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COMMUNITY SYNAGOGUE OF MONSEY
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לס' ולא יהיה בכנ"י נגף

An Open Letter to the Moetzes of Agudas Yisrael

I am writing as a *talmid* of Hagaon Rav Yosef Dov Soloveitchik *zt"l*, as a member of many years affiliation with Agudas Yisrael, and as a son-in-law of Hagaon Rav Moshe Feinstein *zrk"l*, who added so much dignity and universal acceptance to the Aguda during his decades of service to *Klal Yisrael*.

Why did you permit N. Wolpin to soil the pages of your official publication, the *Jewish Observer* (May 1993), with a denigration of the greatest *Rosh Yeshiva* of our generation?

The Talmud (Sanhedrin 99b) gives the following definition of an *apikores*: "Rav and R. Chanina both said, He is one who degrades a scholar... R. Yochanan and R. Yehoshua ben Levy said, One who degrades a scholar is as if he reveals facets in Torah which are not according to *halacha* [he has no portion in the world to come]."

You must try to correct what I fear is "*meivavt shelv yochol l'takain*," an irremediable sin of major magnitude, lest all be guilty of complicity through silence. You alone are able to protest and prevent such degradation of the Torah in future issues of this journal.

If you do not protest — "Woe to those creatures who disgrace the Torah!"

Please reread this insulting "eulogy" so that you can fully realize the need for corrective action. The multitudinous omissions and slights could only have been carefully orchestrated after hours of planning.

I cite specifics:

a) The "*hesped*" appears on page 43, but is not listed in the Table of Contents. In contrast, a "Letter to Mrs. Clinton," on page 44, is given prominent display in the Table of Contents.

b) The *petirah* of a *gadol b'Yisrael*, one who had no equal as a *marbitz Torah*, is noted by the title *Hagaon* before his name and *zt"l* (*zeicher tzadik l'bracha*) after his name. Did no one ever teach your editor Torah manners?

c) The great mother of the Rav, *Rebetzin Pesha n"e*, was a legendary *tzadiekes*, whose Torah knowledge

surpassed that of most rabbanim today. She is mentioned as the "daughter of Rabbi Elya Feinstien" — why is there no *zt"l*, no *Hagaon* for the giant of Torah, *Reb Elya Pruzhener*, the author of "*Halichos Elya*"? Also, why no mention of the Rav's grandfather, *Reb Chaim Brisker zrk"l*? What an

the training for some of our gedolim? *Rav Yitzhak Hutner zt"l* was his classmate there, as was *yibodel l'chaim tovim*, the *Rebbe of Lubavitch shlit"l*, both of whom went on to continue their studies at the Sorbonne in Paris.

e) The snide remark "students who passed through his classes," tries to

tation of the Rav's writings as a "admitted departure from the Torah world from which he came." Shame! The Rav was the finest example of the Torah world that once was, still is in the hearts and minds of his talmidim, and *iy"h* will be, long after the Wolpins are relegated to the oblivion reserved for all who reveal facets in the Torah which are not according to *halacha*.

g) Wolpin cites the *Jewish Week* — an anti-Torah, Orthodox-bashing publication — to denigrate the Rav as one who vacillated on major issues confronting the Jewish community. In his zeal to belittle the Torah and its learners, he is prepared to accept the *Jewish Week* as a source of truth. How cheap can you get?!

h) The concluding paragraph caps the many insults with a summation: "His passing leaves a vacuum in the specific role that he in effect created." No! The vacuum is in the international world of Torah. He had no "specific role" other than the one he shared with every *novi* since Moshe to the present, with every *marbitz Torah* from Moshe to the present. His message was limited at all times, in his *shiur* or in his home, to "Remember the Torah of My servant Moshe."

If he was unique in our *dor yosom*, it was only because he stood for all of *Torat Moshe* — not the truncated perversions that others have substituted for our *Torat Emet*.

I appeal to you, for the sake of G-d's glory and His Torah, to immediately issue a rebuke to those responsible for the scurrilous article, and an apology to the Rav *ztz"l* through his family and talmidim.

