

Rav Yissachar
Shlomo Teichtal
1885-1945



Boca Raton Synagogue
Rabbi Efrem Goldberg

Mishneh Sachir, Yom Kippur 5703

Rav Teichtal

I am recalling and transcribing in order not to forget what I saw and heard that Yom Kippur. A sight I had never seen before in my life. A vision that was awesome and dreadful, that Yom Kippur night.

The rabbi came into *shul*, completely bent over. Bent over from the dread of judgment. But even more contributed to his being hunched over — the pain of our generation. The rabbis who were there told me he was bent over double the way he normally was, carrying both the fear of judgment with the pain the nation of Israel was going through. He was literally bent over to the ground.

This is how he walked and stepped up to the holy Ark, and began crying out “*Shir hamaalos Mimaakim Karasicha Hashem* — from the deepest depth of pain reflecting our situation now, we CRY OUT TO YOU!”

He began to enumerate the terrible things that had befallen them.

“Where are my brothers? I’m missing my *balabatim* (congregants)!” And he started to name them: Where is this one? And this one? Last year he was here. We were ALL here together. And more and more and more — it’s impossible to recount everyone. Where is each one now?

And then he added: “Fathers who are here now are asking ‘where are our sons who were here last year?’ Sons are asking, ‘Where are our fathers who dedicated their souls to raising us, and who have now been stolen from us? Where are they?’

“The husband asks about his wife, and the wife asks about her husband. Where is she? Where is he? Small children who were stolen from their mother’s embrace, whose parents know nothing of their whereabouts.” He enumerated the multiple tragic stories that have affected families among us.

And then there was a tremendous emotional outcry, the likes I had NEVER BEFORE SEEN IN MY LIFE. Throughout the synagogue, men and women were crying, in a loud voice, screams which almost caused people to faint. Children six years old and younger were also crying in a loud voice — almost like a stone wall was crying with us without stopping.

The rabbi continued, “Avinu Malkeinu, Our Father in Heaven, *asei l’maan* — do it for the children who study! Hear the simple cries of innocent children, over whom the Satan has no prosecutorial argument. See how they have been exiled, in this most difficult way, from their mothers.

“Avinu Malkeinu, Our Father in Heaven, *asei l’maan* — do it for those who have been murdered over Your Holy Name! How many of *acheinu bnei Yisrael* (our Jewish brothers

and sisters) have been killed by the hands of the cursed ones, even though they had done NOTHING to deserve this fate!

“Avinu Malkeinu, Our Father in Heaven — have mercy upon us and our children.”

Through all of this expounding on the Avinu Malkeinus, the crying never stopped — the great sound of everyone’s voice, the broken hearts from every corner, both from the men section and the women section.

I do not have the ability to describe this awesome sight which I saw in this synagogue — the only one in the country where a large number of people gathered, *bli ayin hara*, and Hashem should add for us 1,000 times this number, as the blessing of Moshe says, “The Lord your G-d should heap upon you a thousand fold.”

In the whole country, many communities have already been destroyed, to the point that many did not even have a *minyan* in these Holy Days. And in my community of Pishtian, which had close to 500 Jewish families, since the expulsion from there from Pesach through Rosh Hashana, there are only three families left. No *minyan* at all. There is only a *minyan* where I am now because the rabbi here is a tremendous *tsaddik*, the Chief Rabbi, and in his merit, people came from all over the country to benefit from his shade.

We are very grateful to the wonderful *baalei batim*, important, wealthy, influential, God-fearing men who were able to impress upon the officials of the city not to bring about the decrees of the country to this place in the manner that has befallen other communities.

That is the main reason why this congregation is still here. Although even from here around 4,000 souls have been deported. But 1,000 people still remain here, and G-d should save them from the terrible decree. And they should remain here until G-d will bring a great salvation soon.

Many who have become refugees from their cities are here as well, such as myself and my family, and that is why there is a large contingent here.

Sermon of Rav Teichtal during the war

Based on the testimony of Mordekhai Rosenfeld, a member of Rabbi Teichtal's audience, as recorded in *Be-Sheva*, vol. 163, 3 Tishrei 5766.

"What can we say; how can we speak, and how shall we justify ourselves? God has found the sin of your servant." I shall tell you a story.

In a small town there was a *shamash* (sexton) of a synagogue who died, leaving behind a widow. The people of the community thought about how they could provide her some financial support, for at that time there was no pension for widows. Perhaps it would be possible to allow her to continue the work of her late husband. On the other hand - it is not proper for a woman to serve as the *shamash* of a synagogue. Eventually it was decided that she would carry out those activities that could be performed outside the synagogue, while the tasks of the *shamash* during prayer times would be filled by the worshippers themselves, on a voluntary basis. Thus the woman would be able to continue earning the salary that her husband had received.

It came time for "*selichot*," and as part of her job the woman had to get up and go about from house to house in the village, waking the people for *selichot*. She took the special "*selichot* stick" in her hand and headed for the most distant house in the village – the home of Weiss Shendor. When she knocked on the door, Weiss Shendor awoke, alarmed at the disturbance at such an unusual hour. When he opened the door and saw the wife of the *shamash*, he asked what she wanted. She explained that as part of her duties she had to go from house to house, waking everyone for *selichot*. When Weiss Shendor heard this, he tried to persuade her that it was not seemly for a woman to go about outside so early in the morning, in such cold and wet weather, and that it would be better if he did the job in her stead. The woman accepted the offer and handed him the "*selichot* stick," and Weiss Shendor set off to waken the people.

Upon knocking at the first house he was asked to identify himself. He answered, "I am Weiss Shendor, and I have taken it upon myself to waken the people for *selichot*."

The house owner was incensed. "Weiss Shendor? A pork-eater like you isn't going to wake me for *selichot*!" With that he slammed the door and went back to sleep.

He went off to the second house and again came the question, "Who is it?" Again he gave the same reply, and again the same response: "Weiss Shendor? A Shabbat desecrator like you will not come and wake me for *selichot*!" Again a door was slammed in his face.

The same thing happened at the next house: "A swindler and gambler like you will not wake me for *selichot*!" – and so on, at every house throughout the entire village. The wake-up round ended with nothing more to show for itself than a trail of scorn and disdain. Not a single person got up for *selichot*.

When the congregation was gathered for the morning prayers, the rabbi asked: "What happened this year, that no one came to the synagogue for *selichot*?" The people started justifying themselves and explaining that it was all Weiss Shendor's fault. He was a shady character who was notorious throughout the village; it was he who had come to awaken them for *selichot*, and that was why none of them had come.

"Fools!" responded the rabbi. "It's true that Weiss Shendor is guilty of everything that you've accused him of, but this time he was waking you for *selichot*; he wasn't doing any of the bad things that he's known for. So why didn't you get up?"



[Here Rabbi Teichtal burst into tears and shouted:] It's true that the Zionists desecrate Shabbat and so forth, but it was they who awakened the nation and shouted, "Get out of the rubble; the gentiles hate us, there is no place for us except in Eretz Yisrael" – and we didn't listen!

Let us only hope to be worthy of correcting the distortion and having God accept us in the promised land

Who, however, is this rabbi who erred in his Halakhic teaching, “because he failed to grasp the profundity of this *Halakhah*”? It is none other than the author, who wrote about himself: “I have already written in the introduction to this book of mine that **I never grasped the profundity of this** *Halakhah*, but now that I have probed it in depth, I realize that I was truly in error.”¹⁹

Then, however, the war broke out, and the troubles began. R. Teichtal’s *yeshivah* in Piešťany was closed in 1942. The students were deported, and R. Teichtal fled to Hungary. The shock that struck Slovakia and the incoming reports about the destruction of Jewish communities in Poland – of which, surprisingly, R. Teichtal was aware – gave him no rest. In a letter dated April 22, 1942, kept in the archives of the Jewish Theological Seminary,²⁰ R. Teichtal describes the dispossession and looting of the Jews of Piešťany and Slovakia and their deportation to Poland. In this document, published here for the first time, he describes where and with whom he deposited his collection of books and his Halakhic *oeuvre*, which was still in handwriting:



For everlasting memory I will record in pen, metal, and lead that in the year “Your Messiah, do not turn away” [1942], as God poured out His wrath upon the Daughter of Zion, a grave decree of total deportation was pronounced on the Jews of the communities here in the state of Slovakia, including those of our community, Pishtian [Piešťany]. May God observe from Heaven the evil and violence that are being wrought against us. They have taken our wealth and deported us all, the young, the elderly, and even tender children, with such immense cruelty that the mouth tires to recount it, and in hardship, to the ruined land of Poland, may God have mercy on us quickly, and tell our woes, “Enough.” I grieve for my collection of all manner of precious books, Responsa that I placed in the loft of the great house of study, and I grieve most of all for all of my religious writings, ten books of Responsa and sermons in handwriting. God summoned to me a

19 Ibid., p. 302. On p. 173, R. Teichtal refers to the second introduction to his book and to sources in the Talmud and the midrashic compilation *Tanna de-vei Eliyahu*. Indeed, at the beginning of the second introduction (pp. 31–33), he states, basing himself on these sources, that he had not fully fathomed the question of the rebuilding of Eretz Israel and the redemption. See his apology and admission of error, *ibid.*, p. 21.

20 Jewish Theological Seminary of America (JTS), Ms. 10633, p. 5.

loyal and trustworthy Gentile with whom I concealed all of my manuscripts along with manuscripts by other great [rabbis], such as that of my mentor and father-in-law, the holy and brilliant R. Menachem Katz of Tzelem [Deutschkreutz]. May God help me so that He will return us to placid and safe waters and privilege us with returning to our holy land. Then I will come back to this place to reclaim my manuscripts from the aforementioned Gentile.

The name of the Gentile with whom my manuscripts were placed is Michal Lehota, of 498 Žilinská Street. May God grant me the merit of witnessing the imminent redemption of Israel and God's return to Zion speedily and in our days, Amen. The fourth day of the [combined Torah portion] *Aharei* [and] *Kedoshim*, the twentieth (by the Jewish count),²¹ [the year] 702 according to the abbreviated count [April 22, 1942], Pishtian, may it be built soon, Amen. Yisachar Shlomo Teichtal, head of rabbinical court in this holy community and author of *Responsa Mishne Sahir*, in several parts (see Appendix 1).

If so, then R. Teichtal was more aware, by early 1942, of the events in Poland than research has surmised thus far.²² The letter also indicates that his thinking changed at this early stage. Now he placed his trust and desire on the Jews' return to Eretz Israel: "and privilege us with returning to our holy land." In fact, in *Em ha-Banim Semecha*, he testifies to this epiphany, brought on by the disasters that befell Slovakian Jewry. It was manifested by an intensive reexamination of the Jewish question in general, which he had largely dismissed and disregarded until the Holocaust: "I took no interest whatsoever in this because I was occupied with teaching and writing."²³

Now that we have encountered unwanted days, my mind is pre-occupied with the troubles of the generation. Therefore, I am unable to delve into ordinary Halakhic matters as has been my wont since youth, since such study requires clarity. Moreover, the storms of exile that have battered us have driven the *yeshivah* out

21 The twentieth day of the counting of the Omer.

22 See Levanon, "Sermons," pp. 45–46; Hershkowitz, "*Em ha-Banim Semecha*: From Canon to Dialectic," p. 125, n. 48.

23 *Em ha-Banim Semecha*, p. 21.

Apr 24, 2014

R' Chaim Menachem Tiechtel, 91, OBM

R' Chaim Menachem Tiechtel, one of the elder Chassidim in Israel who survived the Holocaust to raise a family of children and grandchildren who are Shluchim around the world, passed away.

By a grandchild

Walk; as if we could walk to yesterday.

Listen; for words that fade...

Sit, as we yearn to, near our Zeide, R' **Chaim Menachem Tiechtel**, in his small, Jerusalem apartment with a porch and breezy winds bringing in the freshest air in the world.

His eyes are blue and expressive, his bearing regal, and his voice poetic and strong. Looking at his noble, lined face, one could guess he lived there for at least forty years, married to **Chaya Feigel**, his soul mate, and kin. Surrounded by pictures that grace every mantel and shelf, he would joke that he needed another room just for them; one would know he established a fine family of children and grandchildren. Staring at him one would never decipher though, the invisible scrapes and bruises from the long, exile night.

In his library, he proudly takes out a brown, hard covered journal that was once hidden in a coffee can. It is an original manuscript that his scholarly father, Reb Yissacher Shlomo, had written from the attic, hiding from the Nazis. Using no references or other books, but only memory alone, the author of "Mishnah Sachir," composed another tome, "Eim Habanim Simaicha."

The papers were covered with words from margin to margin, with flowing, evenly spaced letters, as if his father, the head Rav of Pishtian, Slovakia, could sense the urgency and yet still remain driven to teach and give hope. His father, hy'd, was later murdered by peasants on a train from Auschwitz to Mathausen, when he stood up and defended a fellow Jew who held a meager slice of bread. His brother Meir was also killed, and another brother Dovid perished while hiding, for lack of medicinal care.

This, you did not see in our Saba's eyes. This, you knew from history, but in him, the strength was only a fire, to publish his father's books. Every extra earned dollar went for printing costs, translating into many languages, and to procure only the finest binding. His experience in the war was dark, but his eyes were still resplendent with warmth, his voice, pure love. At one Friday night meal as he sat at the table, clothed in his silk blue bekishe, he began to share.

"Oi ! Meh Haya Lanu! Woe was to us! We were running from the claws of the Nazi beasts, as my father had urged us to flee. We went from Belgian labor camps to Vichy, France. There the Rebbe's cousin, Reb Zalman Schneerson, housed a quasi orphanage. He hid us, though we were older than the legal limit permitted. One night, while hiding downstairs we heard the S.S. at the door. Our hearts were beating in our ears, as we heard them storm through."

