, *zt"l,* and she is one of the distinguished pupils of Sara Schenierer, *a"h.* She is holding a *sefer* (she was never without one).

"Listen," she bursts out. "I found the most beautiful thought expressed by Herr (Reb Yehuda Leib) Orlean. I must share it with you."

She notices our faces and stops talking.

"Alta," I say, "the Warsaw ghetto is burning, it's burning, Alta!"

Alta stands as if turned to stone, unable to utter a syllable. Rivka walks away without a word. Her shoulders are suddenly bent, her noble posture and erect walk have vanished. She needs to be by herself, to recite a prayer. She must gather her strength…we will all need it. She is our fountain of *bitachon* and unbroken faith, demonstrating Hashem's presence even when it is so dark around us and within us.

Her erect bearing has nothing to do with pride or culture. On the contrary, she was always embarrassed to surpass others. Having more actually pained her, whether it was an apple, a bar of chocolate or a piece of cake. She was always giving away everything she had. If she knew more than others (which was always the case), she would share her knowledge so everyone would be privy to it as well. So it had been in school and so it continued in seminary as well as in daily life.

I am reminded now of a childhood episode. During recess, before lessons, she would help the weaker students. Playfully, she would position herself behind the door and when asked why she did this, she would say, "I am embarrassed."

This expression remained with her, receiving entirely other dimensions later on in her life. As she matured and her personality unfolded, the childish embarrassment became her inner essence, a hidden, G-dly spark within her, bringing her to the highest level of humility, true self-effacement. This kind of humility does not express itself in pushing oneself into a corner, but steadfastly partaking in struggles for a true cause. Her magnetism and influence on people was astounding.

A small episode comes to mind. During our last days in the ghetto, I noticed that her hands were wounded and full of pus, a sight I found heartrending. Her hands had always mirrored her aristocratic roots.

"What happened to your hands?" I asked.
"It's nothing. It's the icy water that leaks from the frozen potatoes."

Rivka had the great privilege to peel potatoes in the Shultz shop for great Jews such as the Piasczene Rebbe, the Alexander Rebbe, and Reb Moshe Betzalel Alter, who all worked there, pounding nails as shoemakers.

"Rivka," I said, "When we survive this war, G-d willing, your hands will tell our stories better than a thousand words. You will hold them up with pride."

"No," she answered in a tranquil tone. "I believe that I will hide these hands because people will not want to be reminded…and I understand them, I understand them very well."

Dear Rivka, how right you were! How often did I, with great effort, hide my betrayed soul and bleeding heart from even my nearest and dearest? I feel that they don't want to know everything, they don't want to be bothered. I then try to remind myself of your words, Rivka, wanting - like you - to understand these people. It doesn't always work, Rivka, because time doesn't heal the wounds, they remain raw and burn like fire. We, survivors, live inside our outwardly invisible ghetto. We talk, but though our words might be the same as others, we mean different things. We don't see what others see. We even laugh together, but our laughter contains stifled sobs.

We remain prisoners of our experiences. You are often at my side, more tangible than someone actually standing next to me.

*

The long summer days drag by and the false harmony can no longer fool us. Like drunkards, we run around the camp looking for signs from "over there." Suddenly it all breaks apart around us.

An order from the German commandment: "All South American passports must be handed in."

We, the refugees, who have already lived through hell and were then miraculously brought here with the false Sternbuch passports, know very well what this means.

April 1944

Exactly a year after the Warsaw ghetto uprising, S.S. men from the *einsatzgruppen* appear at our doors. "Pack quickly and go down to the plaza in front of the hotel." From there we will be led to the waiting train. We, Dr. Hillel Seidman, my mother, *z"l*, and I sit in the room.

No one says anything. No one moves. No one packs. "Where to?" we ask each other. The word, "Auschwitz," fills the air until we feel we are choking. We sit unmoving.

Auschwitz - a concept beyond our understanding. One word that means the end, the end of life, the end of time, the end of the entire creation.

Suddenly, Rivka walks in. In a calm, steady voice she asks, "Do you want something to drink? I have freshly made tea here. You must drink something, something warm."

She speaks like a concerned mother addressing her children. When she sees no one responding, she comes nearer and gives everyone a few sips. I drink quickly and then grasp her hands tightly, hoping that some of her *emunah* and *bitachon* will flow into me and give me strength.

My dear, dear Rivka. Your swallow of tea did not only wet my parched throat - it was much more. It restored my will to live. Not the tea, but you, Rivka, with this bit of warm liquid aroused in us the desire to fight. You did not need any words, you were there only for us and when there exists at least one person who is there for others, we learn to fight. My dear Rivka, you will never know that we absorbed from you the most important message - that Hashem is always with us, even amid pain and suffering.

And that's why, Rivka, we thank you with our lives.

*

The door bursts open and two frightened eyes peer in. I recognize them as belonging to Frau Frankel, nee Tzemach. She calls to us in a barely audible voice. "Come, come quickly. I've found a place to hide. Follow me now."

With bated breath we run and run, down the kitchen steps and even farther. Down, down, down. Anything, just not to go back…

I look behind me and I don't see Rivka. "Rivka! Rivka!" I shout but my voice is barely distinguishable. And suddenly I see her. She is standing higher up, she tries to say something but I don't hear her. Is she blessing us or is she trying to tell us something?

I want to run back but someone holds me in an iron embrace. I see nothing. It is pitch black. Where am I?

Suddenly, I am in a hole. I can't move. It smells like ashes and smoke. Sh…sh…they're coming. We hear their footsteps, they're looking for us, they're hunting us with strong lights, but they don't see us.

Soon we hear the whistle of the locomotive. The train to Auschwitz has gone…

What did you want to tell me, Rivka? Did you want to send a message to your father? Should I tell him that you never, even once, even in the bleakest moments, forgot that you are his daughter? Should I tell him that your *emunah* remained unshaken even on the train to Auschwitz? Should I tell him that you always tried to help others, to give the best of yourself?

Your father received your message, Rikva. He may have lost you, but he became the father of thousands of orphans.

I miss you, Rivka.

I search for you always and everywhere. I chase after the dreams of our idyllic childhood and youth.

I look for you because you are a part of me.

Every person has inside him a Holy of Holies, an innermost, holy corner in his soul, an impelling force that draws out the best in people.

You, Rivka, are that force within me.

Originally appeared in "Dos Yiddishe Vort", Nisan 5753

Until the Sun Will Rise Once More

By Yocheved Leah Perkal

It's Friday night after the *seuda*. The kids are sleeping and the house is in order. I'm standing at the sink, doing the dishes, and letting the tranquility in the air wash over me. As I rinse the plates, I find myself singing a Yiddish lullaby.

"Sleep, my little bird, sleep	שלאף מיין פייגעלע, שלאף
Dream of joy and bliss	חלום פון גליק און פון פרייד
In the west the sky has turned red	אין מערב דער הימל שוין רויט
The sun is slowly sinking	דער זון וועט פאמעלעך פארגיין
"Thousands of golden stars	טויזענטע גאלדענע שטערן
Build an iron wall	בויען אן אייזענעם וואנט
They keep watch faithfully	זיי היטן און וואכן געטרייע
Until the sun will rise once more"	ביז דער זון וועט שוין ווייטער אויפגיין

Suddenly I feel my voice quavering and tears prick my eyes. It's my grandmother's lullaby; she sang it to my mother and later to me. And it's the first time I'm singing this song and Bubby isn't here.

When my Bubby, Mrs. Rochel Greenbaum ע"ה was *niftar*, I was busy attending to my mother who was sitting *shiva*. And all through that week, and all through the following weeks I felt like I hadn't mourned her loss personally. I kept thinking, *If only I had been there*, *if only I had been at the levaya*. It was two years since I had last seen Bubby. For all I knew she could have still been living in Australia. I didn't yet feel her absence in my world but I wanted to.

And now, three months later, I'm singing Bubby's lullaby and suddenly I feel it. I feel tangibly that she's not down here with me anymore, that I'm singing it alone. And I have a sudden urge to sing this song to my children along with two others that she taught me. I must make sure they don't forget their Elter Bubby.

It was my father who informed me of Bubby's *petirah*. *My kids don't have a great-grandmother anymore,* was the first thought that raced through my mind.

When I got married, my father's mother wasn't alive and both my husband's grandmothers were long gone. But there was Bubby, and when my oldest was born, I exulted that my daughter had an Elter Bubby. When I was her age, having an Elter Bubby seemed like a fairy tale. My cousins in Australia had one, and I remember gazing at her in awe when I visited. It was the first time I had seen an Elter Bubby. My parents, like so many children of Holocaust survivors, never knew their grandparents.

Actually, it was Bubby who introduced me to the concept of what an Elter Bubby meant. There was another lullaby she would sing to me about two little girls boasting of precious



A group of Bubby's talmidos in Sieradz, 1933, one of the towns where she taught after she graduated from the seminary in Krakow. Mrs. Chana Perlman, nee Aronovitch, is seen standing third from the left in the front row.



A group of children dressed up for a Purim play in one of the D.P. camps in Salzburg, Austria after the war.



