

# Musings . . .

By Ethel "Teddy" Mscovitz



The front page of this week's issue carries an appeal to parents to send their children to Hebrew School at an early age so that they may grow into adulthood seeped in a background which is rooted in an ancient heritage . . . "Early" has been the word around which the discussion of our last two columns have evolved . . . How early? . . .

In the first column concerned with this question we quoted Dr. S. R. Slavson, eminent child psychologist and therapist, who claims that formal Hebrew education when begun at the ages

of eight or nine can possibly be quite confusing to a child . . . Last week we reported on an article by Hyman Chanover, rabbi and educator, which appeared in the Reconstructionist magazine, and claimed that Hebrew education begun as early as five is not injurious, but is also beneficial to the mental development of the young person . . .

How is it possible for experts to be at such variance in their approach to the same question? . . . Actually, there is no disagreement . . . This week I want to go further into the Chanover article for there we find a key to the entire controversy . . .

In discussing the advisability of entering the five year old child into Hebrew studies, the noted Jewish educator adds: "Where bi-lingual training begins early, the methodological emphasis on the second language generally is informal. The oral-aural skills are stressed, rather than reading or writing, with the child 'soaking up' the language through oral and visual presentations of vocabulary objects—through games, songs, tales, films, records, and the like."

With this, I am sure, those child psychologists who are firmly set against early language training would agree . . . As Rabbi Chanover continues his treatise, he in turn finds agreement with the "later age" advocates . . . For he says: "The reading act involves a complex process of symbolization."

This was Dr. Slavson's contention, and evidently this is not overlooked by Rabbi Chanover, but he continues: second lan-

guage studies "is delayed until the child has mastered the rudiments of reading in his mother tongue. Unburdened by conjugations and grammatical declensions, the child at this level, in a sense, 'plays' at language learning."

So there is agreement at last: language study is difficult for a child . . . one language should not be started until the first one is mastered . . . there should be informal study before the formal education begins . . .

But to the parent this is not a positive answer, and to the average synagogue educator the statement can be an unsurmountable challenge . . .

It has been said that to the parent neither physician, nor psychologist, nor educator can give a definite answer in writing . . . Evidently, a great deal depends on the development of the child's facilities, and in our overburdened system of education, secular and religious, there are too few instructors to provide individual attention . . . Also, it must be admitted that there are still fewer who are trained to conduct classes in the progressive manner advocated by the Dr. Slavsons . . .

Therefore, do we deem all to be chaos? . . .

Not at all . . . We believe the good far overshadows the bad, for there is more to Hebrew instruction than simply the mastering of a language . . .

In an address delivered at the commencement exercises of Gratz College in Philadelphia, Dr. Judah Pilch, executive director of the American Association of Jewish Education, said: " . . . we are laying a foundation" . . . Dr. Pilch talk revolves around higher Jewish education, but he admits that in the early grades it is "attitudes" toward Jewish life, culture, history, language, philosophy, ethics, etc. . . . which is

most important . . .

These "attitudes" towards things Jewish in essence is the key to early Hebrew education, and we feel that on that premise we can conclude this series of articles . . .

Scholarly mastery of Hebrew we must place in the secondary Hebrew school . . . In the early years let us, as Dr. Pilch says: "Cherish and make much of those institutions which exist today."

Let us make use of these early years to develop appetites for Jewish learning . . . As we approach the New Year, and as we look with some concern to the beginning of the school season, may we heed the call of Jewish educators which is so sincerely issued to us, by men and women dedicated to those values which have sustained us as a people these thousands of years . . .

## Services Scheduled at Etz Hayim Synagogue

Friday evening services will be held at Etz Hayim Synagogue, 29 West 6th Street, as 6:30 P. M. Sabbath morning services start at 8:30 A. M. Rabbi Joshua Sodden will speak on "Preparing for the High Holidays." On Saturday at 6:00 P. M. Rabbi Sodden will conduct his weekly Bible class. Evening services will follow. Sunday morning, services begin at 8:30. Regular daily services are held at 7:30 A. M. and 6:45 P. M.

The High Holidays Committee of the Etz Hayim Synagogue wishes to announce that with the approach of the High Holiday season which begins on Friday evening, September 16, new members are being welcomed into the Congregation so that they may avail themselves of tickets for the Holidays. Anyone interested in obtaining further information concerning this matter, please contact the Etz Hayim office, 29 West 6th Street. The phone number is Elgin 4-2389.

Edward G. Robinson was glancing through a batch of publicity photographs that had just arrived from the studio. "Brother! These are the worst pictures I ever saw of me!" He motioned for his wife to examine the prints. "Dear, just look at my expressions! I look like an ape!"

Robinson's wife lifted an eyebrow and murmured, "You should've thought of that before you had them taken."

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## D.P. Who Served As G.I. Sends For Mom And Sis



Charles Gottlieb, 24, a former DP recently honorably discharged from the U. S. Army, is reunited with his mother, Mrs. Cyria Gryncajer, 48, and sister, Fanny, 17, on their arrival in New York from Belgium, their immigration assisted by United Hias Service, the Jewish International migration agency. Young Gottlieb, because he was born in Belgium, was able to come to the U. S. five years ago, while his mother, a native of Poland, was compelled to wait five additional years for a visa under the over-subscribed Polish quota, and her daughter elected to wait with her. The children were hidden by a gentile family during the Nazi occupation of Belgium. Their father died at the hands of the Nazis, and the mother survived a concentration camp. Charles had become a citizen, was discharged from the U. S. Army in January, and immediately called upon United Hias to bring his mother and sister to this country. The migration agency helped them obtain their visas and arranged for their transportation to the U. S. The happy reunion pictured here resulted.

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