"What's down there?" came the gruff echoes.

"Only books," we heard Schneerson reply.

At this, Savta interrupted with a weary wave of her hand. "Ah, why talk of those dark times."

He looked at her with the softest look, gentleness and respect in his eyes, as he, this giant of a man said, "It is when we look back, that we can truly thank Hashem for the good."

There in that Schneerson home, together with other orphans, he studied Chabad Chassidus. In his family, he had siblings that were Sanzer Chassidim, Toldos Aharon, the Halbershtam family from B'nei Brak, and even a Gaon in Slobodkia who later studied Tanya. Yet, knowing his father's high regard of Chabad, Reb Chaim Menachem directed a Chabad school in France, and later settled in Shikun Chabad, the neighborhood of Chabad in Yerushalayim with his wife, where he raised his family as proud Chassidim and Shluchim of the Rebbe.

He cared that we remain the golden links. With his gentle ways and his voice like a song, his life beckoned of the shine of the days to come.

R' Chaim Menachem passed away on 22 Nissan, 5774, on the last day of Pesach, known as the day of Moshiach. He was 91.

He leaves behind his wife, Chaya Faigel, and his children, the renowned educator HaRav **Yissacher Shlomo Tiechtel** - Crown Heights), HaRav **Dovid Tiechtel** - Shliach in Natzret Elit, Mrs. **Esti Bistrisky** - Shlucha in Tzfas, Israel, Mrs. **Gita Volpo** - Shlucha in Netanya, Israel, Mrs. **Bracha Levin** - Shlucha in Paris, France, and Rabbi **Meir Tiechtel** - Shliach in Paris, France, and their families, children and grandchildren all around the world.

The Religious Zionism of Rav Soloveitchik: A Synthesis of Worlds

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This article attempts to give a full and fair account of Rav Soloveitchik's relationship with Religious Zionism, the long journey he travelled to develop this relationship, and the synthesis of worlds that he achieved.

There are two key issues to consider; the first is why the Rav was so firmly anti-Zionist when he arrived in America. To understand this, we must discuss the Rav's historical and sociological background; his childhood in Europe and early years in America. We must also examine the trends of secularism, nationalism and communism in 19th and early 20th-century Europe, along with the responses of the Yeshiva world.

The second issue is how the impact of the Holocaust and birth of the State of Israel caused the Rav to fundamentally change his perspective. We will examine the philosophy of activism and Religious Zionism that he developed, and consider the nature of the Rav's Zionism and how his independent thought, creative intellect and family heritage gave rise to a Zionism different to that of other 20th-century thinkers.

The Rav's Agudah Philosophy

Attitude formation is a complex process. Attitudes develop based on a complex interplay between environmental factors, familial influences, personal experiences and intellectual arguments. This section will highlight several factors that were key to the formulation of the Rav's initial Agudist philosophy. We will highlight: his family influence, the struggles faced by his father teaching in a Mizrachi school, his exposure to the world of Agudah in Berlin, and the role models he found when beginning life in America.

Rav Chaim of Brisk

During the 19th century, deep rifts spread across the Jewish world. The secularism of enlightenment philosophy clashed with the Torah values of Orthodoxy. The political trend of

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nationalism in the 19th century also deeply impacted the Jewish world. If the Italians, Germans and Hungarians could have their own autonomous states, then perhaps this could also be a realizable dream for the Jewish people. The desire to return to Jerusalem and renew the link with *Eretz Yisrael* is embedded in religious thought and prayer, and nationalism provided a secular language in which to express this religious ideology. The continued presence of persecution and anti-Semitism acted to crystallize Jewish nationalism, and it was following the tragic accusation of Dreyfus for treason against France that Theodore Herzl first gave form to the dream of a Jewish State in Israel.

Zionism caused a huge upheaval in the Yeshiva world. Herzl appealed to many Jews, but the religious world recoiled from the practical secularism that he preached. The yeshiva world of Eastern Europe was partially isolated from the powerful influence of the Enlightenment, yet ideas still travelled from Western Europe and could have strong impacts. The most famous yeshiva of those times was Volozhin, and this drama was played out in their *beit midrash* even before Herzl began his campaign.

The most famous rosh yeshiva of Volozhin was the Netziv, Rav Naftali Zvi Yehuda Berlin; he was well versed in Enlightenment literature and was a passionate supporter of the nascent Zionist vision. His son, Rabbi Meir Berlin (who later changed his last name to Bar-Ilan), became the president of World Mizrahi, which the Religious Zionist Organization founded in 1902, and his closest student was Rav Kook.

The co-rosh yeshiva of Volozhin was Rav Joseph Dov Soloveitchik, and, though he left Volozhin to become the rabbi of Slutsk, his son, Rav Chaim Soloveitchik, stayed in Volozhin and soon rose to the fore. He became a dominant personality in the yeshiva, with many followers. Rav Chaim was vehemently opposed to Zionism, which he viewed as godless secular nationalism, which would only result in taking Jews away from Judaism. However, he deeply loved and cared about the holiness of the Land of Israel, delivering high level *shiurim* on *Kodashim* and *Taharot* (two complex areas of the Talmud that are mostly applicable in Temple times). This duality was a key component of the Rav's heritage.

Rav Moshe Soloveitchik in Warsaw

The Rav's father, Rav Moshe Soloveitchik, began his main rabbinic career as the community rabbi of the town of Khislavichi, where the Jewish population was mostly Lubavitch and religious. The Russian revolution changed Jewish life irreparably. Communism rampaged throughout Russia and religious life was decimated. Communism engendered a deep hatred of tradition and religion, and many youth were swept up in the tide as it engulfed the country. The Rav's family managed to escape from communist Russia and arrived in Warsaw. Warsaw was a center of Ger Chassidism and the Chassidic towns in Russia were centers of the newly founded Agudah movement. Agudah was founded in 1912 with the intention of creating an over-arching organization to unite Torah Jews in the face of secularizing influences. However, the conservative element rapidly gained dominance within the organization and Agudah came to be defined in opposition to Mizrahi and its support for Zionism. Agudah stood for the values of traditional European Torah Jewry and it was within this environment of ideological conflict that the Rav grew up.

Rav Moshe began teaching in a Mizrahi school, an enlightened institution in which secular studies were encouraged alongside Jewish studies. The Rav saw how his father was mocked and rejected by his family due to his association with a Mizrahi institution. Furthermore, the Rav saw his father suffering within the school, as his conservative views differed from the more radical and modern approach of certain members of the faculty. The intense sensation of pain a child feels when he sees his father unhappy runs deep, and the Rav's childhood experiences of watching his father suffer firmly established a negative association with Mizrahi organizations.

Life in Berlin

In 1926, the Rav travelled to Berlin, the center of the German Jewish world. The Judaism and rabbinic life in Berlin was a world away from that which he had been exposed to in either Russia or Poland. He was exposed to the world of Torah and *Derech Eretz*, the legacy of Rav Hirsch. He attended *shiurim* of the *Sridei Aish*, went to visit Hildesheimer, and encountered a *beit midrash* full of rabbinic students with a mature secular education. This was not the Agudah that the Rav was exposed to in Russia, this was Agudah with PhDs; sophisticated, educated and worldly. The Rav was overawed by this experience. During the six years he spent in Berlin, he mixed with the greatest Jewish thinkers of the 20th century, and was in the thrall of the great leaders of the Agudah movement. The Rav aspired to follow this path, to become one of these great Agudah leaders, entrenched in the world of Torah and of tradition, yet also well versed in secular philosophy, science and politics.

Agudah in America

The third factor that influenced the formulation of the Rav's Agudist position was the role models he encountered in America. In 1932, the Rav came to the United States, brought in by the Chicago Hebrew Theological College. When the Depression hit the American economy, the community was unable to honor the contract, and so the Rav moved to Boston. Religious life in Boston was a challenge and the person that Rav Soloveitchik respected most was Rabbi Eliezer Silver. Rabbi Silver was the first American-made *talmid chacham*, a student of Rav Chaim Ozer who had come to America and worked in the insurance business before serving as a community rabbi in Harrisburg. In 1937, Rabbi Silver led the American delegation to the last European Agudah conference, and received a mandate to establish Agudah in the United States. Rav Soloveitchik was one of the founding members. In the late 1930s, when the rabbinic leaders of Agudah refused to support a boycott of Germany and of Hitler, the Rav sided with them. This decision seems perverse in hindsight, but we must recall that Agudah of the 1930s was still stuck in the mind-set of the ghetto. They maintained an inherent aversion to confronting government authority and they felt that a boycott would only anger Hitler and make the situation worse for European Jews.

The highlight of the Rav's Agudist career was the eulogy he gave in 1940 for Rav Chaim Ozer. This was the clearest, most expressive and eloquent expression of Agudah philosophy ever given on American soil. The Rav described two of the unique garments of the *kohen gadol* (high priest): the *tzitz* (head-plate) and the *choshen* (breast-plate). The *tzitz* represents the mind committed to halachic issues for which the *kohen gadol* is the ultimate authority, and the *choshen* represents worldly issues, the political, the military and the questions of practical reality for which the *kohen gadol* must also be the ultimate arbiter. There can be no separation between the



bearer of the *tzitz* and the *choshen*; rabbinic control must be absolute in both realms. The Rav fully condoned the actions of the Agudah in not boycotting Hitler, and echoed Rav Chaim Ozer's disapproval of Zionism and the secularizing influences with which it was inextricably linked. For the Rav, secular Zionism's attempt to sever itself from the domain of halachah and from the purview of rabbinic authority could not be tolerated.

Antithesis and Synthesis

We now deal with the issue of how the Rav justified the switch from being a committed Agudist to being a powerful and eloquent advocate for Religious Zionism. The Rav himself described this process in terms of a dialectic comprised of three stages: his thesis was Agudah, the primacy of the insulated Torah community and adherence to doctrine as defined by the rabbinic leadership; the antithesis was the pain, disaster and destruction of the Holocaust; and his synthesis was an activist Religious Zionism. In this section we explain the latter two stages of this journey and distinguish between two fundamental components of his great synthesis; first, the necessity for constant, dynamic reevaluation of *hashkafic* (worldview) decisions, and second, the religious mandate of activism and creativity. The Rav dealt extensively with the question of the rationale behind his change of heart, and we draw from his own allegory and exegesis to support and explain this process.

Rejection and Destruction

The initial catalyst for the Rav's change of heart came in 1943, when the horrific nature of the destruction being wreaked among European Jewry became evident. American Jewry woke up to Hitler's crimes and many members of the Agudah leadership, who had rejected a boycott in the 1930s, announced that the time had come to take action. Two days before Yom Kippur, Agudah leaders, the Rav among them, marched to Congress to request a meeting with the president. The greatest rabbinic delegation that America could muster was denied an audience. Their protest went unanswered and they returned home, defeated and dejected. When the full extent of the destruction of European Jewry became apparent, the knowledge that six million Jews had been murdered and countless communities obliterated caused deep and lasting mental anguish. Furthermore, it caused the Rav to make a frank and full reevaluation of his philosophy. The Rav came to the decision that he had been wrong; he had been wrong about the primacy of rabbinic edict in the realm of *hashkafah*, and he had been wrong about the relevance of Jewish activism.

Religious Innovation—Yosef and the Brothers

In his addresses to the American Mizrahi Association, which were subsequently transcribed as the *Chamesh Derashot*, the Rav explained the first aspect of this change of heart. The Rav noted that in the realm of halachah, the rabbinic majority reigns supreme. G-d gave the Torah to man and our capacity for halachic creativity and decision-making is axiomatic to a live and vibrant relationship to G-d. In *hashkafah* however, the rules are different. For questions that are outside the four volumes of the *Shulchan Aruch*, the focus is not on man's insight and deduction, rather we have to be constantly evaluating what it is that G-d wants of man. We have to continually reevaluate our decisions to ensure they align with *ratzon Hashem* (the will of G-d), and we have to adapt to the world around us. In *hashkafah*, there is no edict that is infallible and no rebbe



who is exempt from this obligation for constant reappraisal and review. Once halachah is fixed by man it becomes law that even G-d cannot alter, the heavenly voice affirms *lo bashamayim hi*—it is not in heaven. *Hashkafah*, however, must be in a constant state of flux and adaptation.

The Rav connected this message to the conflict between Yosef and his brothers. All the children of Ya'akov knew that there would be an exile, as had been told to Avraham. Yosef wanted to question the comfortable life of the family and challenge them to rethink the status quo of life in Canaan in preparation for the inevitable trials ahead. The brothers rejected this. They judged Yosef guilty of treason for even suggesting it; they were happy with life in Canaan, comfortable, settled and secure. The divine voice rang out that Yosef was right. Yosef's visions proved true and he eventually ended up as viceroy over all of Egypt, able to guide them safely to Egypt and soften the blow of exile. The Rav explained that the Mizrachi of 1902 represented Yosef Hatzadik and Agudah represented the other brothers. Mizrachi wanted to reevaluate Jewish life in Europe, to prepare for the Jewish future and ensure Jewish continuity, whereas Agudah were content with the status quo. Mizrachi fought and dreamed, and without them there would have been no place for refugees to go to following the war. Without the *yishuv*, Hitler would have killed Judaism. The Rav saw this as a full retroactive justification of Mizrachi philosophy.