A group of children who survived the war in Russia and were brought to the Agudas Yisroel D.P. camp (kibbutz) in Hallein, Austria, not far from Salzburg. The woman in the turban is Reb. Shoshana (Tzimmer) Weiss ע"ה of Antwerp. She came with her first husband, Rabbi Uriel Tzimmer זצ"ל, from Eretz Yisroel to assist the survivors in the D.P. camps.

heirlooms they possessed that had once belonged to their great-grandmothers. And then Bubby would sing about the third little girl, who merely laughed to herself and slowly opened the attic door to show off her most precious heirloom, "*di elter bubbeshe alein*," – her great-grandmother herself.

אנימעלט האבן מיידעלעך
דריי שיינינקע ווי גאלד
מיט טייערע אנטיקעלעך
זיך זאלבעדריד גענפראלט

נאר דאס דריטע מיידעלע
האט שטיל אין זיך גענאכט
און שטיל דאס שייבן טירעלע
פון אלקערל אויפגענמאכט

איך האב א שטערן טיכעלע
האט איינע זיך בארימט
נאך פון מיין עלטע באבישי
גענקענסטעלט און גענבלימט

דאס טייערסטע אנטיקעלע
פארמאג איך איינער נאר
די עלטע באבישי אליין
פון הונדערט צוואנציג יאר

איך האב א ציפער נאדעלע
די צווייטע האט שטאלצירט
נאך פון מיין עלטע באבישי
מיט דימענטעלעך באצירט

I was always enchanted with that song and I remember trying to calculate how long it would take until Bubby could become an Elter Bubby, how old she would have to be when we could finally crown her with the title.

Bubby was in her eighties before we could call her Elter Bubby. As she always said, Hitler had seen to that. She was a newly wed when the Nazis invaded Poland and she lost her first two children in the Lodzer ghetto. Her two-year-old daughter, who should have been my aunt, was taken away in the infamous children's roundup and my would-be uncle died in the ghetto hospital at the age of nine months. Because Bubby arrived in Auschwitz with no baby in her arms or child clinging to her dress, she was sent to the right - to life. And after Europe stopped smoking, she gave birth to three more children. By the time she became a grandmother, she was no youngster in years, although in spirit and appearance she could have easily passed for a much younger woman.

Bubby was an Elter Bubby for only five and a half years, but as I think back to the *nachas* she was *zocheh* to see I realize I have no reason to mourn. Bubby was present at all her grandchildren's weddings. Whether in Australia, New York, Los Angeles and Canada, she attended them all. In fact, she was *niftar* just as the week of her granddaughter's *sheva brachos* drew to a close. She rejoiced in the birth of a number of great-grandchildren, four of whom were named after her husband. She got to see most of them and was able to show off their photos. More importantly, she enjoyed the *nachas* of knowing that all her great-grandchildren were starting off on the right path as Torah-true *Yidden*, something she couldn't have taken for granted in the spiritually barren Australia where she made her home after the War.

Bubby was always a pioneer. A student of Sara Schenierer, she taught in Bais Yaakov schools in several *shtetlach* in Poland after she graduated from Seminary. During the war years, she was an active leader of Bnos activities in the Lodzer ghetto, with other Bais Yaakov teachers such as Feiga Zelicka and Tzipora Levy. She was a *mechaneches* for children who were forced to work for the Nazis ימ"ש. One of her neighbors in the ghetto, Mrs. Tzipporah Gurt ע"ה, recalled how, on *Lag Ba'Omer* 5603/1943, she invited the children to her apartment and was *mechazek* them by telling them about Rabbi Akiva and other stories of *Lag Ba'Omer*. After the war, having been miraculously reunited with my grandfather, Bubby served as a mother figure for the young girls and women survivors in her DP camp. Together with my Zaidy, she was instrumental in setting up a girls' seminary, and helping young couples marry and move to Eretz Yisrael during the stormy period of *Aliya-Bet.*

She had to start all over again when she arrived in Australia. Of course, it was only natural for her to open her home to every needy soul. She also helped my grandfather set up the Yeshiva community, which included an afternoon *cheder*. She ran Bnos groups for girls and regular gatherings for women. Since there was no Bais Yaakov, she taught her daughter, my mother, a full *limudei kodesh* curriculum every day after school.

Bubby was always teaching, always giving, and she continued to pass her lessons and stories down to us, her grandchildren, so we could transmit them further.

My two oldest daughters talk about Elter Bubby. They know she lived in Australia and that she was *niftar* and is now in *Shamayim*. Now it's my job to make sure that they and their younger siblings don't forget her. I will tell them all about her life and her lifelong struggles and accomplishments. It won't be hard because Bubby will help me. I feel it. I feel her presence with me, protecting me, safeguarding me. Like those golden stars in her lullaby, keeping watch faithfully until the sun will rise once more.



Bubby at my wedding



Group of women survivors led by Bubby in the Agudas Yisroel Kibbutz in Parsche, Salzburg after the War. The poster features the words עם ישראל חי *as well as an illustration on the words* על שלשה דברים העולם עומד על התורה, על העבודה, ועל גמילות חסדים . *Bubby is sitting second from the left in the second row.*

Dining room in the kibbutz. Bubby is seated fifth place back on the right side of the table.



One of the weddings celebrated in the Agudas Yisroel Kibbutz in Parsche, Salzburg shortly after WWII. Bubby is sitting on the kallah's left hand side.



Leaflet describing the goals and curriculum of the learning programs which Bubby and Zeidy helped organize in the Agudas Yisroel Kibbutz in Salzburg for girls who had survived the war and whose chinuch had drastically suffered as a result of the war.

„Jüdischer Verlag", Wien, XVII., Hernalsergürtel 1

סמינריון למדריכות

אצל

מרכז אגו"י ופאגו"י באוסטריי, זאלצבורג

ועד ההדרכה

מנהלת רחל נרינבוים
ח' אליעזר ברויער
ח' ש. נרינבוים
ח' איסר זלצברג
מרדכי מאנדלבוים

המרצות

רחל נרינבוים
דבורה קוסטמן
שפרה יענער
אימא אם ואחרות

הנהלה הטכנית

יעקב עלבוים
נתנאל ראדזינער
רושקא יוסקוביץ

The College of Teachers

by the Centrale

Agudas Israel and Poale Agudas Israel Organisation of Austria

in Salzburg

ב"ה.

ח' חברה!

עפענדיג די צוויי בלעטלעך, האסטו פאר זיך דעם אינהאלט פון די למודים פאר דער צייט פון אונזער צוואמענזיין און צוואמענלערנען.

דער אינהאלט איז געשטיצט אויף דער ערפארונג פון דער פערגאנגענהייט. אזוי האבן זיך געלערנט אונזערע בית יעקב לערערינס און כנות פירערינס נ. ז. אנד., אזוי האבען באלערנט א־נזערע לערער און פירער.

צייטן זענען געווען וועלן מען האט געברענט ספר תורה'ס, חיליקע ספרים, אויף וועלכע ס'וועלט געזאגט „דער פאדמעט האט געברענט אבער די אותיות זענען נעפלויגען אין הימעל." צייטן זענען נעקומען וועלן צוואמען מיט די ספרי תורות זענען פארברענט געווארן און אויפגעפרעסן פון יסורים אונזערע טייערע לערער, זיי זענען פארברענט געווארן, אבער זייער נייטס לעבט: דער נייטס וואס רופט צו אונז: לערנט און פארשטייט די צייט, נייט און פירט ארויס פון דער פינסטערניש אייערע שוועסטער די נעראשעווטע פון דער שרפה און אזוי ווי איר האט אינבער געלעבט דאס עבדות, זאלט איר אויך זוכה זיין צו חירות הגוף והנפש.

דער ועד למדריכות.

אינהאלט פון לער־פראגראם:

יהדות: סון ה' ארלאען ז'ל.

9 לעקציעס פאר די יונגערע גרופען און 9 לעקציעס פאר די עלטערע גרופען.

חומש: נח, לך לך, דאס ראנגלען זיך פון דעם מלאך מיט יעקב'ן, די ברכות פון יעקב'ן פאר זיינע זוהן, ס' ויחי, ס' שמות, אז ישיר און ס' קדושים.

סעדאנאניק: פארלעזונגען און אנווייזונגען איבער קינדער־ערציהונג.

תהלים: פאס. א, ב, ג, ח, מ, י, מ"ד, צ, צ"א שיר המעלות.

געשיכטע: די תקופה פון די שופטים, די שפאניש תקופה, געשיכטע פון חסידיזם און מתנגדיזם.

פירוש התפלה: שמונה עשרה, ברכת המזון, ברכות השחר, קריאת שמע.

קיצור שולחן ערוך: הלכות פון ליכט צינדן, סליוש זאל־צען, חלה נעמען און נאך אייניג אקטועלע שיעורים.