Moshe David Tendler

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Cong. Kehillat Monsey



Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik זכרונו לברכה

Several thousand *talmidim* and followers of Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik gathered to pay their last respects to their 90-year-old teacher and mentor at his *levaya* on April 11, third day *Chol Hamoad Pesach*, in Boston. They were joined in their mourning by thousands of others the world over.

Rabbi Soloveitchik was born in the Polish town of Pruzhan to Rabbi Moshe Soloveitchik (of Brisk) and *Rebbitzen Pesha* (daughter of Rabbi Elya Feinstein). His primary teacher in Talmud was his father, while his mother provided him with a rigorous secular education. In 1925, at age 22, he enrolled in the University of Berlin, where he earned a doctorate of philosophy in 1931. That same year he married Tonya Lewitt, his lifemate until she passed away in 1967.

In 1932, they emigrated to Boston, where he served as *Rav* until his final illness. He founded the Maimonides School in 1937, the first Hebrew Day School in New England.

When his father, *Reb Moshe*, passed away in 1941, he succeeded him as *Rosh Yeshiva* in *Yeshivas Rabbeinu Yitzhak Elchanan*, where he had profound impact on the thousands of young men who passed through his classes. He also served as professor of philosophy in *Yeshiva*

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University's Bernard Revel Graduate School. His weekly Talmud lectures in both New York and Boston were attended by hundreds of laymen. His annual *Yahrzeit* discourses in honor of his father and his wife attracted thousands.

While Rabbi Soloveitchik was affiliated with Agudath Israel in the 30's and he addressed its national conventions during those years, he later became the honorary head of the American Religious Zionists (*Mizrachi*). He also was Chairman of the Halacha Committee of the Rabbinical Council of America.

Rabbi Soloveitchik's legacy took many forms. Many of his works revealed a strong tension between the Brisk of his youth and the Berlin of his early adulthood. His *talmidim*, in their *hespedim*, recalled his penetrating *shitturim*, his vast knowledge, and his dynamic, vibrant delivery. At the same time, exponents of *Torah Umadda* emphasized how he was alone in the path he took — especially in his published writings, *Ishe Halalokha* and *Lonely Man of Faith* — with regard to synthesizing Torah, classic literature and modern philosophy. In admitted departure from the Torah world from which he came, in effect, these works offered an eloquent portrayal of a turbulent inner struggle.

Rabbi Soloveitchik rarely spoke out publicly on major issues, and was frequently quoted in conflicting manner by different people (for example, in such matters as membership in religious organizations with Reform and Conservative groups). He has been cited as explaining himself: "I have many pupils, I have many disciples, but I never impose my views on anyone." Thus, he allowed his students to issue highly divergent rabbinic rulings, with both camps able to claim... [him] as their legal source and mentor." (*Jewish Week*, April 16, 1993)

Nevertheless, he was unequivocal on several issues, such as rejection of theological dialogue with Christian groups; denying attempts to tamper with *halachic* precedent in regard to innovations in the marriage contract, and the idea that changing mores of society and culture can justify change in principles set forth in the Talmud and *halacha*; and opposition to entering a Conservative synagogue or one without a *mechtza*, even to hear *shofar* on *Rosh Hashana*.

His passing leaves a vacuum in the specific role that he in effect created — a vacuum that cannot conceivably be filled by any other individual.

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Copy of obituary of Rabbi J.B. Soloveitchik in The Jewish Observer

insidious effort to isolate the "Rav" even from his own family, all of whom wore the *kesser shel Torah*!

d) "At age 22 he enrolled in the University of Berlin." Surely this fact was recorded only to accentuate the "Lonely Man of Faith" portrait of the Rav, as if to question how a *gadol* could attend the University of Berlin?! Would it not be of interest to the readership to know that obviously, at that time and in that place, such was

portray a professor/student relationship, not a *rebbe/talmid* bonding. No one ever "passed through" the Rav's classes. The fire of Sinai burned so brightly in the Rav's *shiur* room that the finest talmidim of the U.S.A. were drawn irresistibly toward this light and imbibed the Torah that emanated from the mind and soul of their matchless *rebbe*.

f) The evil in Wolpin's heart finds clearest expression in his unconscionable, perverted interpre-