Activism—Ya'akov and Eisav

The second component of the Rav's Religious Zionism was activism, the necessity for Jews to take a stand in world affairs, to be people of deeds as well as of books. He developed this philosophy building within the tradition of his father and grandfather. The essence of the Brisk conception of Torah is the mandate of *imitatio Dei*, intellectual creativity of man emulating the creativity of G-d through the study of Torah. The Rav felt that this creative power must also be actualized beyond the realm of the intellect and carried into the outside world. To substantiate this message, the Rav drew from the episode in which Rivkah engineers a deception of Yitzchak to give the *brachot* (blessings) to Yaakov. He described Yitzchak as the epitome of holiness and sanctity, the *korban shelamim* who never left the Land of Israel. According to Yitzchak's worldview, the best possible path for Ya'akov was to be as an "*ish yoshev ohalim*" (a man who dwelled in tents), insulated from the outside world, shielded from mundane physical, economic and political realities and able to focus solely on the study of Torah. According to Yitzchak's vision, if Ya'akov was ever in need of assistance in practical matters, he could turn to his brother Eisav, the worldly industrialist. That was the view of Yitzchak. Rivkah, however, thought differently; she told Ya'akov to go out into the field, to fight for the blessings of heaven and earth and to gain a foothold in the outside world. She realized that this was the only viable way in which the tent of Torah could survive. The Rav believed that the vision of Mizrachi was to extend beyond the tent of Torah, to establish the ownership of the Jewish people of the Land of Israel in the way that the returning exiles did in the times of Ezra, through weeding and plowing, digging wells and fortifying borders. The Rav came to believe with a full heart that the true achievement of the State of Israel was the creation of a people with a Gemarah in one hand and a plowshare in the other. This activism was at the heart of his Zionism and at the focus of his entire worldview.



The knock of opportunity—*Kol Dodi Dofek*

Activism comes with obligation. If G-d gave us the power to act, we have a responsibility to do so. The Rav elucidated this beautifully in his 1956 speech at Yeshiva University entitled "*Kol Dodi Dofek*." He told Shir Hashirim's tragic story of a couple deeply in love. One night the young lover knocks on his beloved's door, but she is too tired and tells him sleepily to go away and come back tomorrow. She awakens the next day and goes to look for him; she searches but eventually realizes that he is gone forever, lost to her for all time because she missed her opportunity. The Rav argued that each of us is given a chance to reach for something, to become great and to actualize our potential. We learn from Shir HaShirim that we must not let our apathy, feelings of inadequacy or laziness spoil this opportunity. The Rav spoke of six knocks on the collective door of the Jewish people, six awakenings to call us to awaken and reach for greatness. These six knocks were the six miraculous events accompanying the establishment of the State of Israel:

- The first knock was political; the alliance of the United States and USSR to vote for the existence of the Jewish State.
- The second was military; the victory of the tiny Jewish forces, handicapped by an arms embargo and massively outnumbered.
- The third was theological; the refutation of Christian doctrine by demonstrating that the Jewish people will again be a vibrant player on the world stage.
- The fourth was sociological; the fact that Jews from around the world felt proud to be Jewish and free to re-engage with their Jewish identity.
- The fifth was an international change of attitude due to the birth of the State of Israel; the fact that Jews had a position of power and a homeland meant that Jewish blood could no longer be spilt freely and without fear of retribution.
- The sixth and final knock was the influx of exiles; the return to Israel of Jews from across the world.

This speech became the most famous exposition of Religious Zionist thought given in the 20th century, and the philosophy it contained was a result of the Rav's personal journey over the previous decades.

Brisker Zionism

The Religious Zionist thought developed by Rav Soloveitchik was significantly different to that of other 20th-century thinkers. For both Rav Soloveitchik and Rav Kook, Zionism was connected to Torah. For Rav Kook, however, Zionism was an *a priori* reflection of his Torah perspective, as obvious as *tefillah*, Shabbat or *kashrut*. For the Rav, Zionism was a *posteriori*, a position adopted after tumult and struggle. The Rav, therefore, did not grant Zionism an independent mandate in religious life. He rejected the position of Nachmanides, elucidated in his commentary on *Acharei Mot* (18:25), that mitzvot can only be properly fulfilled in Israel and that, therefore, *yishuv Eretz Yisrael* (settling the Land of Israel) is more important than all the other commandments combined. This position would lead to the conclusion that Zionism is more important than every other aspect of Torah life. The Rav whole-heartedly rejected this; he believed that Zionism, as with every other *hashkafah*, must be actualized solely within the bounds of a rigid



halachic framework. This position often put the Rav at odds with other Mizrachi thinkers who followed the teachings of Rav Kook and saw Zionism as of supreme importance within religious life.

The Rav often quoted the Mishnah in *Yoma* 8:5, which states that if a person is ill on Yom Kippur, then we ask a doctor whether they must eat; the rabbi has no say in the matter. The Rav felt adamant that *yishuv Eretz Yisrael* is similar to Yom Kippur. Just as Yom Kippur is disregarded to save a life, so too is *yishuv Eretz Yisrael*. Thus, when the question of land for peace arose in the 1970s, he felt that the military and political experts ought to determine the best course of action.

Conclusion

Rav Soloveitchik was arguably the greatest exponent of Religious Zionism in the latter half of the 20th century and he travelled a long path to reach this position. By the 1930s, the Rav had become a fervent Agudist. This position stemmed from his family background and formative experiences in Europe and America. It took the war and subsequent establishment of the State of Israel to force the Rav to reevaluate his approach and come to the belief that the Agudah worldview was no longer tenable. He constructed a majestic Religious Zionism built on activism and the passionate desire to seek out G-d's guiding hand in the world. He became an ardent Zionist and a member of Mizrachi yet always maintained his independent view. Each decision he made was subjected to rigorous analysis and halachah was never subjugated in favor of Zionist sentiment.

His switch from Agudah to Mizrachi was a testament to his intellectual honesty and personal conviction. It was hard for the Rav to differ from his family, change his associations and uproot his worldview, yet he came to see this as a fulfillment of two fundamental religious obligations; the drive to attune with the will of G-d and the mandate to emulate G-d's creativity, to be an activist and make an impact in the wider world. Both the content and context of his Zionist philosophy have beautiful and powerful messages for us all.

doctrine underwent major, if not revolutionary, changes. The first studies tended to view him as an out-and-out Zionist; later research challenged the identification of R. Teichtal with religious Zionism and attempted to show that the portrayal is different, broader, and more complex. I wish to argue that the complexity evinced in the more recent studies dulls if not blurs R. Teichtal's Zionism in general and his views — which approximate those of the messianic Zionism of Rabbi Abraham Isaac Hacoen Kook — in particular. I demonstrate this below.

The Transformation

Rabbi Teichtal took vehement exception to the Zionist project in writing and evidently verbally as well. His written censure of Zionism appeared in 1936, in a letter to the Munkács newspaper *Yiddishe Tsaytung*, which was subsequently published in *Tikkun 'Olam*, a collection of letters and articles initiated by the Munkacser *Rebbe*, R. Chaim Elazar Shapira (1871–1937), head of the anti-Zionist ultra-Orthodox camp.⁷ The collection challenged both the Mizrachi (religious-Zionist) movement and Agudas Yisroel.⁸ R. Teichtal's letter is, in fact, one of the most extreme contributions in the collection:

Our rabbi the Ba"r [Joel Sirkis, author of *Bayit Hadash*]...wrote that the sanctity of the earthly Eretz [Israel] emanates from the sanctity of the heavenly Eretz Israel and this sanctity enters its fruit. Thus, by eating its fruit, we are nourished on the sanctity and purity of the *Shekhinah* [the Divine presence or abode]. The opposite also obtains, Heaven forbid: If Eretz Israel is defiled, this impurity is also drawn into its fruit and, by eating fruit that draws its nourishment from the impurity of Eretz Israel, the impurity penetrates the innards of the Jews, may the Merciful One

College, 1992), p. 47; Farbstein, *In the Hiding Places*, p. 578, n. 46. A third perspective, mentioned below, is that of Isaac Hershkowitz, *Vision of Redemption*, "Em ha-Banim Semeha: From Canon to Dialectic" (Hebrew), *Alei Sefer*, 22 (2012), pp. 115–127.

7 Moshe Goldstein, ed., *Tikkun 'Olam* (Hebrew) (Munkacs: np, 1936), pp. 104–107. About the Munkacser *Rebbe*, see Levi-Izhak Cooper, *The Admor Rabbi Chaim Elazar Shapira of Munkács: The Hasidic Posek – Image and Approach* (Hebrew) (Ph.D. dissertation, Bar-Ilan University, 2011).

8 See title page of *Tikkun 'Olam*.

spare us, and the sanctity leaves them and the *Shekhinah* among the Jews vanishes. So says the Ba”h....After all, it is known that the heavenly Eretz Israel is the foundation [*sod*] of Zion and Jerusalem; the evil forces [*kelipot*] surround [them] and are called *arelim* [uncircumcised/as-yet-unfit for consumption] because Mount Zion is surrounded by Esau and Amalek. Now that the building of the Land of Israel is at issue, every Jew should learn this in order to gain some grasp of what the true Eretz Israel is....The [verse fragment] *erets okhelet yoshveha hi* [“a land that consumes its inhabitants”; Numbers 13:32] indicates this: [Eretz Israel] consumes those who wish to settle there serenely and high-handedly merely to consume its fruit....The aforementioned remarks of the Ba”h invite another allusion: The impurity enters via its fruit and Jews who consume it force the sanctity out of their bodies and [the fruit] turns into thorns in their bodies. Thus it is stated, *mi-dor dor* [“from generation to generation”; Exodus 17:16], in a diminishing from the wording *qots ve-dardar tatsmi’ah* [“thorns and thistles shall (the land) bring forth”; Genesis 3:18]. For this is the essence of what Amalek does: defile the Land and make its fruit *qots ve-dardar* for the Jews....In truth, no human deed and act will be of any use whatsoever in raising the fortunes of Zion and Jerusalem until God observes from Heaven and basks us in an all-embracing spirit of celestial purity to immerse us in new luminescence from the six days of Creation in the revelation of the hidden light upon Zion....Until such time as God renews the hidden light, we have no vocation other than Torah by gathering and teaching pupils in *chadarim* [singular, *cheder*, religious school for young boys] and *yeshivot* [singular, *yeshivah*, religious academy for older males] on the path that we received from our forebears...namely, only by study of the Holy Torah in the old and accepted guileless way will we merit the redemption.⁹

Shmuel Weingarten and later Isaac Hershkowitz¹⁰ claimed that the contents of this letter should not be considered a rejection of *aliyah* and evidence of an outlook that counsels passive waiting for Divine

9 *Tikkun ‘Olam*, pp. 104–107.

10 Weingarten, “From *Yeven Metsula* to the Celestial Jerusalem,” p. 236; Hershkowitz, *Vision of Redemption*, pp. 51–57.

לנעמן ואמר לו בדרך עצה הלך ורחצת בירדן ז' פעמים וישב בשרך לך וטהר, ושום נברא לא הרגיש כלל שהוא איזה תפלה, כמו כן אתה לא עת תפלה להאריך ולעמוד כדרך שמתפללים בתנועות מורגשות, רק דבר אל בני ישראל ויסעו, ר"ל תלביש תפילתך בדיבורים פשוטים בדברך אליהם שיסעו. וזה שאמר המדרש הה"ד ותגזור אומר ויקם לך, והוא ע"ד ששמעתי בשם מרן הרה"ק ר' מאיר'ל מפרימישלאן בפסוק [דברי הימים א, כט, יז] "ויברך דוד את ה' לעיני כל הקהל ויאמר דוד", ר"ל דוד הסתיר תפלתו וברכתו כ"כ עד שלעיני כל הקהל הי' נראה רק ויאמר דוד כמו אומר ומדבר עם אנשים. כמו כן אמר לו הקב"ה ותגזור אומר, ר"ל שילביש תפילתו באמירה בעלמא שלא ירגישו כלל שהוא מתפלל, רק כאומר דבר אל רעהו, אז ויקם לך בודאי כי לא ימצא קיטרוג. וזה המכוון אמר הקב"ה למשה מה תצעק דבר אתה ואני עושה, ר"ל למשה מה תצעק בתפלה שירגישו בתפלתך, דבר אתה ר"ל הלבש תפלתך בדיבורך שיהא נראה שאתה רק מדבר ולא מתפלל, ואני דייקא אני, הרואה ללבב ויודע שתכין לבך בתפלה, אני עושה, וא"ש.

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מה תצעק אלי דבר אל בני ישראל ויסעו

[יד, טו]

פרש"י מלמד שהי' עומד ומתפלל יעי"ש. והוא פלא מה היא גערת השי"ת למשה שהי' עומד ומתפלל לישועת ישראל, דמה לו לצדיק אמת לעשות יותר בעת שישראל בעת צרה מלהתפלל להי' שיושיע את ישראל בעת צרתם ולמה גער בו.