עבריח, אנגלית
אידעאלאגיע
סאלעסטינאגראפיע


Remembering
Rebbetzin Vichna
Kaplan ע"ה

AN APPRECIATION OF
REBBETZIN KAPLAN ע"ה

by Rebbetzin Devora Kitevits



INTRODUCTION

Throughout the ages, certain *gedolim* have stood out as the *Rabban shel kol bnei hagolah*, the master teacher of his generation. These past four generations had two women who served as great leaders. Sarah Schenirer who passed away almost 52 years ago on 26 Adar I, 5695 (1935), stemmed the tide of assimilation of young girls enrolled in Polish "Gymnasiums" (high schools) by founding Bais Yaakov schools, thus preserving *Yiddishkeit* as it had been in the past.

Rebbetzin Vichna Kaplan, a disciple of Sarah Schenirer, toiled for 49 years, carrying Sarah Schenirer's message to America. She founded the first Bais Yaakov High School and Teachers' Seminary in America. Not only did she keep Jewish daughters loyal to their faith, she guided them in creating Jewish homes and founding a tradition, the likes of which America had never seen. She imbued her students with a philosophy of life, and through them and their households, through their children and their students, her impact was far-reaching, fomenting a virtual revolution in American Jewish life.

Whereas the influence of gedolim generally filters down to women through the medium of the man's world - the yeshiva, the *psak*, the *tisch* - Rebbetzin Kaplan's influence was directed towards the women and girls themselves. We felt that she belonged to us, the girls and women. She was someone whom we could embrace and confide in, who not only understood our problems, but had experienced them ... someone through whom we could become great by listening to her speak, by walking with her, by sharing in her work, by doing some humble task for her.

We lost our personal *gedolah*. Now, when we aspire to greatness in our daily life, we must look for the path she paved for us. We have no choice but to live with the memories she gave us and to learn from them.

I. European Years

Her Heart Was Set On Cracow

Rebbetzin Vichna Kaplan was born in Slonim, Russia, about 1913. Her father, Reb Ephraim Yehoshua Eisen was famous for his *tzidkus*. Her mother, Mereh Gitel, was the daughter of Rabbi Chaim Leib Lubchansky זצ"ל, Rav of Baranovich.

By the time she was eleven both her parents had passed away. She and her brother, Dovid, went to live with their mother's brother and sister-in-law who had no children of their own. Rabbi Yisroel Yaakov Lubchansky was the famed mashgiach in Reb Elchonon Wasserman's yeshiva in Baranovich, and his wife was the daughter of the gaon, Reb Yoisel Horowitz, "The Alter of Novarodok." Vichna Eisen, her cousins, and friends attended "Meselevsky's", a private religious school for girls.

When sixteen, Vichna read about the Bais Yaakov Seminary in Cracow and set her heart on going there. But the Seminary refused her application because she lacked a diploma from preparatory school. Not content with the refusal, she wrote directly to Sarah Schenirer: "Should my whole future be changed because of such a small matter?" Still she did manage to earn that diploma by taking private lessons. However, she had no funds to pay the Seminary tuition and was only able to attend because of Reb Shmuel (Dr. Leo) Deutschlander who obtained a scholarship for her.

Sem Rules and Regulations

Upon arriving in Cracow as part of a group of some 150 young girls, she was presented with the conditions that Seminary students were required to sign before beginning their two-year course of study:

Upon completion of Seminary every girl would have to teach for two years. This could not be in the graduate's hometown, where presumably she would be too busy with her own family to devote herself fully to her teaching career. After the initial three months in Seminary, the administration would evaluate each student's performance. Girls judged to lack the potential for teaching would be asked to leave. This policy was necessary because the goal of the seminary was to turn out top quality teachers for the hundreds of towns desperately clamoring for teachers to start their schools. An additional reason for this policy was the extreme shortage of appropriate accommodations. Anyone who was deemed an unsuitable candidate for teaching was discreetly escorted to the train station late at night, to minimize their embarrassment[1]. This policy changed with the expansion of facilities.



Bais Yaakov Seminary building in Cracow.

The girls were deeply upset by the rules. They feared that their opportunities for marriage would be seriously limited if they were forced to live away from their hometown. Others worried about the blot on their reputations if they would be sent home from the Seminary.

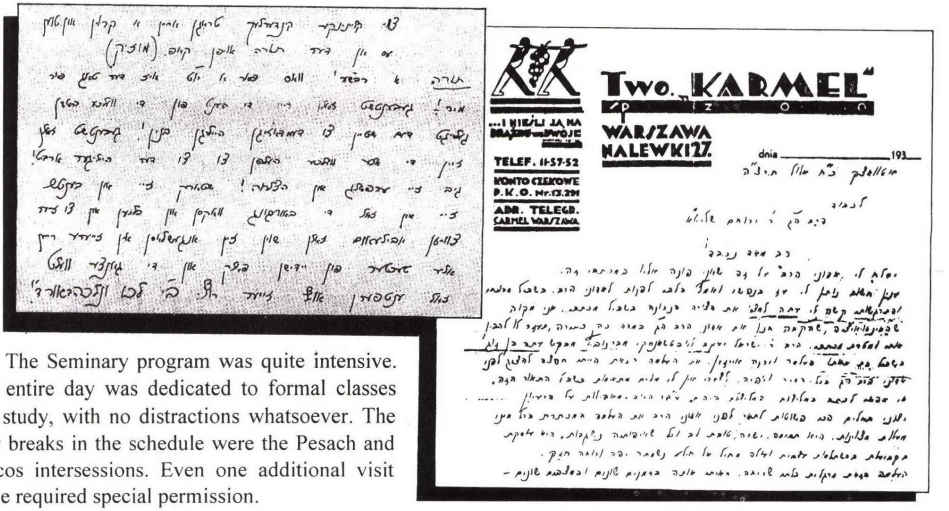
Her former seminary classmates,[2] who had met Rebbetzin Kaplan in Warsaw on the way to Cracow, recall how she had encouraged the other girls not to despair, but simply to start their seminary courses.

They also remember her as the top student in her class. Besides knowing much more than the average girl, she had a superior intelligence, and made memorable presentations at assemblies. In time, young Vichna began to assist Sarah Schenirer in various ways, such as collecting *tzeddaka* from house to house for her fund to support poor families.

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[1] During Dr. Grunfeld's years in the seminary, she personally escorted these girls.

[2] Rebbetzin Basya (Epstein) Bender ע"ה, and Rebbetzin Chava (Shlomovitz) Wachtfogel, who joined the staff of Bais Yakov high school and seminary in 1939 and 1944, respectively, greatly assisted Rebbetzin Kaplan in many matters. Many of Rebbetzin Kaplan's colleagues from her own seminary days taught in her Bais Yaakov, despite lucrative offers to teach elsewhere. Together with her they forged a strong, unique link to the original Bais Yaakov in Cracow.


Two. KARMEL
WARSZAWA NALEWKI 27.
TELEF. 11-57-52
KONTO CZEKOWE P.K.O. Nr. 13.291
ADR. TELEGR. CARMEL WARSZAWA

Left - Partial script of Purim play produced in Brisk, in Rebbetzin Kaplan's handwriting. Above - Copy of a letter recommending Vichna Eisen, sent to R' Yeruchum Levovitz.

The Seminary program was quite intensive. The entire day was dedicated to formal classes and study, with no distractions whatsoever. The only breaks in the schedule were the Pesach and Succos intersessions. Even one additional visit home required special permission.

The only other allowance for travel was to help start a new Bais Yaakov school in one of the small *shtetlach* of Poland. This was usually launched by a team of a teacher and a Seminary student. Rebbetzin Kaplan was once dispatched to Baranovich with a teacher, Miss Hamburger, to lobby for opening a Bais Yaakov school there. Her speech had unusual impact[3], and Baranovich opened its Bais Yaakov School.

Dr. Judith Rosenbaum would teach *Shir Hashirim* Friday nights. After Shabbos the girls would approach Rebbetzin Kaplan: "Vichna, please review the *shiur* so we can write down notes. You know it the best." With her characteristic humility, she would say, "I don't know it the best, but I'll try anyway." Then she repeated the *shiur* verbatim, not using her own language, but the teacher's words.

Rebbetzin Kaplan told her children that when she left for her first intersession trip home, Sarah Schenirer confided in her, "From the first letter you sent me, I saw that you were going to help me in the movement." Others who were present remember Frau Schenirer saying, "You will succeed me, but you will be greater." Rebbetzin Kaplan, of course, never repeated this.

[3] According to her Baranovich friend, Sora Baila Gutman (Rebbetzin Mendel Kaplan)

Indeed, all her classmates knew that she was the closest *talmidah* to Sarah Schenirer but no one was jealous, because they all recognized that she had earned this special relationship.

THE YEARS IN BRISK

The two years in Cracow came to a glorious end on her graduation night, an event that Rebbetzin Kaplan often recalled for her *talmidos*: "Sarah Schenirer danced and sang *'Vetaheir Libeinu'* with us the entire night."

Rebbetzin Kaplan was sent to Brisk, where, for some five years, she served as the only teacher for *limudei kodesh* in the school, besides studying with girls in their older teens before school hours. She frequently consulted the Brisker Rav, Rabbi Yitzchok Zev Soloveitchik זצ"ל, who was responsible for the school.

