

## Passover Feature

IN HONOR OF PASSOVER, WHICH COMMEMORATES THE ANNIVERSARY OF THE LIBERATION OF THE ISRAELITES FROM EGYPTIAN BONDAGE, THE LAS VEGAS ISRAELITE WILL PUBLISH A SERIES OF FEATURES. THIS YEAR THE PASSOVER FESTIVAL IS INAUGURATED AT SUNDOWN ON THE EVENING OF MONDAY, APRIL 20, AND ENDS ON APRIL 28.

### Where Are We Going?

by Joan Silberstein

In a tiny Polish village which doesn't exist any more, a four-year-old child once set out every day, long before dawn, for cheder. A lantern nearly as big as himself swung from one hand to light the path. The dark didn't scare the boy and he endured the snowy, cutting winds of winter without thought. Just two things mattered: he was Jewish and he would grow up to be a rabbi.

The path in the village in Poland that led to cheder brought Isadore Koplovitz, my grandfather, to America where he did, in fact, become a rabbi. For thirty years, he went wherever there was a congregation that needed him. With his wife and three children, he went to the Jews huddled in small clumps across the barren plains of Kansas. He went to the Jews scattered by the handful through Georgia, and then moved up through the midwest to the iron and copper country of northern Michigan.

I think the most remarkable thing that ever happened to my grandfather was what happened when he couldn't be a rabbi any more. After thirty years of wandering, after thirty years of being so poor the children never had a store-bought toy, my grandmother planted her feet finally and said, "Isadore, I can't stand it any more. Don't be a rabbi. Be something else."

To keep peace in the house and to hold the family together, my grandfather went out to sell insurance. That was how he came to settle down in Detroit and to earn enough money, for the first time in his life, to

support his family. But selling insurance nearly broke my grandfather's spirit. A rabbi is what he was.

So, at night when he finished work and on the Sabbath, he walked out miles to the Polish neighborhood in Detroit to preach, without pay, to people who needed him. Many came because he was a hah-kham, a man wise in the study of the Bible, the Torah, the Talmud. Many came because he gave of himself, asking nothing in return. There was no synagogue, only the empty spaces in the aisles of a Polish-Jewish general store where, during the day, working men bought clothes and women came for sundries and yard goods.

All this seems to make a difference between my grandfather and many rabbis of 1970, particularly the conservative and reformed rabbis. To me, many modern American rabbis are corporate businessmen --- disguised as rabbis.

And all this seems to make a difference, too, between the congregations of 1870 and many congregations of 1970. Many congregations of second and third generation American Jews are, I think, congregations of nearly assimilated, nearly Christians -- disguised as Jews.

If we have come to this in the name of progress, then where are we going as Jews? And why?

NEW YORK -- A 60 page "Guide to Israel Programs," listing seventy-six summer, six month and year round programs in Israel open to Americans, has been published by the American Section of the Jewish Agency for Israel. Twenty-five thousand copies of the pamphlet have been made available to rabbis, Jewish educators, community centers and youth groups, Zionist organizations, English-Jewish publications, religious schools, libraries and others. Individual copies of the "Guide to Israel Programs" are available at a cost of twenty-five cents to cover handling charges from the Publications Department, Jewish Agency-American Section, 515 Park Avenue, New York City, 10222.

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