ויראה בס"ד עם מה שראיתי למורי הצדיק מחוסט ז"ל בספרו ערוגת הבושם סוף פ' בהעלותך ויב, יג בפסוק "ויצעק משה אל ה' לאמור אל נא רפא נא לה", פרש"י שלא האריך משה בתפלה שלא יהיו ישראל

תפלה ומוכח מאלישע משום דכל מה דעבד ברחמי הוא דעבד. והנה כשאמר אלישע לנעמן "לך ורחצת ז' פעמים בירדן וישב בשרך לך וטהר", זהו בעצם כיון לתפלה וברכה, ורק הלביש תפלתו בהדיבורים שדבר אל נעמן, ונעמן לא הבין זה, על כן חרה אפו ואמר "הנה אמרתי אלי יצא יצוא ועמד וקרא בשם ה' אלקיו והניף ידו אל המקום ואסף המצורע הלא טוב אמנה" כו', ר"ל כיון שהוא לא הרגיש כלל שהתפלל כיון שלא ראהו עומד ומתפלל, כדרך המתפלל להיות עומד מרעיד ולהניף ידו בתנועת שונות, ויען שהוא לא ראה כל זאת חשב שלא התפלל כלל רק דבר אליו כדבר איש אל רעהו, על כן קצף עליו. אבל עבדיו הרגישו בתפילת אלישע "ויאמרו לו אבי דבר גדול" היינו תפילה, כמו שמבואר בגמרא הנ"ל גדולות היינו תפילה, ומוכח לה מאלישע, "דבר אליך הנביא", ר"ל אף כי רק דבר אליך עכ"ז הוא גדול - היינו תפלה, וא"כ הלא תעשה, ואף כי אמר אליך רחץ וטהר כדבר איש אל רעהו, מ"מ בזה מלובשת תפלה לשמים, עכ"ד ודפח"ת.

המורם מדבריו דבעת שח"ו יש קיטרוג למעלה, אז טוב להלביש תפילתו בדיבורים פשוטים כדבר איש אל רעהו ושלא ירגישו כלל בתפלתו, וכדברי אלישע אל נעמן דא"ל רחץ וטהר, אשר נעמן לא הרגיש כלל שהוא תפילה וחשב שהוא רק דרך עצה.

והנה כאן ביציאת ישראל ממצרים הי' קיטרוג גדול כידוע [עי' שמו"ר כא, ז] ששרו של מצרים טען הללו והללו כו', ומשה הי' עומד ומתפלל כדרך המתפללין בתנועות מורגשות והניף ידו אל ה', ואמר לו הקב"ה מה תצעק אלי, ר"ל עתה שישראל נתונים בעת צרה למעלה בבי"ד שלמעלה שמדת הדין עומד ומקטרג, לא עת להאריך בתפלה רק דבר אל בני ישראל ויסעו, ר"ל רק ילביש תפלתו בדיבורים פשוטים, כמו שעשה אלישע לנעמן שהלביש תפלתו בדברו

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שיושיע את ישראל מצרתן, וע"ז התרעם עליו השי"ת ישראל נתונים בצרה ואתה עומד ומתפלל, "דבר אל בני ישראל ויסעו", היינו דייקא דבר, שאתה יכול לפעול בדיבור לבד ולמה לך להאריך בתפלה ולהאריך בצרתן, וכן הי' באמת שאמר להם ליסע ובא הישועה עפ"י דרך נס. כן יעשה לנו ה' נסים בב"א וא"ש.

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מה תצטק אלי דבר אל בני ישראל ויסעו

[יד, טו]

הנה אנו אומרים בכל יום אני מאמין באמונה שלימה בביאת המשיח ואע"פ שיתמחה עכ"ז אחכה לו בכל יום שיבוא. וכן אמרו חז"ל במדרש [ילקוט פרשת בשלח רמז רמ], חמה מולא שלא נגאלו מצומיני ממנרים אלא צומת אמונה שהאמינו, שנאמר: 'ויאמן העם' וכן חמה מולא שאין סגליות ממננסות אלא צשכר אמונה, שנאמר 'אמי מלצנון לכה' וגו', וארשמיך לי לעולם... וארשמיך לי באמונה, עכ"ל המדרש.

אבל, תדע שאמונה בלא מעשה לא סגי ולא מהני, וכמו שראיתי בספר הנפלא "יד יוסף" להחכם האלקי ר' יוסף צרפתי, שהיה רב בק"ק אנדרינפול בשנת שע"ז, בדרוש שני לסוכות, שכתב בביאור המדרש [ש"ט ק"ב] "תכתב זאת לדור אחרון" אלו דורות שהן נטויין למיתה. "ועם נברא יהלל ידה" [תהלים קב, יט] שעתיד הקב"ה לברוא אותם בריה חדשה. ומה עלינו ליקח - לולב ואתרוג ונקלס לקב"ה. לפיכך. משה מזהיר לישראל "ולקחתם לכם ביום הראשון" [ויקרא כג, מ], ע"כ המדרש¹⁰. והקשה: איך תמשך ממה שאמר שהקב"ה עתיד לברוא אותנו בריה חדשה השאלה "ומה עלינו ליקח", דמי מחייב אותנו משום שהקב"ה יעשה אותנו בריה חדשה לקחת שום דבר ששאל "ומה

אומרים אחותו עומדת בצרה והוא עומד ומרבה בתפלה, וצ"ע להבין הדברים מה הי' העוולה אם הי' מרבה בתפלה לעורר רחמים עליה. וכתב לפרש עפ"י הרמב"ן בשם ר"ח בביאור חטא מי מריבה, שהחטא הי' שאמרו [שם כ, ח] וכי מן הסלע הזה נוציא לכם מים, דמשמע כאילו אין בכחו של משה רבינו למשול על הטבע ולהוציא מים מן הסלע בדיבורו, ובאמת כל הטבע משועבד אל התורה ולומדיה, וכמו כן י"ל דהא יש לצדיק כח בדיבורו כדכתיב ותגזר אומר ויקם לך [איוב כב, כח], צדיק אומר וגזר והקב"ה מקיים [תענית כג, א], וא"כ הי' יכול משה רבינו להפיק לה רפואה בדרך הנ"ל בלי הארכת תפלה רק בדיבורו לבד לאמר ולדבר לה' שירפא לה, והיינו דחשש משה רבינו ע"ה שלא יתרעמו ישראל עליו על שהוא מאריך בתפלה ואינו פועל על דרך הנ"ל, עכ"ל ושפתים ישק.

ובמו כן י"ל בביאור פסוק שלפנינו, דהנה החילוק בין אם רוצין לפעול ישועה ע"י תפילה או ע"י בחינת צדיק גזר והקב"ה מקיים היינו בדיבור לבד, הוא מבואר היטב, דע"י תפלה יוכל להיות ע"י כל אדם אפילו ע"י קטן שבקטנים, אם שופך תפילתו לפני שומע תפלה בהכנעה ובשבירת לב לא תשוב תפילתו ויקם, משא"כ בבחינת דיבור וגזרה שיגזור אומר ויקם, לזה צריך להיות צדיק אמת בבחינת צדיק מושל ביראת אלקים [שמו"ב כג, ג], מי מושל בי - צדיק [מ"ק טז, ב], אשר אין זוכים לזה כי אם מבני עליה והמה מועטים. והנה משה רבינו ע"ה בגודל ענותנותו, ומה גם בתחלת ימי נשיאותו, ודאי לא החזיק עצמו לצדיק שיהיה יכול לפעול בדיבורו לבד, על כן עשה כמו אחד מפשרטי ישראל שראה ישראל נתונים בצרה שפך תפילתו לפני בורא כל העולמים

10 ע"י ש"ט פרשה קב [מהדורת בובר אות ג] ; ילקוט"ש ח"ב, רמז התנה בסופו, עוד ע"י ויק"ר פרשה ל, אות יב.



YISACHAR SALOMO TEICHTAL

[1943 - 850465]

ובמדרש וירושלמי, ודגאולה תדיה קימעא קימעא ולא בבא אחת, על כן יצטרך להיות קיבוץ ישראל בארץ ישראל קודם הגאולה האמיתית, כדי לצאת חתילה מתחילת הרעה — שהיא הפיזור והגלות — לרע אמצעי שהוא רק חורבן בית המקדש, אבל ישראל המה במקומה, ואח"כ כשנתיה מקובצים בארץ ישראל יש תקנה לאחידותנו, וכמו שכתב החת"ס (שם), דהיינו שאחיותם יהיה שלום ביניהם והוא תקות ואחיות טובה להם, וע"י השלום שיהיה ביניהם, ישובו בניו לגבולם, ויבנה בית המקדש, ולא תהיה שנאה ביניהם כגומל חורבן בית שני. עיי"ש, שהארץ בנעם אמיתיותו.

ונראה לי להוסיף על דברי הקדושים, ולבאר אור יגורם הקיבוץ שיהיה נעשה חתילה בארץ ישראל, אף בלי בנין בית המקדש, למעט פיזור הגליות. אף דא אפשר בחתילה לקיבוץ את כל האומה בכללה בארץ ישראל, עד שכמה שהארץ תתפשט עודה לאסוף עליה את כל בניה, כמו שאמר ד"ל⁸⁷, שארץ ישראל דומה לצבי כידוע, ועל כרחך ישארו עוד ישראל כבצרות הגרים עד שת בא דבר לקיבוץ בתוכה כלל כל ישראל, וכמו שכתב הדמב"ק⁸⁸ על דברי יעשיה שאמר "גם ה' אלקים מקבץ דהני ישראל, עד אקבץ עליי לנקבציו"⁸⁹ — פיודשו, שמתחילה יקבץ רבים מנהגי ישראל ולא כולם, ואחר מלהמת גוג אמר "עוד אקבץ עליי לנקבציו", שיתקבצו שנית על הנקבצים שנקבצו כבר. נראה לי, דבזה שיעשה קיבוץ ישראל בתוככי ירושלים וארץ ישראל, יהיה נעשה ע"י זה מרכז כללי לישראל בכלל, עד שאפילו אלו שישארו בגולה יהיו עיניהם ולבם שם, ויהיו אגודים וקשודים בכל ימי נשמותיהם למרכז הכללי שנוחטו בארץ ישראל, עד שזה יהיה מאחד ומאגד אותם יחד אף בגולה, ולא יהיה פיזורם נחשב לפיזור כלל, כי כולנו אגודים ומאחדים יחד למרכז אשר בארץ ישראל. משא"כ עתה, שה פזורה ישראל⁹⁰, וכשה אובד בין העמים, ואין לאף אחד שתופות עם חבירו ישראל, והמה כאברים המדולדלים ככל מקומות מושבותיהם מכלי איגוד ואיחד עם הפזר, וכל שכן עם הכלל, על כן, הוא פיזור כאמת ותכלית הרע, רחמנא ליצלן, כי כלנו ממש הפקר כדגו הים, כמו שראינו בשנים הקשות והאחרונות — שכל פוזות וגורע כפה ידו בנו, ועשה עמנו מה שלבו חפץ מהשפלות והרציונות מכלי גבול ומבלי שום קבלה אחריות על מעשיו שעשה עמנו, כי אין לבן בליעל הזה למי לתת דין וחשבון על מעשיו שעושה עמנו. משא"כ אם נייסד בעור ה' מרכז כללי בארץ ישראל, ותהדרם קרינו בכבוד נגד כל עמי הארץ, ונחשב לאומה יקרה וחשובה בכלל, וכדאיתא במדרש (שיר השירים⁹¹) על פסוק "הבן לה' משפחת עמים, הבן לה' כבוד ועז"⁹² — כשתהיו מביאין אותן לא תביאו דרך בזיון אלא בכבוד ועז, עיי"ש. אז אף הפרט שישאר בגולה — לא יהיה הפקר מכלי אחיות, כי כל הרצפה לעשות אוהו דבר חזמט בנו, ידע שיהיה מי שיבקש ממנו דין וחשבון על מעשיו, ויקבל אחריות על פעולותיו, על כן יהיה בשב ואל תעשה⁹³, ולא יעשה דבר שאינו הגון עמנו. נמצא, דע"י הקיבוץ שיהיה נעשה בארץ, נצא מתחילת הרע אף בגולה, וזה אמת וברור, וגם יגורם קיבוץ לבבות כל ישראל אף בגולה, ויהיה שלום בינינו, ונשיג האחרית והתקנה הטובה לבוא על ידה לגאולה שלימה בב"א.

ג. ואחר שבאנו במה"ש שגאולתנו שאנו מצפים לה כל כך תהיה לאט לאט ממדרגה למדרגה, נכון מה שהביא החת"ס בדרשותיו שנתפס מקרוב (בדרוש אלו חק"פ⁷⁶), שנראה מדברי הרמב"ם (בסנהדרין פ"ק א'⁷⁷) שיתקבצו ישראל חתילה יחדיו לארץ ישראל קודם ביאת המשיח, ואף בלי בנין בית המקדש, עיי"ש, וכן מצאתי בספר "שבילי אמונה", לנכד רבינו הרא"ש⁷⁸ (נבי עשירי, פ"ק א'), שכתב בשם המדרש⁷⁹, שקודם הגאולה יתברכו הרבה מישראל לרוב בארץ ישראל ולהתיישב שם מארבע פינות העולם, וכאשר יתיישבו שם הרבה יירבו להתפלל כהה הקדוש ישמע הכורא יתברך ויקרב קץ הגאולה, עיי"ש, והגאון הצדיק רבינו ר' הלל מקאלמייא⁸⁰ בתשובות "בית הלל" (ס' ל"א) הביאו, ועיי"ו החלצה לבו שם מאד במכתב אל הגאון ר' זלמן שפיצר מוינה, שידבר עם הברון רוטשילד שבימים עצמו בהו יתמך זאת בכספו וכוונתו, כי לדבר כזה צריך לעשירי עם בני ישראל (כאשר הובא מעשה כזה במדרש רבה פרשת תולדות⁸¹, שבימי ר"י בן חנניה נתן המלך רשות לעלות לארץ ישראל ולבנות בית המקדש, הושיב ר"י בן חנניה שני עשירים גדולים מישראל שיתנו הוצאות על זה, עיי"ש), והנה"צ כתב שם, כי מי הוא מישראל עם ה' אשר לא יתאוה להיות לו חלק במצוה זו.