Rabbi Dovid Soloveitchik שליט"א, of Yerushalayim, writes: "I remember how ... my sainted father and teacher would be extremely lavish in his praise of the *chinuch* in Torah and *yiras Shomayim* that [Rebetzin Kaplan] implanted [in her charges]. He would add that she had a great advantage in that she was raised and educated in the home of her uncle, the *gaon* and *tzaddik* Rabbi

Yisroel Yaakov Lubchansky זצ"ל, and that she had absorbed much Torah, *yiras Shomayim* and exemplary *midos* from him, which she drew on to be *mechanech* (educate) her students."

When she was in Brisk, the Jewish community was threatened with a pogrom. In response to her query, the Brisker Rav advised her to leave, since she could not help in the situation. On the last day of school before the feared pogrom, Rebbetzin Kaplan was preparing to flee to Kamenitz, but first she hired a taxi to take home several girls who were stranded at the school. Only then did she leave.

Once, before returning home for vacation, Rebbetzin Kaplan decided not to return to Brisk. The city lacked funds for her salary and she could not afford to work without pay. She later received a telegram from the Brisker Rav telling her to come back, so she returned - only to discover that the telegram had been forged! She stayed on anyway. Perhaps she reasoned that if the people in town had to lie to keep her they must be in desperate straits.

In view of her financial situation, the following incident becomes more poignant. Rebbetzin Kaplan and the present writer were once discussing a specific book for use in our Child Guidance classes in the Brooklyn Seminary. Because of a questionable anecdote in the book, Rebbetzin Kaplan decided that we would not use it. Sensing my disappointment; she told me that when she was teaching in Brisk she had purchased history books with her hard-earned money. As she was preparing a lesson, deciding on which information was acceptable and which she could not use, she suddenly asked herself: "What am I doing? Trying to get kosher information from non-kosher sources!" So she discarded the entire set of books.

Vichna Eisen was remembered fondly by all the people she met. She became best friends with the Brisker Rav's daughters who had first been her *talmidos*. Her landlady told others about her concern for all creatures great and small that even extended to their house cat, which she brought in from the cold every night. She was remembered by a *talmidah* who married during wartime, but never forgot to honor the rules of *tznius*, for: 'Weren't we brought up in a certain way of life? It stays with us."

Rebbetzin Sora (Kaplan) Zeilberger, who had been her student in the earlier grades in Brisk, recalls, "When I was older, I studied privately, but 'the girls' and I still visited her in her room after *licht bentschen* Friday nights. She would tell us stories until our fathers picked us up after *Maariv*. She was always with us. On Shabbos afternoons she supervised the Basya (Bnos Agudath Israel) groups, where she told stories and played games with us. Whatever she did impressed us ... such as the grand play she produced for Purim, which attracted the whole town."

A Suitable Match

On 28 Elul, 5695 (Sept. '35), Mrs. Laya Schwartz wrote a letter to the famed *mashgiach* of the Mir Yeshiva, Rabbi Yeruchem Levovitz זצ"ל, asking him to find a suitable *shidduch* for a young lady she knew in Brisk, Vichna Eisen. Her words describe her aptly:

"She is perfect, straight, good of heart, and all her aspirations are lofty. She strives constantly for self perfection, constantly rising in her attainment. Her soul is beautiful and she has an indomitable spirit... Primarily, she impresses one with the high goals she has set for herself. An excellent person, she was created for greatness."

The actual *shadchan* was Rebbetzin Kaplan's landlady, who had seen Reb Boruch learning in the Brisker Rav's *shul*. She delegated a yeshiva fellow to approach him, but the *bachur* added on his own that since neither he nor the Eisen girl had any money, it made no sense to even suggest the match. Reb Boruch, however, accepted the suggestion, while ignoring the advice. "She was a *shem davar* (widely admired)," he later told his children.

After the two had met, Rabbi Kaplan had to leave for America on Chanuka 5696. They corresponded and became engaged by mail! Rabbi Kaplan still cherishes his *chassan* gift from his *kallah,* the *sefer Koveitz He'aros* on *Yevamos*, by the illustrious Baranovich *Rosh Hayeshiva*, Rabbi Elchonon Wasserman זצ"ל.

Reb Yisroel Yaakov was unhappy that his niece should move to America. He advised her to consult the Brisker Rav, who replied: "To join him, you can go anywhere!" It was the only time the Rav had consented for someone to go to America, according to his son, Reb Berel (Yosef Dov) Soloveitchik זצ"ל.

Before leaving, Rebbetzin Kaplan petitioned the Bais Yaakov headquarters in Cracow (which administered not only the Seminary but all the

elementary Bais Yaakov schools in Poland, and all related publications) for permission to start a Bais Yaakov school in America. Reb Yehuda Leib Orlean, successor to Sarah Schenirer as head of the organization, granted her permission.

Rebbetzin Kaplan left friends and family in Brisk and Baranovich for America, arriving almost 49 years to the day before her passing. The wedding took place eleven days later, on Rosh Chodesh Elul (September '37) in the lunchroom of Yeshiva Torah Vodaath, on Wilson Street in Williamsburg, with the Rosh Hayeshiva, Rabbi Shlomo Heiman זצ"ל as *mesader kiddushin*.

II The Bais Yaakov Comes to America

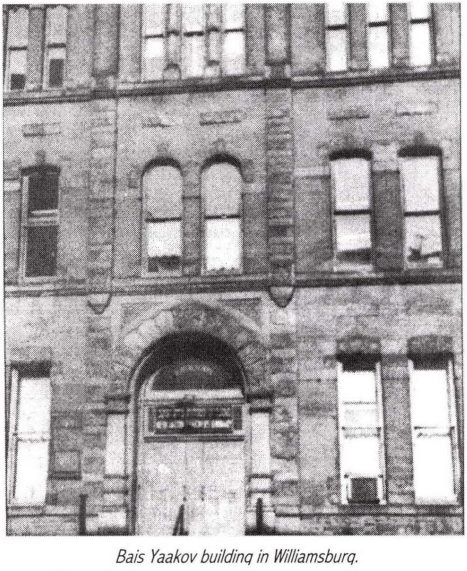
Early Attempts[4]

In the 1920's the only Hebrew schools for girls were afternoon Talmud Torahs and Sunday schools with co-ed classes, and boys' Bar Mitzva classes, which some girls joined. These schools were basically culture-oriented and not religious in content. Some more religious girls studied privately at home.

In the late 1920s, Mrs. Fruma Leah Mandel, mother of Rabbi Manis Mandel[5], started *frum* girls' groups on Shabbos in Brownsville. After moving to Williamsburg in the early '30s, Mrs. Mandel organized groups there as well. She also held night classes. Within a short time, some two hundred girls were attending her Bnos Yaakov groups. She placed ads in the Yiddish *"Morgen Journal"* and wrote letters to parents to encourage the opening of groups in other neighborhoods as well.

Inspired by Sarah Schenirer in Europe, Reb Binyomin Wilhelm together with his brother-in-law, Ben-Tzion Weberman, and Rabbi Shraga Feivel Mendlowitz (*menahel* of Torah Vodaath) זכרונם לברכה and other community leaders founded the Beth Jacob Hebrew School for Girls in 1925, the first all-girls afternoon school.

Two Bais Yaakov-type elementary day schools later opened in Williamsburg. Bais Sarah, named after Sara Schenirer, opened through the initiative of Rabbi and Mrs. Avrohom Spinner. Prior to this, Mrs. Mandel started an elementary Bais Yaakov type school in 1935 and named it "Bais Rochel", with fifteen students and a few grades. A year later she started an evening high school and seminary with Rebbetzin Basya Magnes as principal [who had been recommended by R' Shraga F. Mendelowitz]. It was called *Bais Medrash L'Moros Bnos Yaakov*. A year later, Rebbetzin Kaplan arrived in America. She founded Bais Yaakov High School and Seminary. Eventually, Mrs. Mandel's school merged with that of Rebbetzin Kaplan's[6].



Bais Yaakov building in Williamsburg.

Through the concerted efforts of a large group of *askonim*, the Beth Moses Hospital building was purchased, and the Bais Yaakov elementary (day) school in Williamsburg was opened in the winter of

[4] The historical background was furnished by Mrs. Leah (Wilhelm) Herskowitz. Additional information was added from the J.O. biography on Mrs. Fruma Leah Mandel. (Kislev-Teves 5765, Dec. 2004)

[5] Dean of Yeshiva of Brooklyn, which includes separate schools for girls and boys.

[6] At the time of Mrs. Mandel's *petira*, on כ"ה אדר, her sons who were constantly at her bedside, had just gone out to *daven Mincha*. To their utter dismay, they returned and were shocked to find that she was *niftar*. They were unsure about the exact moment of *yetzias neshama*. It seemed to have been *bein hashemoshos*. Therefore, her children recite *kaddish* on כ"ה אדר. Her illustrious son, Rabbi M. M. Mandel, *shlita*, the esteemed *Menahel* of Yeshiva of Brooklyn, recites *kaddish* on both days. On כ"ו אדר he says *kaddish* for Sara Schenirer, who had no children of her own. At the same time he has in mind his mother because of the *safeik yahrtzeit*. What amazing *Hashgacha* – two women whose life missions were so similar, have *yahrtzeits* that are intertwined!