ודב גדול אחר עוררני מרש"י (הגלים תחילה פרק ע') שכתב על הפסוקים "כי אלקים יושיע ציון ויבנה ערי יהודה, וישבו שם וירשנה, ורע עבדיו יגלוה ואוהבי שמו ישכנו בה. למנצח לדוד להוכיח"⁸², וד"ל רש"י: "לדוד להוכיח" — לשון תפילה הוא וכו'. ובמדרש הגלים⁸³ ראיתי משל למלך שכעס על צאנו וסתר את הדין והוציא את הצאן ואת הרעה, אחר זמן החזיר את הצאן וכנה את הדין ולא הוכיח את הרעה, אמר הודעה, הרי הצאן מחזיר וחדיר בנו ואני איני נוכח, כך, למעלה מן הענין נאמר כי אלקים יושיע ציון וגו' ואוהבי שמו ישכנו בה' — הרי הדין בנהי והצאן כנס הודעה לא מוכר, לכן נאמר 'לדוד להוכיח'. עכ"ל, היינו שרוד התפלל שגם הוא יחזור לישראל למקומו, הרי מפורש ברש"י כאן, דחתילה יחזור ישראל לארץ ישראל ויבנו אותה, עוד טרם ביאת בן דוד, עד שרוד יבקש מוה"ת, אחר שישאל כבר חזרן, שגם הוא רצה לחזור אליהם, והוא ראה נפלאה לדברי רבינו הרמב"ם הג"ל.

After I have explained, with God's help, that the redemption, for which we so fervently yearn, will occur gradually, step by step, we can understand a comment found in the *Derashot* of the Chatam Sofer. He infers from the Rambam²⁷ that Israel will gather together in *Eretz Yisrael* before the advent of *Mashiach*, even though the *Beit HaMikdash* is not yet rebuilt.²⁸

I discovered something similar in *Sh'vilei Emunah*, by the grandson of our mentor, the Rosh. He cites a *Midrash*²⁹ which says that many Jews from the four corners of the earth will volunteer to live and settle in *Eretz Yisrael* before the final redemption. When many people dwell there and pray frequently on the Holy Mountain, the Creator will listen [to their prayers] and hasten the final redemption.³⁰ The righteous *gaon*, R. Hillel of Kalamoya, cites this in his responsa, *Beit Hillel*.³¹ Consequently, he wrote a very enthusiastic letter to the brilliant R. Zalman Spitzer of Vienna urging him to convince Baron Rothschild to become involved in this matter and finance it with his own capital. He reasoned that matters like this require the assistance of the wealthy Jews. ♦ R. Hillel writes there, "Who among Israel, HaShem's nation, would not desire to take part in this *mitzvah*?"

A certain great rabbi enlightened me to Rashi's comments on the verses: *For God will save Zion and build the cities of Judah, and they will dwell there and possess it. And the offspring of His servants will inherit it, and those who love His name will dwell in it. For the conductor, by David, as a remembrance* (*Tehillim* 69:36 - 70:1). Rashi writes:

♦ The *Midrash* relates that in the days of R. Yehoshua ben Chananyah, the king gave the Jews permission to ascend to *Eretz Yisrael* and build the *Beit HaMikdash*. R. Yehoshua ben Chananyah delegated two extremely wealthy Jews to finance the endeavor (*BeReishit Rabbah* 64:10).

By David, as a remembrance: This is an expression of prayer... *Midrash Tehillim* (ibid.) compares this to a king who became angry with his flock. He, [therefore], destroyed its pen and banished the sheep and the shepherd. After a while, he retrieved the sheep and rebuilt the pen, but did not remember the shepherd. The shepherd said, "The sheep have returned; the pen is rebuilt; but I have been forgotten!" So too here. Above, it states, *For God will save Zion...*, and *those who love His name will dwell in it*. The pen is built, the sheep are gathered in, but the shepherd has been forgotten. Therefore, it says, *By David, as a remembrance*.

That is to say, David prayed that he, too, would return with Israel to his place. It is clear from this Rashi that Israel will return to *Eretz Yisrael* and build the Land before the Son of David arrives. Then, David will ask HaShem to allow him to return to the people of Israel, since they have already returned. This is a wondrous proof for the words of the Rambam cited above.

It seems to me that the reason for this [order of events] is based on a comment of the Chatam Sofer himself.³² He writes that

the height of our evil lot is dispersion and exile. For even though the *Beit HaMikdash* was destroyed, had we remained in *Eretz Yisrael* matters would not have been so bad. Similarly, the Rambam writes, "The murder of Gedalyah ben Achikam caused the flame of Israel to be extinguished and the Jews to be dispersed among the exiles, due to our numerous sins."³³

Now, I already mentioned that our Sages in the *Zohar*, *Midrash*, and *Yerushalmi* assert that the redemption will progress gradually, not all at once. Therefore, the ingathering of the Jews to *Eretz Yisrael* must precede the true redemption. First, they must leave the state of absolute evil, which is dispersion and exile, and proceed to the middle level of evil, which is when the people of Israel are in their Land but the Temple is in ruins. After this, peace will prevail among the Jews and there will be hope for the future, as the Chatam Sofer writes (ibid.). By virtue of this peace, the sons will return to their borders,³⁴ the *Beit HaMikdash* will be rebuilt, and there will be no

hatred among the Jews, like there was at the time of the destruction of the Second Temple.

I would like to add to the Chatam Sofer's holy words and explain how the ingathering to *Eretz Yisrael* will diminish the dispersion of the exiles even though it will occur before the rebuilding of the *Beit HaMikdash*. At the very beginning, it will be impossible for the entire nation to assemble in *Eretz Yisrael*, for the Land will have to first expand her "skin" to make room for all of her sons.³⁵ Therefore, some Jews will remain in the Diaspora until HaShem fulfills His promise to gather all of Israel into the Land. This coincides with the Ramban's comments on the verse *The Lord, God, Who gathers the dispersed of Israel says, "I will gather others to him, besides those already gathered to him"* (*Yeshayah* 56:8). He explains that God will gather many, but not all, of the dispersed Jews at the outset [of redemption]. Then, after the wars of Gog and Magog, there will be a second ingathering, as it says, *I will gather others to him, besides those already gathered to him.*³⁶

Now, [even though all of Israel will not return right away], it seems to me that the Land will become a universal center for the entire Jewish nation, by the very fact that there will be an assembly of Jews in Jerusalem and *Eretz Yisrael*. Even those who remain in the Diaspora will keep their eyes and hearts on the Land. They will be bound and connected with all their souls to the universal center which will be established in *Eretz Yisrael*. It will unite them even in the Diaspora, and they will not be considered dispersed at all...

Today, on the other hand, the people of Israel are like lost and scattered sheep³⁷ among the nations. No Jew associates with his fellow Jew. Wherever they live, they are like dangling limbs without any connection to the individual, and certainly not to the community as a whole. This is true and utter dispersion (may the Merciful One save us). We have all been abandoned like fish of the sea. In these recent, difficult years, despots subjugate us and do with us as they please. They degrade and murder us without limit and without any liability for their actions. These scoundrels have no one to answer to for their deeds.

However, if we establish a universal center in *Eretz Yisrael* (with God's help), our pride and glory will rise among the nations and we will be considered a dignified and important nation. ♡ Then, even the individual who remains in exile will not be forsaken, because anyone who wants to cause him harm will know that there is someone who will demand a reckoning of his actions. He will know that he is liable for his deeds and will, therefore, refrain from doing anything improper.

Thus, the ingathering to the Land will free us from the state of absolute evil even in the Diaspora. It will also cause all of Israel, even the Diaspora Jews, to unite and live in peace. Then, we will reach the bright and hopeful future leading to the complete redemption, speedily in our days. Amen.

FOREWORD OF R. CHAYIM MENACHEM TEICHTAL

With the appearance of *Eim HaBanim Semeichah* in English, I find it my sacred obligation to clarify certain points about the author and about the purpose of the book.

This work is rooted in the pure wellsprings of our holy Torah and in the words of our great Sages throughout the generations. It was composed as an expression of absolute piety, at the very height of the unspeakable Holocaust, in the year 5703 [1943], in Budapest. It was written while the author was hiding from the rage of the oppressor, immersed in a sea of troubles. His saintly heart was fairly bursting with anguish over God's holy people bowed by the relentless pangs of exile beneath the boots of the ferocious Nazis, may their memory be eradicated!

Perhaps, for one who was not tried by the events of that period, in that hell-on-earth, for one who escaped the torment of the unbearable physical and emotional suffering of those days, some parts of this work may seem surprising, even "controversial." In fact, there have even been some who clothed themselves in zealotry and knew no peace until they distorted the pure and holy image of the author beyond recognition.

Even though some of them were motivated by sacred intentions, I, in turn, must lift up my voice with a passion every bit as holy and cry incessantly in the name of God: *Remove your shoes from your feet (Shemot 3:5)* when you come to speak of this wondrous man, exalted above the rest! Every aspect of his life was suffused with sanctity, piety, and supreme self-sacrifice for God and His Torah. Indeed, he selflessly gave up his pure soul in defense of another Jew (see above).

Our mental resources are insufficient to describe the greatness of my righteous father and teacher, whose entire life, within the narrow confines of *halachah*, was dedicated to guiding his precious flock – his congregation and the students of his yeshiva. But, as great as he was in Torah, he was greater still in fear of Heaven. He was a leader and guide of tremendous stature, always standing in the breach to defend pure Torah Judaism. He never yielded an inch on an issue of *halachah*, and he never deviated from the traditional path of Torah. Because of these qualities, he attracted many followers and admirers, who learned from his every word and exhibited absolute devotion to their master.

The greatest and most righteous scholars of the generation venerated my beloved father. They heaped titles of honor upon him

while he was still a very young man, extolling his wisdom and extraordinary gift for discovering the truth of the Torah.

His whole life was centered around his precious congregation, his holy yeshiva, and the responsa he sent to the numerous questions he received from all over the world. During his lifetime, a portion of this great fountain of knowledge was indeed shared with the world when the first volume of *Mishneh Sachir* was published. (The remainder of my saintly father's responsa, saved miraculously in manuscript, are now, at last, appearing in print, with the help of the Almighty. They are being published by Machon Yerushalayim.)

This devout scholar worked day and night to serve the Almighty. The sounds of Torah and prayer constantly filled his home, and he never stopped writing, even in those darkest days. When unprecedented and unparalleled troubles befell the Jews, he poured out his pure heart to our Father in Heaven over every individual and collective misfortune.

During those stormy times, his yeshiva was banished from his *beit midrash*. Thus, his mind turned increasingly to the troubles of the generation. He began to scrutinize the history of our people, in an attempt to find an explanation for the terrible suffering we have endured ever since the destruction of the Temple, now reaching a peak before his eyes.

Observing the desperate circumstances of European Jewry, he arrived at his conclusion: The exile and our existence in foreign lands were the source of all the troubles of our people. And so, he embarked upon a campaign, from then until the end of his life, urging his brethren to flee these lands, to cease devoting their energies to the development of gentile countries, and to dedicate themselves, instead, to building our own Land in the spirit of the Torah.

When circumstances in his birthplace grew intolerable, he was forced to hide from the government forces. Along with some others - men, women, and children - he hid in the attic above his study hall. Through the slats of the attic, they were able to see their beloved neighbors and friends brutally forced onto transports for destinations which, at that time, were still unknown. My father's heart fairly burst within him at these terrible scenes, and his prayer was fervent: If only God's tortured people could escape from this nightmare and find themselves exclusively among Jews, on the sacred soil of *Eretz Yisrael*...

Such thoughts occupied his mind incessantly, giving him no peace. There, in that attic, he was able to raise himself out of his despair over the bitter fate of our people only through deep study. Now, exercising superhuman powers of concentration, he turned his attention and his writing to *Eretz Yisrael*.

The unendurable troubles and indescribable torture ignited the

torch of love for the Land which had always been buried within him. This found its expression in *Eim HaBanim Semeichah*, a work encouraging the settlement and building of the Holy Land through the mass *aliyah* of Jews who "tremble at the word of God" (החרדים לומר ה'). This masterful opus was invested with intense emotion; my father's very essence poured into every line. It was composed in 5703 (1943), in "a valley of troubles," Budapest, the capital of Hungary, to which he was forced to flee.

My revered father's love for the Land, his fervent desire to expand its settlement with Torah Jews, and his joy at its building were exhibited publicly at every possible opportunity. Alas, his fiery words in praise of our hallowed Land, were distorted more than once. Various groups misrepresented his views intentionally, for various reasons. Thus, concerned for the honor of this pure and righteous man, the family was hesitant to issue this work for some time.

Indeed, the author himself predicted this very eventuality. He expressed his fears in one of his last letters to me: "To my great dismay, there are some who did not understand my intent in writing *Eim HaBanim Semeichah*... God is my witness that when I write about our brethren resettling *Eretz Yisrael*, tears flow from my eyes uncontrollably because of God's people who suffer indescribable miseries. I see in the Land of Israel a ray of light, an anchor of salvation. I know that there will be those who will attribute to me words which I never said and never thought. Still, He Who Knows All Secrets can testify how fervently I prayed that my words not constitute a stumbling-block. And I am certain that the merit of our Holy Land will stand by all those who sincerely love her, so that ultimately no one will be turned away. I find support in the words of our sages, quoted often by the brilliant and holy author of *Minchat Elazar*, the righteous Rebbe of Munkatch: 'Israel will be redeemed only through repentance, and the Torah has already promised that Israel will repent at the end of their exile and immediately be redeemed.' On the basis of this guarantee I authored *Eim HaBanim Semeichah*."