'37 with a kindergarten and several grades. The founding principal was Rabbi Kreiser, followed by his successor, Rabbi Avrohom Newhouse[7] ז"ל. This Bais Yaakov grew and blossomed for many years.

When Rebbetzin Kaplan arrived, she began with a class of seven eager girls[8] of high school age, who gathered around the dining room table in the Kaplans' small apartment at 134 South Ninth Street in Williamsburg. Here the beginnings of the Bais Yaakov High School and Teachers' Seminary took place.

Twenty some years later, an American girl undecided about which seminary to attend in Eretz Yisroel, consulted the Brisker Rav in Yerushalayim. He advised her: "Return to Vichna Kaplan's seminary. There you will learn how to educate the next generation."

Mrs. Genauer recalls: "Rebbetzin Kaplan was an answer to my parents' prayers. The only other Jewish high schools were far to the left in religious orientation and many parents later did not eat in their children's homes. We had heard about Sarah Schenirer and the Bais Yaakov in Cracow from Rebbetzin Pincus[9] when she had come back and called a meeting to organize us. We fell in love with her. She had so inspired us that we were prepared for Rebbetzin Kaplan and her plans.

"As a fifteen year old, I went to public high school, then traveled to the Bronx to teach a Talmud Torah class, and then returned to Williamsburg. From 7 to 10 PM every night we learned around the dining room table in Rebbetzin Kaplan's house.

"Rebbetzin Kaplan's devotion was always apparent. She knew what each of us needed and lacked. She had an all-encompassing memory about every one of us. I was ambitious at eighteen and could not decide whether to marry then or not. Through her influence I married my late husband, an American who had learned in Kelm.

"I visited her in the hospital after she had given birth. She was preparing her *shiurim* in the hospital bed!

She took our notebooks home to mark, even the spelling, making notations, i.e., 'This thought is not written out clearly.'

"From Rebbetzin Kaplan's house we moved to Keap Street, then to the 'old Mesivta building' [at the corner of Bedford and Taylor streets]. By then we were already two classes. We then moved to 143 South 8th Street, the address that thousands of Bais Yaakov students will always remember. We thought it a beautiful building! [Rabbi Boruch Kaplan then left his position as a *maggid shiur* in Mesivta Torah Vodaath to help his wife carry the financial administration of Bais Yaakov.] My father, Reb Nisson Pilchik, used to go out nights soliciting money for the school."

THE RUACH DIMENSION

The Kaplans borrowed money to open a summer 'learning' camp at Engel's farm in Connecticut. For many of the girls, it was their first adventure in the country. As in the city, Rebbetzin Kaplan was the only teacher in camp, and taught the girls all morning, despite her young, growing family. She even tried to bring *Yiddishkeit* to the people in the area, and invited people from New Haven to special events, such as the campfire.

Rebbetzin Kaplan strove to bring the *ruach* of her Cracow years to Williamsburg. She met with the girls on Friday nights, at Bnos Agudath Israel groups on Shabbos afternoons, even had *Seudah Shlishis* and *Melave Malka* with them. This Shabbos spirit drew many girls to join her school.

Rebbetzin Esther Weissman (who joined Bais Yaakov a few months after it opened) recalls one rainy, stormy Friday night when Rebbetzin Kaplan came to the Bais Sarah Talmud Torah building where the Shabbos group met. When they entered the building they found the lights were off. Someone called in the janitor to put them on, whereupon Rebbetzin Kaplan left the building for a few minutes. Despite the inclement weather, she had gone to inquire if it was permissible to use the room now that the lights had been opened especially for them... There were so many *halachos* that the girls never even heard about, which she taught by example.

After five years, the first group of girls graduated. The school was growing. Yet the love and

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[7] Rabbi Newhouse ע"ה led the elementary Bais Yaakov school for many years. He also pioneered the concept of *frum* girls' camps, as we know them today, when he opened his famed Machane Bais Yaakov in Ferndale.

[8] Sylvia (Pilchik) Tehillim, Faigy (Pilchik) Genauer, Sora Wolfson, Rochel Rose (Wolf) Gitelis, Faigy (Rubin) Horowitz, Chanie (Mendlowitz) Greenbaum, and Rivky (Mendlowitz) Karp ע"ה.

[9] Rebbetzin Chava (Weinberg) Pincus, born in America, studied in Bais Yaakov Seminary in Cracow. She taught for Rebbetzin Kaplan until she and Rabbi Avrohom Chaim Pincus moved to Eretz Yisroel in '64.

attention for each student was not diminished. Rebbetzin Chana (Fishbein) Lubart[10] came from Chicago straight to the Kaplans' home. They found her a room with the Pilchiks, walked her over to her new quarters, and gave her $7 to pay for room-and-board for the first week. They continued to do so for several weeks, until her older sisters, who were working, could support her.

This *ad hoc* approach changed in 1944, when a dormitory was opened in the South 8th Street building.

THE ALL-DAY HIGH SCHOOL

Rabbi and Rebbetzin Kaplan's school became a full-day high school in January, 1944. It was the seventh year of the school's existence, but attending a Bais Yaakov high school was not a matter of course as yet.

Rebbetzin Chana (Adler) Wessel[11] was about to graduate public elementary school in January 1945, and saw nothing wrong with staying on in public high school. Most of the girls in her class were religious, the mode of dress was proper; boys were permitted to wear only white shirts, ties and slacks, and girls were required to wear dresses with some sort of sleeve. There were separate entrances and separate seating for boys and girls, and a chapter of Psalms was recited at the opening of each assembly! The public school building's physical plant and the honors given to a bright student were attractions.

Her father wanted her to attend Bais Yaakov. She acceded to her father's wishes and went to Bais Yaakov in the fall of '44, with the understanding that if she chose, she could return to public school after several months.

"I feel that Rebbetzin Kaplan saved my life," says Rebbetzin Wessel. "If not for her, I dread to think what would have happened to me and my sisters, who followed in my footsteps. She gave me a feeling of worth and importance. Rebbetzin Kaplan taught my class all the subjects (sometimes with a child on her lap when her babysitter didn't show up) with infinite patience, despite the class knowing so pathetically little.

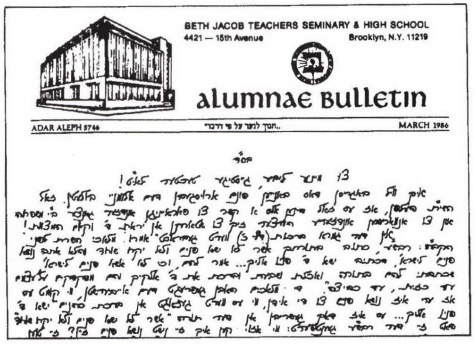
She built our confidence by keeping her beautiful lessons simple and not beyond our grasp... She broadened our horizons. She gave us a dream, a purpose: We were pioneers, building *Yiddishkeit* in America. We learned that there's a Jewish future for the Jewish woman.

"There was another facet to Rebbetzin Kaplan. She was approachable; she listened and took things to heart. A girl could share her teenage dreams and problems with Rebbetzin Kaplan, and even forty years later tell her things that she could not tell anyone else. She never failed to ask how this one or that one was doing."

During the war years, the Kaplans applied for thousands of student visas to enable many refugees to enter this country. Bais Yaakov Seminary was far above all other educational institutions in the number of girls that it saved from Europe, despite harassment from the Immigration Department, which had difficulty believing that one institution could guarantee support for such a large amount of girls.

GROWTH AND EXPANSION

As the Orthodox community grew, so did the Bais Yaakov School. In September '58 a branch was opened in the Boro Park section of Brooklyn, soon to equal, and then surpass, the main Williamsburg school, which eventually closed, in '77. The one-year Intensive Seminary program began in September '68, a new concept in its time, in which girls immerse themselves fully in *limudei kodesh* from 8:15 AM to 3:30. The observation and student-teaching programs have become fine-tuned and demanding.


BETH JACOB TEACHERS SEMINARY & HIGH SCHOOL
4421 — 15th Avenue Brooklyn, N.Y. 11219

alumnae Bulletin

ADAR ALEPH 5746 MARCH 1986

Her newsletter

Today Rebbetzin Kaplan's students are teachers and principals all over the world. They can be found in the largest Bais Yaakov High School and Seminary in the world (Yerushalayim) as well as in

[10] Formerly principal in Crown Heights and Williamsburg branches of Bais Yaakov High School, currently assistant principal of Bais Yaakov Elementary School in Boro Park.

[11] Teacher in Bais Yaakov High School since 1954.

the largest Bais Yaakov elementary school (in Boro Park), from Tifrach to Flatbush… Chassidic schools such as Puppa, Ger, Bobov, Lubavitch and Satmar sprang up, and again Rebbetzin Kaplan's students helped establish them, teach in them, and head them.