And so, at this time, I find myself obligated to refute the views which were incorrectly attributed to the author by people who took his words out of context. It is my duty to reestablish the truth, that the goal of this work is to enhance the glory of Heaven and increase the settlement of *Eretz Yisrael* through the *aliyah* of masses of Torah-observant Jews.

The author quotes the words of the Rebbe of Gur z"l: "The more Orthodox Jews that ascend to *Eretz Yisrael*, the greater their influence will be in fashioning the image of the Land according to Torah tradition, and in preserving the holiness of the Land." Today we see concrete evidence of this in the increased numbers of Orthodox

Jews in the Land, bringing enhanced awareness of the Torah's demands. How much more so would this be true if they constituted a majority in the Land?! If a little bit of light can chase away much darkness, surely a great deal of light can eliminate the darkness entirely.

Indeed, we witness the proliferation of *yeshivot* in every part of the country, and the light of Torah is permeating even the thick darkness that precedes the advent of *Mashiach*. Increasingly, winds of purity are reaching our lost brethren. They are returning to their roots and casting away all of the false ideologies whose emptiness has become apparent. It is not hard to imagine how much better this situation would be if the Torah-true portion of the population were greater, and if centers of Torah learning filled every corner of the Holy Land. Clearly, the great light thus cast would bring all the people back, and "sins, not sinners, would cease to exist" (*Berachot* 10a).

The author speaks in praise of the builders of the Land. Although they may have left the Torah, it is undoubtedly to their credit that they are privileged to settle and build the Land. My saintly father even has answers for those who question why the Almighty saw fit to allow the initiative for the rebuilding to come specifically from such people. He explains that no human being can fathom the searchings of God, for the thoughts of He Who is Perfect in Knowledge are far beyond our thoughts. In his view, not only are the God-fearing Jews forbidden to refrain from building the Land based on such objections, but they have a sacred obligation to combine their strengths and contribute to this lofty endeavor. Then, when the wayward builders see that the religious Jews want to cooperate with them, they, in turn, will draw closer to them and improve their ways. After all, they, too, are descendants of Avraham, Yitzchak, and Ya'akov...

It should be clear to all that this author was not carrying the banner of a movement which announced "*Eretz Yisrael* without Torah!" Any organization whose goal was to establish Israel as a nation in its own Land, like all other nations, would have nothing in common with him. This was the very antithesis of my beloved father's goal.

There is a great danger in reading this work superficially, seeking a modern-day ideology with which to associate its message. To reduce the sacred, Torah principles laid forth on these pages to some "-ism" is a desecration, a blasphemy. The Torah precedes, transcends, and outlasts any man-made system of thought. In the Torah, and in all the holy books which explain it, love for the Land of Israel is a supreme value. Building and settling the Land are *mitzvot* of paramount importance. At this point in history, the author perceived a combination of factors making this *mitzvah* both

more urgent and more available. He thus felt himself compelled to encourage the people of Israel to shoulder this precious obligation, to settle and build the Land on a firm Torah base.

Ideas fashioned by man are not addressed in this work at all. Indeed, there could be no greater distortion of its intent than to conclude that this book is a declaration of support for a man-made ideology. Beyond the straightforward restatement of Torah ideas, there is merely transcendent love: love for the Land of Israel, the people of Israel, the Torah, and the Almighty.

This love is displayed on all levels of my father's writing. At every opportunity, he addresses himself to the builders of the Land in an ardent plea to establish their efforts on a solid Torah base. He warns that without Torah, which is our only claim to the Land, the settlement of *Eretz Yisrael* can have no future. Whereas a Torah-true approach to building the Land is a guarantee for success, a nationalism stripped of Torah is a path to perdition, God forbid. Thus, while beseeching Torah Jews to join hands with the builders, he implores these very builders to subjugate themselves to Torah authority.

My father's love for the Jewish people expresses itself in almost every page of the work. He instructs us to invoke merit upon every Jew, encourage him to do what is right according to our holy Torah, and rebuke him lovingly where he falls short.

In his all-encompassing love for God and man, my saintly father served as a source of comfort and strength for all those around him. Even in the valley of tears and torment, his greatness of spirit never left him. When he understood that his own end was near, he spoke passionately to those around him: "Jews," he said, "soon this reign of evil will end, and you will merit a salvation so great that it will illuminate the entire world. In particular, those residing in our Holy Land will merit this. Let us all pray for the welfare of our brothers everywhere. I know that my time is limited, and I promise that I will pray on your behalf that you may speedily merit salvation and complete redemption."

With these words my father returned his pure soul to its Maker, on the 10th of Shevat, 5705 (1945). May God avenge his blood!

His very last request was: "Please, spread my wellsprings outward."

May his memory be blessed.

Chayim Menachem Teichtal,
son of my revered master and teacher,
the brilliant and saintly author,
Rabbi Yisachar Shlomo Teichtal *ztuk*!"

Rav Shlomo Aviner

<http://www.ravaviner.com/2015/01/short-sweet-text-message-q-285.html>

Teshuvah and Geulah

Q: Aren't the Charedim correct that Am Yisrael will first perform Teshuvah and only then return to Zion in purity?

A: This was in fact one of the possibilities, but as it happened, Am Yisrael did not repent in the Exile but will do so here (In the newly released edition of the book "Eim Ha-Banim Semeichah" of Keren Re'em, it is written in the introduction [p. 12] that during the Tena'im ceremony held for the engagement between the granddaughter of Ha-Rav Yissachar Shlomo Teichtel, author of Shut Mishneh Sachir and Eim Ha-Banim Semeichah, and the eldest grandson of the present Belzer Rebbe, the Belzer Rebbe related that in the year 5703, Ha-Rav Teichtal came to his uncle and father [the previous Belzer Rebbe Ha-Rav Aharon and Ha-Rav Mordechai of Bilgoray] in Budapest to ask for a Haskamah for his book Eim Ha-Banim Semeichah. Rav Mordechai of Bilgoray said to him: There is a dispute in Mishnah Pesachim [10:6]: How far does one recite Hallel during the Pesach Seder prior to the meal? Bet Shammai says: Until [the verse] "Eim Ha-Banim Semeichah – As a joyous mother of children", while Bet Hillel says: Until "The flint into a fountain of waters". We currently follow the halachic rulings of Bet Hillel. In the future, the Halachah will follow Bet Shammai: "Eim Ha-Banim Semeichah" [- a play on the name of his book].

But apparently they were unaware that when the Belzer Rebbe – Ha-Rav Aharon - made Aliyah, he came to Reb Noson – Ha-Rav Shalom Natan Ra'anah Kook, Maran Ha-Rav Kook's son-in-law – and said: You and I had differences regarding the way to bring Jews on Aliyah. We [much of the Haredi world] said that they should first be strengthened in Judaism outside of the Land and only then could they make Aliyah in order to build in holiness; you said that every one of them should quickly come on Aliyah without calculation. After the Holocaust, it has become clear to us that we erred, and we are greatly distressed over this fact. Sichot Ha-Rav Tzvi Yehudah – Eretz Yisrael pp. 57, 221-222. This story is also brought in Imrei Shefer on Ha-Rav Avraham Shapira, p. 37)

external aspects to its own possession. National passion is mounting; recognition of its independence is growing. It already knows that it has a country, a language, literature, an army.¹⁰⁰

R. Kook viewed the Gentile sciences as “vast intellectual wealth” that augment the Jewish people’s “own possession,” i.e., the Torah, with “pure external aspects.” In this manner the Torah receives “far-seeing vigor” — language, literature, and more.¹⁰¹

Conclusion

In this article I have presented accepted research parameters as indicators of the teachings of religious-Zionist thinkers and have distinguished between them and the policies of Agudas Yisroel with regard to the question of Eretz Israel. On the basis of these parameters, I examined R. Teichtal’s doctrine and found it proximate to the teachings of R. Abraham Isaac Kook. It was not my goal to fit R. Teichtal into any artificial slot, label him, or induct him into any particular movement or political party. Instead, my intention was to assess his teachings and their uniqueness. These include his perspective on the redemption, activism, preference of objective outcome over subjective intention, cooperation with non-religious Zionists, the value of labor, the religious value of the Zionist pioneers, the three-way nexus of the People of Israel, Eretz Israel, and the God of Israel, the spiritual quality of Eretz Israel, intercommunal unity, and openness to science. All these flowed from a vision of a sovereign Jewish entity that would arise in Eretz Israel and restore the Jewish people to a normalization that entails the economic and material development of the country.

100 *Orot*, p. 15, Section G.

101 Notably, R. Kook dealt at length with the “unity of the sacred and the profane” outside any context that is clearly related to Eretz Israel. See Abraham Isaac Kook, *Orot ha-Kodesh* (Hebrew) (Jerusalem: Mossad Harav Kook, 1992), Vol. 1, pp. 61–80, and *ibid.*, Vol. 2, pp. 305–324. However, the editor of this publication, R. David Cohen (“Harav ha-Nazir”), emphasizes this context in the teachings of his mentor, R. Kook. See introductions to “*Kodesh ha-Kelali*” at the beginning of Vol. 2 (no page number noted): “The universal sanctity that elevates the profane to the holy is the holiness that exists in nature, **which is manifested in the Land of Holiness**” (emphasis mine — D.R.). It is indubitable, however, that appreciation of secular studies is much more developed in R. Kook’s thinking than in that of R. Teichtal and appears in numerous contexts apart from its being an instrument for the settlement of Eretz Israel.

Any attempt to compare R. Teichtal with Agudas Yisroel-affiliated rabbis such as R. Avraham Mordechai Alter of Gur, or to claim that he resembles R. Yosef Chaim Sonnenfeld and the “Yishuvniks” in his affection for Zion, obscures his unique teachings. The challenge that the second generation of researchers handed its predecessors was more than unhelpful; it masked the singularity of R. Teichtal’s teachings, their redemptionist focus, and their kinship with those of R. Kook. At issue is something more than mere love of Zion: it is a ramified doctrine of redemption that does not fear to be radical and to wrestle with a new and convoluted reality.

Friedlander’s assertion that R. Teichtal “dealt sparingly with the ideological aspects of Zionism and religious Zionism”¹⁰² is fundamentally groundless. *Em ha-Banim Semeha* deals with these aspects from beginning to end. Friedlander depicts R. Teichtal as a pragmatist who favored what the Zionists did but not what they thought: “As a pragmatist, R. Teichtal sided with the immediate necessity of rescue....The applied solution that Zionism offered...was amenable to him and he supported it. As for the ideology of Zionism and religious Zionism, he refrained from taking a stand.”¹⁰³

On the contrary: R. Teichtal dealt with and took a stand on a range of Zionist and religious-Zionist ideas; only some of them were discussed in this article. R. Natan Tzvi Friedman (1914–1993)¹⁰⁴ related and quoted from a heretofore unknown sermon that he had heard R. Teichtal deliver while in Budapest.¹⁰⁵ Its content plainly rules out any depiction of R. Teichtal as a pragmatic thinker who sees Eretz Israel as a place of refuge and rescue:

I recall how he thundered about the Talmudic dictum [*Megilla* 28]: “One does not behave frivolously in a synagogue and one does not enter [it] in hot weather to escape from the heat and in rainy weather to escape from the rain.” If so, one should not use holiness to protect oneself. Therefore, one should not ascend

102 Friedlander, “Thought and Deed,” p. 174.

103 Ibid.

104 Rabbi of Shikun E in Bnei Brak and member of the secretariat of the Ha-Poel ha-Mizrachi rabbinical council. Between 1936 and 1944 he served as a lecturer for the “Talmudic Society” (*Hevra Sha’s*) in Budapest. See “Rabbi Natan Tsevi Friedman,” *Encyclopedia of the Founders and Builders of Israel* (Tel Aviv: Sifriyat Rishonim, 1962), vol. 12, p. 3997.

105 This sermon does not appear in *Em ha-Banim Semeha*.

to Eretz [Israel] to protect oneself from the torrential rain of the Gentiles' decrees. We should preempt the evil and ascend to Eretz Israel before the heat of the oppressor comes (see Appendix 3).¹⁰⁶



No doubt that R. Teichtal considered Eretz Israel as an anchor and rescue for the Jewish people, but the need for *aliyah*, for him, was broader than merely a “shelter.” According to R. Teichtal, troubles do not furnish a reason for *aliyah*, but non-*aliyah* furnishes a reason for troubles. The troubles, in his eyes, are evidence that the Jews were wrong in not having preempted them by means of *aliyah*. The Holocaust, for him, was an incentive to reexamine his views and develop a teaching that approves of the *aliyah* project and the attempt to establish a Jewish entity, a “nation,” in Eretz Israel that would be able to manage national life independently and strive for national normalization.¹⁰⁷

R. Friedman’s letter sheds new light on and adds information about an event that is briefly described in *Em ha-Banim Semecha*:

On the past *Shabbat Hol Hamo’ed Pessach*, I was given the honor of delivering a sermon at the synagogue of the Orthodox Talmud society here, and there was a large crowd. I inserted into the sermon the matter of building our Land...and I spoke about it with great passion and many were angry with me.”¹⁰⁸

Exactly what happened there? R. Friedman, who taught at the Budapest Talmud society at the time, describes it:

At the beginning of the Holocaust, as the German oppressor tightened his grip on Slovakia, many migrated from there to Budapest, capital of Hungary, among them the brilliant Rabbi Y.S. Teichtal. Due to his reputation as a giant in Torah and an outstanding speaker, he was given the privilege of delivering a sermon at the synagogue of the Orthodox Talmud society, then the center of Orthodoxy in Budapest, where at the time it was my privilege as

106 Letter from R. Friedman to R. Menachem Kasher, December 26, 1968, retrieved on July 7, 2015, from http://www.bhol.co.il/forums/topic.asp?whichpage=1&topic_id=2543735&forum_id=19616. I am grateful to Prof. Asa Kasher for his permission to publish this letter.

107 *Em ha-Banim Semecha*, p. 323.

108 *Ibid.*, p. 160. On additional displays of wrath and opposition to R. Teichtal, see *ibid.*, pp. 223–224. The objections interrupted his sermon and later even prevented him from leading the *Mussaf* service on the anniversary of a family member’s death. See also *ibid.*, pp. 229–230.

a young man to be one of the teachers. I remember that at noon that *Shabbat*, the salt of the local Jewish community gathered and filled the synagogue to overflowing. [R. Teichtal] climbed the stairs to the pulpit and began to thunder audaciously: **But we are guilty** [emphasis in the original],¹⁰⁹ and he spoke for about an hour and a half about the sanctity of the Land [of Israel], its cultivation, and the error that we had made by standing aside and failing to heed the voice that urged us to ascend to our holy land — for which reason “this trouble has befallen us.”¹¹⁰ His words, spoken in a voice fit to hew flames, made a tremendous impression on the listeners, who stood transfixed and drank them in thirstily. The leaders of the congregation, in contrast, were flabbergasted by the powerful impact of his rhetoric. They were followers of the German Agudah, but the speaker’s words exceeded [the Agudah’s stance] by far and were stated in full psychological identification with everything being done in Eretz Israel, at all levels, including the non-religious pioneers who pledged their lives to the sanctity of conquering the Land. His sermon was like the “loud voice that added no more”¹¹¹ because he spoke no more there; they denied him the floor and there he remained, shunned and distanced from the official leadership. To create opposite public opinion, the official board of the congregation went out of its way to honor in Tiferet Bahurim Synagogue — a group of young people associated with Agudas Yisroel — a young talented rabbi, an excellent speaker, a son-in-law of that belligerent fanatic Hasidic *rebbe* who opposed Eretz Israel, and gave him the honor of delivering a counter-sermon. [The speaker] based himself on the *Gemara* (*Berakhot* 17): “The goal of wisdom is repentance and good deeds, so that a man should not study Torah and Mishnah and then despise his father and mother and teacher and his superior in wisdom and rank,” since [R. Teichtal’s] words clashed with the view of his mentor, the Munkacser *Rebbe*.¹¹²

109 Genesis 42:21.

110 Ibid.

111 Cf. Deuteronomy 5:22.

112 Letter from R. Friedman to R. Menachem Kasher. Interestingly, the opposing speaker, the son-in-law and pro tem of the Munkacser *Rebbe* — none other than Rabbi Baruch Yehoshua Yerachmiel Rabinowitz — changed his mind in the after-

R. Friedman, who was acquainted not only with R. Teichtal's writings but also with the man himself evidently had no doubts about the matter at hand. R. Teichtal's sermon, in his opinion, superseded the views of the heads of the congregation, who were considered moderate. They favored Agudas Yisroel and were not followers of the Munkacser *Rebbe*, who opposed Agudas Yisroel and disseminated mordant anti-Zionist teachings. Nevertheless, these leaders shunned R. Teichtal, deprived him of the pulpit in mid-sermon, and sent up another preacher from the young generation of Agudas Yisroel in order to counter his remarks. Even R. Teichtal's sons, R. Friedman noted, neither followed nor identified with his spiritual path: "Several times I asked his sons in Jerusalem to reprint his important book *Em ha-Banim Semeha*, but they evidently rest at the extreme pole, disclaiming the ways of their great father, and refuse to do it."¹¹³ This observation indeed explains the criticism expressed by R. Teichtal's son, R. Chaim Menachem Teichtal, and his apologetic attempt, which was later supported by several scholars, to dissociate his father from religious-Zionist thinking and portray him in a different light.

R. Kook's disciples correctly detected the proximity of R. Teichtal's teachings to those of their mentor and swiftly embraced this book — prompted not by an interest in appropriating him, as Friedlander alleges,¹¹⁴ but by profound and justified understanding of his teachings.



math of the Holocaust, abandoned his post of *rebbe*, distanced himself from his father-in-law's teachings, and drew close to the Mizrahi perspective.

113 Ibid.

114 Friedlander, "R. Yisachar Shlomo Teichtal's Attitude Toward Zionism and the Holocaust," pp. 85–86.

FAITH AND THE HOLOCAUST

For easy printing go to:
www.vbm-torah.org/archive/shoah/08c-shoah.htm

**Lecture #08c:
Rabbi Teichtal's World View: Conservative or Innovative?**

By Rav Tamir Granot

C. Foundations of Rabbi Teichtal's World View

I shall now attempt to summarize some of the main elements of Rabbi Teichtal's world view.

1. The commandment of settling Eretz Yisrael is an obligation that applies to every Jew at all times.

2. There is a redemption "track" that comes about through natural processes; it is initiated by man, and then the private commandment becomes an integral part of the process. In other words, by fulfilling one's private commandment to settle Eretz Yisrael, a Jew thereby participates in the process of redemption.

3. Our era is the era of redemption. More Jews have come together in Eretz Yisrael than have been seen here since the Second Temple period, and the country is continually growing and developing. The status of "redemption" should not be withheld from this era just because there are no miracles or prophecy; our Sages did speak of the possibility of redemption through human processes that would encounter difficulties and setbacks.

4. The "freethinkers" who built up the land should not be viewed as heretics and apostates, for three reasons. Firstly, they are like "captive children" - Jews who, for reasons outside of their own control, have been brought up ignorant of much of their Jewish heritage and its laws. Secondly, they are fulfilling the important commandment of settling the land. Thirdly, they are countering and repairing the damage effected by the Enlightenment, which led to assimilation; in this sense, they may be viewed as engaging in repentance.

5. Even if we do not accept the defense set out in no. 4 above, the common mission and the importance of Jewish unity at the time of redemption make it essential to work in favor of the Jewish settlement of the land despite misgivings. There is certainly no room for preventing *aliya* and settlement of

the land just because there are heretics there.

6.) The Holocaust represents the "footsteps of the Messiah" preceding the redemption, and therefore the troubles are necessary. Rabbi Teichtal offers many explanations for this necessity, as discussed in the previous two lectures.

7.) The mistake on the part of the ultra-Orthodox community in its negative attitude towards Zionism and its adoption of a policy of "sit and do nothing," arising *inter alia* from excessive caution, led indirectly to the deaths of many Jews in the Holocaust. The ultra-Orthodox leadership is responsible for this, as well as for the secular character of the Zionist endeavor.

As to the connection between opposition to Zionism and the Holocaust, I would like to state clearly that in Rabbi Teichtal's words I find no argument corresponding (inversely) to that of the Satmar Rebbe, claiming that the Holocaust was a punishment for the sin of opposition. The Holocaust happened for other, independent reasons. However, in His great mercy God prepared an escape route, which came to be blocked by the anti-Zionist position. From this perspective, this position bears responsibility, on the leadership and religious level, albeit indirect and certainly unintentional.

D. Conservatism or Innovation?

Rabbi Teichtal's philosophical turn-around may be viewed from two perspectives.

From the one perspective, his theology or historiosophy is conservative. Ideologically, Rabbi Teichtal became a Zionist, but in terms of theology he continued to maintain the same fundamental ultra-Orthodox assumptions: he employs the concepts of sin and punishment; he perceives the Holocaust as part of God's direction of reality; and he offers no criticism of the fundamental assumptions of religious thought in the wake of the Holocaust. All of these indicators point to a conservative way of thinking.

The change occurs only in the ideological dimension, while the fundamentals of his philosophy remain as they were. Rabbi Teichtal argues that Am Yisrael should behave differently from the way in which they did until now, because an analysis of reality demands this, and he backs up this demand by adopting a perception of the process of redemption ("at its time," "a poor man riding upon a donkey") which has its foundations in classical Jewish sources and which, in his view, is almost obvious. But his religious point of departure, his view of Divine Providence, his theology, his concepts of good and evil, and his cultural perception - all of these remain outside of the scope of his book and the turn-around that it represents.

The other perspective from which we may view Rabbi Teichtal's change is that of "religious existence." What does his view tell us about "religiosity" itself, about a religious standpoint? I offer the following thoughts on the difference between the ultra-Orthodox reaction to the Holocaust and the Zionist reaction, from the point of view of a psychological movement within a religious person.

The ultra-Orthodox position seeks acceptance of God's judgment. Acceptance is an active movement on the inside, but outwardly it is passive. The view of exile as a punishment and the faith in a miraculous redemption necessarily mold a religious stance that accepts anything that happens as a Divine decree that must be viewed as part of a religious test. Exile turned the historical situation of the Jews into a one-way street: history does not await or expect our reaction; all that is left to us is acceptance. Acceptance of God's judgment has therapeutic power because it denies the arbitrariness of history, and because it is an important element in the spiritual repair that is necessary prior to redemption. The attempt to change reality itself in the general sense (on the individual level a person is obviously permitted to try to escape, since perhaps God's decree is not aimed at him specifically) - for example, by a revolt against the Nazis, or by establishing a Jewish state - is therefore an anti-religious act by definition, since it conflicts with the Divine decree.

To clarify this, let us consider a parable on the individual level. Let us imagine the case of a person who is diagnosed, heaven forefend, with a fatal disease. One religious reaction to this would be to accept the situation and to live with it, attempting to elevate it to the highest possible spiritual experience - not to try to escape it or change it.

The opposite reaction is a lack of acceptance of the decree. I once heard of a well-known Zionist figure who was informed that he was suffering from fatal condition. Until the very end he fought, refusing to recognize his illness, not uttering a word about death and not agreeing even to recite the "vidui" since he viewed it as a capitulation. According to this view, reality is an arena for fighting. Or, in religious terms, reality is a religious test in the practical arena. According to this view, the future is not decreed and dictated in advance; rather, it is open to change. A Zionist views history as an opportunity, and views whatever happens as signals or calls to action, not as decrees.

From the ultra-Orthodox perspective there is therefore something un-religious about the phenomenon of religious Zionism. It is a sort of paradox: religiosity means acceptance, while Zionism means rebellion and acting for change. Faith in God's Providence should lead to acceptance and reconciliation, not struggle.

From this perspective we may describe the change that Rabbi Teichtal underwent as an all-encompassing, revolutionary change of heart. The religious test is carried over from the inner dimension - from submission to events and justification of God's decree - to the realm of history. Without human action, history will not move forward - as Rabbi Teichtal argues in several places.¹ I believe this to be an accurate analysis of the religious Zionist revolution in general.

As to Rabbi Teichtal, we stand at an exegetical crossroads. One way to understand the change of position brought about by the Holocaust is that he meant it to apply only from now on, as formulated in the words, "Once, the anti-Zionism position was appropriate; now, even the Rebbe of Munkacz would agree that it is no longer." Another understanding is that he meant the change to be retroactive - "Now we know that those who were opposed, at the time, were wrong;" "we should have been Zionists from the outset."

According to the second possibility, Rabbi Teichtal truly abandons the religiosity of acceptance and reconciliation, in favor of the battle. According to the first view, we must say that the very recommendation of and support for *aliya* after the Holocaust is itself an acceptance of history. While history's message may have changed, the fundamental movement of response remains one of acceptance: the Holocaust forces us, by Divine decree, to abandon the exile, but it does not create a new consciousness of taking responsibility for reality.

I am inclined towards the second view, according to which the change applies retroactively. In other words, the Zionist approach conformed with God's will from the outset, and therefore the main message of *Em Ha-Banim Semekha* is a transition from a religious position of acceptance and submission to one of historical activism with a view to changing reality.

It is fascinating to compare the spiritual, ideological change in Rabbi Teichtal with the move that appears to arise in the Rebbe of Piasezno's *Esh Kodesh* (which we will address in greater detail in a future lecture). In both cases the reaction arises from within the Holocaust, as the events are taking place. The relationship between Rabbi Teichtal's position and that of the Rebbe of Piasezno is not one of conflict - as, for example, with the Satmar Rebbe. Rather, they are two reactions that follow parallel tracks without ever meeting. For the Rebbe of Piasezno, almost everything is internal and subjective. The suffering, breakdown, the religious act - all of these are directed inward, and this is

1 A good illustration is his argument with the Rebbe of Belz and his brother concerning the teaching of Rabbi Elimelekh, "Speak to Bnei Yisrael, and let them journey on, as discussed in a previous lecture.

the significance that is awarded to them. For Rabbi Teichtal, the repair is not to be found in some subjective, internal place, but rather is objective and external and to be found in history: settling Eretz Yisrael is the greatest possible repair.²

Translated by Kaeren Fish

2 In recent years the work *Esh Kodesh* has enjoyed considerable attention amongst the religious Zionist public, whereas twenty years ago it was almost never mentioned. In contrast, *Em Ha-Banim Semekha* has been relegated to the sidelines. It would seem that this phenomenon reflects the general movement in this public - and among the youth - away from the activist approach espoused by Rabbi Teichtal, and toward an inward, individual, existential approach that complements ideological activism.