Despite the fact that Bais Yaakov schools in America are not officially affiliated with each other, Rebbetzin Kaplan's advice and suggestions were sought after. "What does the Rebbetzin say?" was a constant consideration. When Bais Yaakov-type schools organized a mass *tznius* rally at the Brooklyn Academy of Music, [approx. 5732] of course Rebbetzin Kaplan addressed the audience. And when 5,000 women and girls gathered to commemorate the 50th *Yahrzeit* of Sarah Schenirer in Adar 5745, Rebbetzin Kaplan was a leading force in the assembly.

She felt that her responsibilities extended beyond the school walls. Years ago, Rebbetzin Kaplan called camp directors together to discuss the *ruach* in their camps. She wanted camp activities and conduct on days off to be a continuation of what the schools strive so hard for during the year.

Whether it was a man from Toronto crusading against the evils of television, a teacher from Flatbush concerned about the erosion of *tznius*, an educator doing *kiruv* work in New Jersey or a former *talmidah* begging her and Rabbi Kaplan to say *Tehilim* for a sick family member, each one found their way to Rebbetzin Kaplan's office.

III. Leader of the Revolution

In the past fifty years, women have changed the face of Jewish Orthodoxy in America, with Rebbetzin Kaplan at the helm of the revolution. Now, just study the contrast. In 1937, the *frum* Jewish girl wore pants and sleeveless garments. Today the discussion is what type of legwear is "good enough". Then, married women covering their hair was an unheard-of rarity; today they are grappling with what style *sheitl* is suitable for a young Rebbitzin. Then few were called by their Jewish name; today it's almost an oddity to hear a yeshiva boy or Bais Yaakov girl called by an English name. When a match was proposed, the first question the young lady asked was, 'What does he do for a living?" Today, it's: "How long will he learn?" When the highest level of *frumkeit* was identified as a home where the father *davened* and attended a *shiur*, Rebbetzin Kaplan taught the girls to dream of being worthy of marrying a *talmid chacham*.

Rabbi Aharon Kotler זצוק"ל is quoted as having said, "If not for Bais Yaakov, all the yeshivos would be forced to close!" His Rebbetzin, Rivka Chana Perel Kotler ז"ל said that Reb Aharon held that Rebbetzin Kaplan did more than all the *roshei yeshivos*. Rabbi Elya Lopian זצ"ל said: "The yeshivos are very important, but the Bais Yaakovs are more important. Without the Bais Yaakovs the yeshivos could not exist." The Satmar Rebbe זצ"ל once dispatched his *hoiz bachur* to say "*yeyasher koach*" to Rabbi Boruch Kaplan, thanking him for making it easier for his boys to find suitable *shidduchim*.

She demonstrated to the girls and the women how to elevate themselves to the highest level. The prevalence of *chessed* and *tzeddaka* organizations, *shiurim* for women, *shmiras halashon* classes, telephone *chavrusos* and the joy that her students find in being devoted mothers and teachers of *Yiddishkeit.* are the outgrowths of her teachings. The fervor in contemporary women's *avoda*, the integrity of their *emuna*, their aspiration to true *shleimus,* and the will to perpetuate these ideals to future generations are the fruits of her labor.

The Power of Personal Sacrifice

How could one person have so many followers, and evoke such a strong response in them that they pattern their very lives after hers? Perhaps it was the personal sacrifice that was invested in her work.

Rebbetzin Kaplan's greatest dream for her students and for her own children was that the girls marry *talmidei chachamim* and the boys should be *talmidei chachamim*, never to leave the *koslei beis midrash.* When someone brought her regards from one of her sons saying that he is known to be a great *talmid chacham*, Rebbetzin Kaplan commented, "You know just what to say to gladden a mother's heart!" She avoided



Rebbitzin Kaplan, at her son, R' Avrohom's wedding.

disturbing her sons during their *seder* (learning period), and when forced to do so, she would ask them to please pay back the time of their conversation during free time, and to ask their *chavrusa* to do the same.

Despite her profound love and respect for learning, and despite Rabbi Boruch Kaplan's success as a *rosh yeshiva* in Mesivta Torah Vodaath, he was ready to make the almost unbearable move of leaving the *Beis Midrash* to help the school.

Rebbetzin Kaplan sacrificed the time not spent with her own children. In an interview for a magazine article about the working mother, Rebbetzin Kaplan was asked what type of work is suitable for the woman who seeks something to do with her time once her children are in school. "Do you mean dealing with the empty nest syndrome?" asked Rebbetzin Kaplan. "I thought that only set in after all the children married. While her children are in school, doesn't a mother have enough to do in the home? Why should a woman feel useless simply because her children are away from home for several hours?"

She then went on to describe the anguish and inner conflict that she experienced every day that she left her children when they were younger. "Why must I leave my children with someone who will tell them the story of the 'The Three Bears' while feeding them, when I could give them so much *yiras Shomayim* with every spoonful of cereal? And, even in the best of cases, when I would have the most wonderful babysitter, I agonized over why I must leave my children's *chinuch* to someone else while I leave them behind to tend to someone else's children!" She added that for years she had wished she could meet *Eliyahu Hanavi* and he would tell her what to do. If he would tell her to go home, she would do so joyfully. If he would tell her to continue on to school, then she would at least know that she is doing the right thing.

When her first graduate married a Kollel man, put on a *sheitl*, and taught in a Bais Yaakov School, she knew she had made the right choice! The conflict was resolved, but the anguish of leaving her children at home never left her.

IV. Master Teacher

Rebbetzin Kaplan taught by example, not only by what she did, but by what she was. In the words of Rebbetzin Dvora Zoberman,[12] "I feel as if I grew up under her. I received my education in Eretz Yisroel, but my *l'maaseh* (practical application) came from Rebbetzin Kaplan."

Anivus

Rebbetzin Kaplan was an ordinary housewife at home. So much so, that her own daughter-in-law said that it took years for her to realize that she was a public figure. Even in school, despite being the dean, head of all the departments and principal of the Seminary, Rebbetzin Kaplan did not put on airs.



Rebbetzin Kaplan with a grandchild, 5743, 1973

Those close to her saw how nervous she was before delivering a speech, despite a speaking career of over fifty-five years! "The world is made up of two halves," she told a close worker, "the fortunate and the unfortunate, and the unfortunate have to speak."

She refused to allow a car to be sent to pick her up for a N'shei Ahavas Chessed speech. "The bus stops right there." Yet, she would worry about the same extra curricular trip being too strenuous for other senior staff members and insisted that the school provide car service.

Rebbetzin Kaplan's youngest daughter, Blumie (Rosengarten), was making a sign "W. KAPLAN" for her mother's office door. "That's all you're going

[12] Rebbitzin Zoberman ע"ה was on the faculty of the Bais Yaakov High School and Seminary from '57, up until the year of her *p'tirah*, Nissan 5763.

to write? Won't you write 'Dean' on the sign?" a student asked. Her daughter explained that she was bound by *kibud av vo'eim*, and that is what her mother told her to write. "Well," said the girl, "someone else can add a word or two." So she put "REBBETZIN" before the "W. KAPLAN" and added "DEAN" at the end. Rebbetzin Kaplan looked at the completed sign, and, not wanting to insult anyone, just never used it.

When entering a classroom to take over for a master teacher, she would say: "It will be hard to teach this class after they had an expert like you on the subject."

Rebbetzin Kaplan always convened meetings to weigh any decisions or changes in the school. Good ideas were always given consideration no matter who presented them. A radical change was once seriously considered, and a protest was voiced: "But you've been doing it the other way for 50 years!" Rebbetzin Kaplan answered in her quiet, but firm way: "I will listen even to a child if it's the right thing." She was not embarrassed to admit that we may have overlooked something for 50 years.

Rebbetzin Kaplan's yardstick till her death in guiding her school was, "What would Sarah Schenirer say to this?" *The same self-effacement that made her see herself as a messenger from the last generation, made her the living example for our generation.*

KAVOD HABRIYOS

Rebbetzin Kaplan dealt diplomatically and graciously with every situation. With two phones ringing, a third line buzzing, someone knocking on her office door, and someone already seated in her office, Rebbetzin Kaplan took care of each one without slighting the others. She was always careful to offer a visitor a seat and to offer her teachers lunch when it was lunch time. She realized her visitor's needs before they themselves were aware of them.

At staff meetings, she always took the time to explain the situation and to give every person a chance to express his or her opinion. She only interrupted to say, "We have to be careful to say only what is *noge'ah* (relevant)", when she sensed that a remark was leading to *lashon hora*, *avak lashon hora* or *rechilus* (slander or gossip). When she had to reprimand someone, she did not wait for the situation to become embarrassing, but nipped it in the bud, in advance. Rabbi Uri Hellman, principal of the Bais Yaakov High School of Boro Park, describes how Rebbetzin Kaplan would remind the staff at the opening of class meetings that only what is relevant may be said, and nothing may be mentioned about any party who is not involved. Indeed, Rabbi Boruch Kaplan remarked that in all the years he knew her, he never heard his wife express a *ta'anah* (complaint) about anyone, nor ever say a word of *lashon hora*.

She was meticulous to avoid hurting others: Rabbi Hellman says that in the 40 years that he worked for Rebbetzin Kaplan he could not recall a single incident in which she issued a command.

The writer's mother, who worked for the ladies' auxiliary of Bais Yaakov, told her children: "Rebbetzin Kaplan never hangs up the phone first. She waits to hear you hang up."

When announcing a *simcha* to her children, she called them in order of age to avoid making an older child wonder why he was called after a younger one. Rebbetzin Kaplan always asked the director of the school plays to make sure that the script contain no line that might prove insulting to the public school janitor who might watch the play. When a new private nurse walked in during Rebbetzin Kaplan's confinement in the hospital, she complimented her with, "I heard so much about you! When my daughter-in-law called the agency they recommended you so highly." A bright smile lit up the nurse's face.

To an alumna of 20 years, Rebbetzin Kaplan said, "I was waiting many years to meet you. I've been wanting to ask your forgiveness." The *talmidah* expressed astonishment, to which the Rebbetzin explained, smilingly, "You remember how you often came late to class. I once commented, 'Late again!' Please forgive me for the remark."

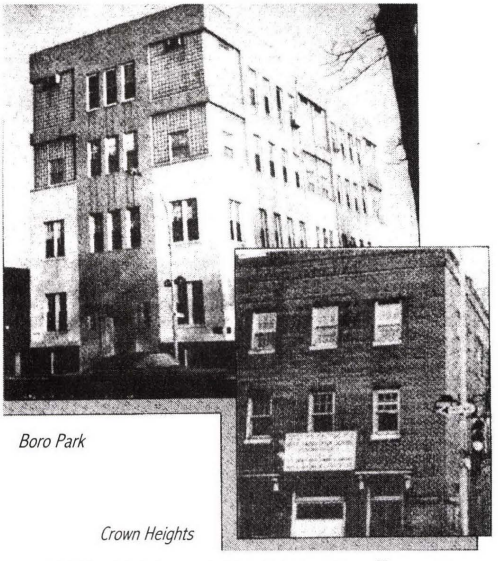
HER RESPONSIBILITY AND LOVE TO EACH STUDENT

Every school has to make crucial decisions about accepting students into the school and about expelling students when necessary. One administrator postulated that if Bais Yaakov would accept a below-average student in the freshmen class, it would reflect badly on the school. Rebbetzin Kaplan answered, "I couldn't care less about our reputation as long as we do the right thing. Is she basically a good girl, or will she ח"ו be a bad influence on others? Each and every girl is entitled to a Bais Yaakov *chinuch*."

Rebbetzin Kaplan would spend hours deciding an individual girl's class placement. There were times that she spent sleepless nights out of concern

that each girl should be placed correctly and develop properly. If a girl wasn't accepted into the group, she would call in key students and discuss ways to make the student feel accepted.

Rebbetzin Kaplan would convene a faculty meeting before demoting a student from full-day Seminary to the half-day program.



Boro Park

Crown Heights

Rebbetzin Renee (Adler) Hershberg[13] recalls a meeting to discuss the expulsion of a girl from school. When it seemed that her fate was sealed, Rebbetzin Hershberg said, "Yes, but..." Rebbetzin Kaplan interrupted her, "We're keeping her." A mere "but" about expelling the girl was sufficient reservation to warrant keeping her.

One of the students in question later commented: "She did not expel me. I sensed that she had some kind of trust in me. She saw something that no one else could see, an expectation that I had to fulfill. I remember the first time she called me by my first name; I was shocked that she knew me as a person. I remember feeling loved when she said it... She never reprimanded me. Once or twice she questioned me very softly, very quietly. She made the decision to keep me. I owe a lot to that." Imagine Rebbetzin Kaplan's *nachas* when she learned of the marvelous work for *Yiddishkeit* this student does in her town!

[13] Guidance Counselor, Bais Yaakov High School, former *talmidah*.

Rebbetzin Miriam (Weiss) Dissin[14] writes in *Hamodia*: "Rebbetzin Kaplan would call in a girl and talk about various subjects, and then say, 'I was told you did this and this, and I said it's impossible. A girl like you couldn't have done that. There must be a mistake, or maybe you fell in this one time.' The girl couldn't disappoint Rebbetzin Kaplan."

Adds Rebbetzin Engelsrath,[15] "I never saw a girl come out of Rebbetzin Kaplan's office crying. She always had something positive to say with the *mussar*."

She arranged private meetings with small groups of Seminary girls, and would even sit in at conferences on high school students, to get to know them all. "One of our main goals," said Rebbetzin Kaplan, "is to discover every Seminary girl's talent and develop it."

A broad range of extra-curricular activities were scheduled to encourage each girl to find her particular niche. However, among the many activities, she never permitted a Broadway production to be used as a school play for the public.

At school plays, she checked that each performer had transportation home.

Rebbetzin Kaplan sent many students to summer camp, paying from the school's meager funds, or raising the money through other means. If the school decided a student would be better off in a Seminary away from home (such as Gateshead), Rebbetzin Kaplan would bear the expense.

Rebbetzin Kaplan added ר"ל on a girl's record if it were noted that she was orphaned or otherwise marked by misfortune and needed special consideration.

During a visit to Eretz Yisroel, Rebbetzin Kaplan met a former *talmidah* who had been active in drama and dance. Not seeing the heavy grandmother standing before her, Rebbetzin Kaplan asked, "Do you still dance?"

Years ago, a group of former students decided to travel to Eretz Yisroel by Zim Lines, leaving on *Erev Shabbos*, which is contrary to *halacha*. Rebbetzin Kaplan, fearful of a harmful precedent, personally visited the most influential girl of the group to

[14] Rebbetzin Kaplan's secretary and program coordinator in the early 60's. Later moved to Eretz Yisrael and became an assistant principal in Bais Yakov Yerushalayim.

[15] An associate of Rebbetzin Kaplan since 1963.

convince her to change her reservation. While she was talking to the girl, a call came from the Kaplan house that one of the children was hurt, to which Rebbetzin Kaplan said, "I don't care what the *sotton* will do, I'm not leaving until she agrees." The girl changed her reservation, as did the rest of the group.

An applicant to the Seminary lived in the Southwest. Rebbetzin Kaplan arranged for some seniors to correspond with the girl, and even meet her at the airport. On Orientation Day, Rebbetzin Kaplan opened with: "Usually, I speak in Yiddish, but I'm sure there are many girls here who don't understand Yiddish, so I'll speak in English." Staff members were certain the switch was made in deference to that one student, who needed special *kiruv*, because the following year the orientation speech was in Yiddish again. This student was very unhappy, despite all the efforts of the *hanhala* and her fellow students. Rebbetzin Kaplan gave her carfare to visit her parents, round-trip. The girl never did come back, but she left feeling Rebbetzin Kaplan's boundless love.

At times, Rebbetzin Kaplan would direct a full speech to an individual. A former *talmidah* wrote to her that she felt as though she had failed Rebbetzin Kaplan because she did not become a teacher. Soon afterward, Rebbetzin Kaplan spoke about the beauty of motherhood, and the fulfillment achieved in the home. She once heard that some girls felt like second-class citizens because their *chassanim* were not going to sit and learn. At their Seminary graduation she spoke about the *talmid chacham* who has to go to work. In essence he's a *talmid chacham* even though necessity forces him into business.

A graduate teaching in Eretz Yisroel once wrote that she felt shunned by students and staff alike, but did not know why. Some time later, the principal of her school walked into her classroom and announced to the class, "We don't know what a treasure we have amongst us. This teacher is one of the most outstanding *talmidos* of Rebbetzin Kaplan, and is married to a great *talmid chacham*." This was the turning point in her career. It seems that Rebbetzin Kaplan understood the source of the problem from a distance and had written a letter to the principal, explaining that the students should not disrespect their teacher simply because she wore cosmetics. It is the American fashion. "I, too, wear lipstick at times," wrote Rebbetzin Kaplan.[16]

Ne'emonus v'Emes/Trust and Integrity

Her secretary noticed her marking down every time she ate a school lunch and paying for it at the end of the week, even though she offered lunch to her staff and considered it part of their salary.

- Clips or rubber bands in her house that may have come from school were excluded from personal use.
- Even though complimentary tickets to the annual school play were given to staff members, Rebbetzin Kaplan always paid for her own ticket.
- Whenever her children called her in school she marked down how many minutes she spoke to them and deducted the time from her base salary. (She was paid on a per-hour rate.) She kept a small notebook to record these and similar notations.
- She was allotted 15 minutes to address the audience at the Sarah Schenirer 50th Yahrzeit gathering. She practiced her speech with a timepiece again and again, to make certain that she would not be using time that was not hers.
- Her co-workers never heard her discussing personal matters on school time. When asked about a family member, she answered briefly and went on with her work. "Sometimes we worked together for hours at a stretch. I do not recall her ever mentioning family in the middle of work," reports Rebbetzin Engelsrath.
- In the '40's, Rabbi and Rebbetzin Kaplan faced a crucial decision. They had to part ways with Mr. X, the school benefactor, who felt peeved when his offer to sponsor a "charm course" for the girls was summarily overruled by the Kaplans. The financial burden was awesome; no other laymen had been cultivated during the time that Mr. X underwrote all the bills. Rebbetzin Kaplan called an assembly and explained the situation carefully to the students. She would not compromise, even when the school's very existence was at stake.