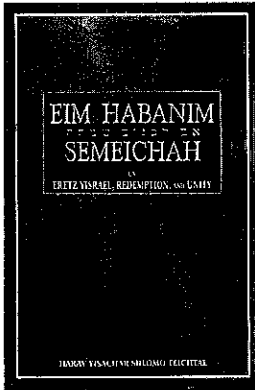
Eim Habanim Semeichah:

On Eretz Yisrael,

Redemption, and Unity

By Rabbi Yisachar Shlomo Teichtal

Translated by Rabbi Moshe Lichtman



Kol Mevasser, 2000

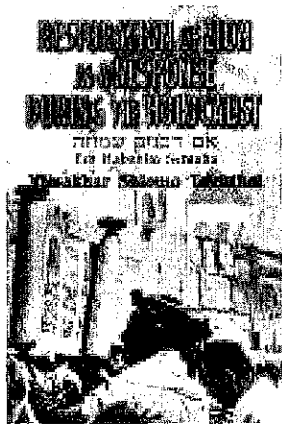
542 pages

Em Habanim Semeha:

*Restoration of Zion as a Response
During the Holocaust*

By Rabbi Yisachar Shlomo Teichtal

Translated by Dr. Pesach Schindler



Ktav Publishers, 1999

415 pages

Reviewed by Berel Wein

Rabbi Berel Wein is director of the Destiny Foundation, a media outreach organization, a Talmud lecturer at Yeshivat Ohr Sameach in Jerusalem, and a columnist for The Jerusalem Post.


There is an enormously powerful book about the Holocaust, Orthodox Jewry, the Land of Israel, Zionism, Jewish unity and hatred and the Messianic Era, that has been in circulation for the past number of decades. Written in difficult and scholarly rabbinic Hebrew, it is called *Eim Habanim Semeichah* (The Mother of the Children is Happy), a phrase taken from Psalm 113. The author is Rabbi Yisachar Shlomo Teichtal, a noted scholar, author of three volumes of responsa, and rabbi in pre-World War II Slovakia and Hungary. Rabbi Teichtal was murdered by the Germans during the forced evacuation of Jewish and Ukrainian prisoners from Auschwitz to the Mathausen concentration camp, at the end of January, 1945. He was barely sixty years old at the time of his death.

Since over six million Jews perished in World War II, and each one of them was special and unique in his or her own way, what makes Teichtal's tragedy so especially significant? The answer lies in *Eim Habanim Semeichah* that he wrote in 1943 while living in Budapest. Having escaped from the Germans in Slovakia in 1942 and finding refuge in then as yet German unoccupied Hungary, Teichtal fulfilled a personal pledge that he had made to write a book in honor of the Land of Israel. But this book is much more than a paean of praise for the spiritually imagined Holy Land that has always dominated Jewish religious thinking in the long exile of the Jews. This work candidly, almost brutally, confronts the terrible issues of shaken faith and loss of tradition raised by the rise of Zionism and the terribly unimagined events of the Holocaust. Writing from within the hell of Hitler's Europe, without books or research material, Teichtal wrote a work of enormous Torah scholarship and erudition and of searing pain and challenge. The book is literal-

ly written with blood for its ink.


Before World War II, Rabbi Teichtal was an adherent of the Rabbi of Munkacs, Rabbi Chaim Elazar Shapiro. This rabbi of Munkacs was the fiercest foe of all types of Zionism. Rabbi Shapiro also opposed and bitterly criticized the non-Zionist Agudat Yisrael for its alleged cooperation in certain areas with the Zionists in building the Land of Israel. Teichtal was as committed an opponent and as strong a critic of the Zionist movement, its aims and achievements, before the war as was Shapiro. It was only during the German destruction of the Slovakian Jewish community, which Teichtal was forced to personally witness and endure, that he began to draw conclusions diametrically opposed to his pre-war views on Zionism, Messianic times and secular Jews. In *Eim Habanim Semeichah* Teichtal humbly and yet proudly confesses to his previous errors of judgment and misguided interpretations of Jewish faith. The purpose of his work now is to call on his fellow, learned Jews, strictly observing of Torah precepts, to recant their blind and wrong opposition to Zionism. Rather, they should join with all Jews, irrespective of their level of Torah knowledge and observance, in a unified effort to build the Land of Israel and the Jewish people. This effort of united Jewry is to be carried forward on the basis of Jewish activism and initiative. The lesson of the Holocaust is that the Jews are to forego the passive attitude of the Jewish exile that relied solely on Divine intervention and supernatural Messianic deliverance. Instead, the active programs of settlement and building in the Land of Israel, coupled with the declared abandonment of the Jewish exile in any foreign country as a solution to the problems of the Jewish people, and enhanced by a determined effort to deal with all Jews in toler-

ance, understanding and even love, are the methods for the successful initiation of the Messianic Era.

 Rabbi Teichtal's change of heart and attitude did not receive universal approval. He was driven from certain Hungarian synagogues and not allowed to conduct his regular Torah classes and sermons in other study halls, due to his now "heretical" views. This opposition to him personally, only caused him to write and disseminate his book and ideas with even greater impetus. Teichtal was especially incensed by the statements of certain rabbis in Hungary that Hungarian Jewry would be spared the fate of German, Polish and Lithuanian Jewry because of God's presumed approval of its fiercely anti-Zionist, anti-Enlightenment stance. They claimed that their "Munkacs" attitude stood in sharp and correct contrast to the prevalent popular Jewish attitudes in those other lands, where even the Orthodox leadership was corrupted in advocating Zionist ideas — i.e. immigration to the Land of Israel and the active rebuilding of the country by Jewish efforts, sweat and resources. Of course, history tragically proved Teichtal correct, since in 1944 Hungarian Jewry met the same fate that earlier decimated its Eastern European brethren.

Teichtal's book was intended for an audience composed mainly of the rigorously Orthodox members of the Jewish community. The book has never reached that audience. Most of the present students of the yeshivot and members of the Chassidic communities are unaware of its existence, let alone of its contents and challenges. In the aftermath of the Holocaust and the rise of the State of Israel, many of the attitudes in the Orthodox world that Teichtal so criticized and blamed as being contributory to the Holocaust — insularity, open opposition to the rebuilding of the Land of Israel through Zionism and now the State of Israel and its official bodies, sanctioned and institutionalized intolerance and even hatred of other Jews, a sense of fatalism and inaction in the face of

changing social circumstances, a glorification of the 'easy life' of exile in lands outside of the Land of Israel, a mistaken dogma that preaches a passive dependence solely upon Divine aid that paralyzes any Jewish national initiatives — have in fact hardened. A new generation has arisen that knows not the circumstances of the Holocaust or of the founding of the State of Israel and thus is unable to draw any historic lessons from these cataclysmic events. It is to this new generation of committed Orthodox Jews that *Eim Habanim Semeichah* should speak and argue its case.

 In Israel, the book has become a second Bible for the Gush Emunim/Mercaz Harav camp. The authoritative Torah arguments marshaled by Rabbi Teichtal served as a needed support of the correctness of the ideology of settlement of the Land of Israel everywhere and against all odds, practical and diplomatic considerations and objections. Because of the fervor of Gush Emunim in adopting Rabbi Teichtal (together with Rabbi Zvi Yehuda Kook) as their spiritual father, the other camps of Orthodoxy, most notably the non-Zionist yeshivah and Chassidic world, have almost automatically ignored or rejected Rabbi Teichtal and his book. The irony is that Rabbi Teichtal intended the book and its message precisely for the non-Zionist Orthodox world and not necessarily for the committed Religious Zionist Gush Emunim section of the Orthodox world. Nevertheless, in spite of this limited political appeal, the book has been republished in its original Hebrew format many times in Israel and tens of thousands of copies have been sold and distributed in Israel and worldwide.

Within the past two years, *Eim Habanim Semeichah* has been translated and published in two English editions. The first translation appeared in 1999 and was authored and edited by Dr. Pesach Schindler of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. The second translation was published in 2000. It was translated and edited by Rabbi

Moshe Lichtman of Israel. Both books face the great task of translating an extremely difficult, scholarly, heavily nuanced book written in a Hebrew that is itself somewhat obtuse, into clear, interesting and readable English. Both authors have done nobly in their translations, albeit naturally with different readings and style. Schindler's translation is not quite as literal, and omits portions of the book. Lichtman's translation is unabridged. Schindler's translation also has more copious and informative footnotes that are most helpful in understanding Teichtal's work and thoughts. He has paraphrased Teichtal, and done some important editing in order to make the book much more readable. Both the print and the format of Schindler's book are very attractive and user friendly.

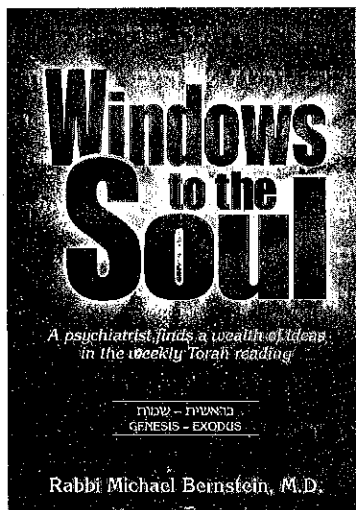
Lichtman's book has very helpful paragraph and subject headings in the margins of the page, thus allowing the reader to know instantly where Teichtal is heading with his words and ideas. The rendering of the Hebrew text in this English translation is most faithful, the footnotes are spare and simple and not only the words but the mood of the author comes through very clearly. Each of the translations has its own style and rhythm. Choosing one over the other is in my opinion simply a matter of subjective taste. What I do believe is that thoughtful Jews, interested in hearing the opinion of a great Torah scholar on the crucial matters of faith and policy that face world Jewry today, must read one or both of these translations if they are unable to read the original work in Hebrew.

The attitude of Diaspora Jewry, especially Orthodox Jewry, towards the role of Israel could stand improvement in the current times of crisis and challenge in Israel. We here in Israel do not hear the call for the love of the Land of Israel and our unquestioned right to the Holy Land in a strong voice emanating from our Diaspora brethren. I think that Rabbi Teichtal would be heartbroken to see that even after the Holocaust and the events in the Land of Israel of the last fifty five

years, much of the same attitudes of the glorification of the Exile and the negation of building the Jewish home in the Land of Israel that he so decried still remain dominant in much of the Orthodox Jewish world. Both Pesach Schindler and Moshe Lichtman have done the Jewish English-speaking world a great service by bringing Rabbi Teichtal and his message to its attention and study. It is our task to truly make our mother — the Land of Israel — happy with her children — the people of Israel. **IA**

Windows to the Soul:

A Psychiatrist Finds a Wealth of Ideas in the Weekly Torah Reading
By Rabbi Michael Bernstein, M.D.



Shaar Press
New York, 2000
320 pages

Reviewed by David L. Berkovitz

Chumash and its study, as we learn from Rashi very early on, is much more than a book of laws and *mitzvot*. Inherent to Torah study is following and understanding the experiences, character development, and driving

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forces of the *avot* and their later generations. In turn, this is intended to help us further develop good *middot*. It is well established that the transmission of Torah, as described in *Pirkei Avot*, handed down from *Moshe Rabbeinu* to Yehoshua to the *Zekeinim* to the *Nevi'im*, and so on, is transmitted from mind to mind and from heart to heart. Psychology is the science of the mind and of the heart. What drives a person? What motivates him to pursue his goals? What stymies him? In the contemporary world, *musar* and modern psychology are often portrayed as similar tools of self-improvement. The difference lies in discerning not only man's relationship to himself, as psychology would have it, but also his relationship with God, as the *musar* movement would have it. Psychological awareness is critical to the individual's understanding of self and the world around him. As such, any book on psychology and Torah is approached with interest and anticipation.

Dr. Michael Bernstein, in his new book, *Windows to The Soul* has undertaken to apply his training in psychiatry to explicate the narrative portion of the books of Genesis and Shemot from a psychological perspective. The reader should understand, however, that first and foremost, Dr. Bernstein's book is a commentary on the Torah, not a Torah/psychology instructional guide to daily living in the vein of the writings of noted psychiatrist and rabbi Abraham Twerski. It is clearly not intended as such. As described on the dust jacket, Dr. Bernstein's book "makes the reader think, reflect, and then say to himself, 'Why didn't I think of that?'" If and how the reader applies these insights to his daily life is up to him. For the reader interested in a comprehensive psychological approach to the Torah and its personalities, this is not the book. Rather, it presents the author's psychological *p'shat* coupled at times with selected traditional commentators. *Windows to the Soul* is often informed by keen insights into the Torah narrative from which the reader can frequently mine

nuggets as will be evidenced below.

Dr. Bernstein has divided each *parshah* of the first two books of the Torah into anywhere from 3 to 15 small sections. He introduces the basic content of each *parshah*, provides a short synopsis, and then endeavors to examine particular events or personalities. Included in many of these small sections is his psychological "take." His presentation is straightforward and readable. Its focus is on how the Torah presents its message, with particular focus on the turn of a phrase, word nuances, repeating patterns, and commonalities often taken for granted. The use of the word *begehd*, for example, in the story of Joseph and Potiphar's wife, tells us more than we realized about Joseph's psychological and moral development. Dr. Bernstein writes, "the word for garment, *begehd* is also the three letter root-word for betrayal. In this instance, the double entendre of the word *begehd* reflects a profound insight into the nature of sin." In discussing the description of the serpent as *arum*, Dr. Bernstein explores what he considers the strong correlation between "craftiness" and "nakedness" and the resulting psychological insight. "A crafty person is someone who takes advantage of another person's instinctive trust ... Conversely, when dealing with someone they do not know, people are more circumspect and wary of unexpected problems. A crafty person presents himself as a known quantity ... figuratively naked, with nothing to hide... Craftiness is the ability to project the illusion of nakedness."

Dr. Bernstein applies a wider angle lens to a trait that transcends any particular *parshah*, namely, jealousy. He describes jealousy as "mankind's first egregious flaw after the expulsion from the Garden of Eden." He finds this pattern repeated throughout the first book of the Torah and ultimately tested in the final section of Genesis, which "fittingly describes how the seeds of Jewish nationhood were planted in the hostile Egyptian soil, [and] focuses on the capacity of Jacob's chil-