[16] Rebbetzin Kaplan opposed the use of heavy make-up. It was a theme in her last letter to her *talmidos* in the Bais Yaakov Bulletin. She never failed to put it into the context of how wonderful her *talmidos* are - if only their "outer selves" would reflect their pure "inner selves."

- Many years ago, Rebbetzin Wessel applied to Rebbetzin Kaplan for a teaching job and was turned down. She had six years of teaching experience, was highly successful, and could not understand the rejection. She pressed Rebbetzin Kaplan for an explanation and was told, "Your school is about to establish a high school. I don't want to take good teachers away from them." Only after assuring Rebbetzin Kaplan that she was leaving the previous school, regardless of whether she was accepted in Bais Yaakov, did Rebbetzin Kaplan accept her.

SEEDS OF CHESSED

In his *hesped*, Rabbi Avrohom Kaplan related how his parents spent hours trying to gain the release of two old women from a mental hospital where they had been coerced to commit themselves. It was close to sundown on Friday when the Kaplans finally found an old-age home to which the ladies could be transferred. The Kaplans left their belongings behind and walked home. The Kaplan children visited these women with Shabbos food every Friday, and Bais Yaakov girls visited them during the week... Very likely, this was the beginning of the expansive *chessed* and *bikur cholim* activities in this school, as well as schools all over the globe.

Rebbetzin Kaplan had her own agenda of private *chassodim*. For instance, she used to visit a *giyoress* on Shabbos and study with her. Later, she traveled by bus to have her *sheitl* done by this woman, to keep up the contact.

She never lost control of herself, even in the most trying situations. She once told Rebbetzin Bender that arriving home from work she would sometimes find all the children crying. To whom should she give her attention first, to the baby who was the most helpless, or perhaps to another child whose need was more urgent? She would listen to each child's story, and then decide who needed priority.

Rebbetzin Kaplan *never* raised her voice, not at home, even with her nine boys and four girls בע"ה who were very lively youngsters, and not at school. Rabbi Avrohom Kaplan does not remember his mother ever ordering her children to do something. She always said, "If it's not too hard, maybe you could do this or that..." adding, "If you don't do it, you won't be *oveir kibbud em*" - derelict in honoring your mother.

SHIR HASHIRIM

"כל השירים קודש ושיר השירים קודש קדשים"

"All the scriptures are holy, but Shir HaShirim is the holiest of the holies."

As growing administrational responsibilities forced Rebbetzin Kaplan to curtail her time in the classroom, she still taught the graduating classes one subject: *Shir HaShirim*. She taught it simply and beautifully, explaining the most complex *Rashis* in a lucid manner.

"When she mentioned 'The *Shechina* says' in her *Shir HaShirim* class, her tears flowed. We felt as if she were the author," recalls a 5744 graduate. She had not changed. Early graduates (5720) remember the same scene. "She would teach *Shir HaShirim* with a tissue in her hand, the tears rolling down her cheeks, wiping them as she taught."

Her office: Lunchtime, and hundreds of girls are milling about, there's laughter and music, and you're standing next to Rebbetzin Kaplan's door, knocking. You strain your ears to hear the melodious "Come in," lest you cause her to run and open the door for you. You take a deep breath to gain your composure, turn the knob slowly, and prepare yourself - to face the *Shechina* that rested upon her.

Others may question this description, but this is how we *talmidos* felt. Maybe that explains her *hatzlacha*. She would say *'Tzeis'chem l'shalom'* to a busload of students leaving to a Bais Yaakov convention and tell them to make a great *Kiddush Hashem*. One group ended up in eight newspapers and on many radio stations - because, caught up in a blizzard, they refused to violate the Shabbos and elected to stop in a village midway to their destination. When a student requested permission to work in a camp where there were not many Bais Yaakov girls, but she felt she could influence others, Rebbetzin Kaplan wished her *hatzlacha*, and the following year many girls from that camp joined the Seminary.

Her own children were also amazed: If Rebbetzin Kaplan said, "I don't see what you'll have from this job," the job didn't work out. If she said, "Yes, this could be," then it did work out. No wonder we'd be eager to discuss our plans with her; we felt that her *bracha* would make things go well.

V. Changing of the Guard

Erev Shabbos Nachamu, Rebbetzin Kaplan jumped out of bed two hours before *lichtbentshen*; she dreamed that she had missed candle-lighting. She *bentched* right then because she knew her family would not wake her again to light the candles. She refused to come to the Shabbos table. She was too weak to dress for Shabbos, and said it would not be a *kavod* for Shabbos to come as she was.

As she was leaving for the hospital on Sunday, the phone rang. Rebbetzin Engelsrath was calling about certain decisions. Rebbetzin Kaplan told her that she (Rebbetzin Engelsrath), together with Rabbi Kaplan's son Reb Yisroel Yaakov, and Rebbetzin Bender should make the decisions.[17] "Hashem should give you the *da'as* to make the right decisions."

"*Omein*" answered Rebbetzin Engelsrath.

At that moment Rebbetzin Kaplan transferred her life's work to others.

The doctors did not give up. "You're a diamond and we have to polish you up," they told her. They recognized the shining brilliance of this patient who, when requesting something, cautioned her children, "Maybe there isn't enough for the other patients."

Her condition deteriorated rapidly. Nothing could be done, and our diamond was taken from us. In the midst of the frenzied calls to all camps and yeshivos to say *Tehillim*, the message was changed: *We can't daven for her refuah anymore.*

Again calls were made, and we gathered to perform the final *chessed shel emes* that we could do for our great leader.

POSTSCRIPT

"Mommy, are you in *aveilus* for Rebbetzin Kaplan?" asks the writer's 5-year-old when she saw the tears streaming down my cheeks. Yes, the tears are hot under my lids when I want to say *Modeh Ani*, because Rebbetzin Kaplan is my conscience. "What would she think?" is always on my mind when making a *bracha*, because her *brachos* were always loud and clear... when taking a *bentcher* in hand to say *Birchas Hamazon*, because Rebbetzin Kaplan always reached for her Siddur after lunch... What would she think of my *davening*? She, who would put on her *sheitl* and slip on her shoes and, when asked by her children, "Ma, where are you going?" answered, "I'm not going away; I'm going to *daven Mincha*"... Would she approve of my aspirations? She would end her *brachos* with דער עיקר איז, דער רבש"ע זאל האבן נחת "The main thing is that Hashem should have *nachas*"... When I want to answer my children or my students, impatiently, and when I do answer them impatiently, what would she think? There is so much I still want to tell her, so much more time that I want to spend with her, so much more to learn...

When Sarah Schenirer passed away, the little girls in Bais Yaakov of Brisk cried. They saw all the adults crying. Rebbetzin Zeilberger remembers someone telling Rebbetzin Kaplan to calm down the little children. Rebbetzin Kaplan answered through her tears, " זאלן זיי ווייגען, זיי זאלן ווייגען Let them cry. They should cry."

And so should we.

Adapted and reprinted with permission from the Jewish Observer, Shevat 5747, Feb. 1987

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[17] Rebbetzin Kaplan's daughter, Rebbetzin Frumie Kirzner, has moved to New York from Los Angeles to become a member of the school leadership, which consults Rabbi Boruch Kaplan. Rebbetzin Kaplan had mentioned several times that she would like Frumie to come and work with her.



Rebbetzin Kaplan with the first class.

REBBETZIN KAPLAN HAD A DREAM

By: R. Blau

Rebbetzin Kaplan had a dream
To build Bais Yaakov on these shores
Way back in תרצ"ו
Bais Yaakov opened up its doors.

Its beginning was quite humble
No more than seven daughters came
Yet she taught these future mothers
How to build a Yiddishe heim.

Many flocked to hear her teachings
She lit a fire in their soul
To restore the בת ישראל
Was Rebbetzin Kaplan's sacred goal.

Refrain:
רבות בנות עשו חיל
ואת עליית עליהן
רבצין קפלן את בית יעקב
אשריכן! אשריכן!

As she taught us שיר השירים
Tears were streaming down her face
Yes, the שכינה was upon her
As she spoke in Hashem's praise.

Thousands learn, today, in כולל
In the Talmud they do toil
While her daughters
from Bais Yaakov
Stand beside them, נשי חיל!

Your dream came true, Reb. Kaplan
You have sent forth scores of מורות
To distant lands and far-off places
To teach תורה to the דורות!

We pledge to follow in your footsteps
Your מדות to emulate
For in Bais Yaakov של מעלה
You shine amongst the very great!

Refrain: ....רבות בנות עשו



Cracow Jewish Community Cemetery - Podgorze, Poland

Bais Yaakov Movement

Zichron Sarah Schenirer ע"ה

זכרון אמנו - שרה שנירר ע"ה מחוללת תנועת בית יעקב

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