

**SOME IN LUBAVITCH COMMUNITY SEEING
SIGN OF REDEMPTION IN REBBE'S HEALTH**

By Pamela Druckerman

NEW YORK, March 10 (JTA) -- As Lubavitch Grand Rebbe Menachem Schneerson lies semiconscious in a Manhattan intensive care unit, following a stroke early Thursday, some Lubavitch leaders are viewing the rebbe's illness, along with last week's shooting of a Chasidic student on the Brooklyn Bridge, as a sign that redemption is near.

"This is the intensification of darkness which signals the coming light," explained Rabbi Shmuel Butman, who heads the Lubavitch Youth Organization and who has been outspoken in the effort to promote Schneerson as the biblically prophesied Messiah.

Meanwhile, police in Brooklyn's 71st precinct, where the Lubavitch movement is based, are preparing for "Operation Demise," a massive contingency plan to cordon off the streets of Crown Heights and import thousands of police officers in the event of the rebbe's death.

Ninety-one-year-old Schneerson, known simply as "the rebbe" to the hundreds of thousands of Lubavitch devotees worldwide, was first hospitalized Tuesday after suffering a series of seizures related to a previous stroke, which left his right side paralyzed.

At a news conference at Beth Israel Medical Center in Manhattan where Schneerson is being treated, Dr. Matthew Fink, the director of neurology, said Thursday's stroke "seriously weakened" the rebbe's left side.

It was too early to gauge the extent of the damage or whether treatment will be effective, Fink said.

Schneerson -- who has led the movement since 1950 -- had been bedridden at Lubavitch headquarters in Crown Heights since a stroke two years ago left him almost completely debilitated.

Community Struggling For Sense Of Self

In the shadow of his illness, political infighting over the future of the Lubavitch movement, along with ongoing criticism over the course of the rebbe's medical care, revealed a community struggling to maintain its sense of self.

Despite the rebbe's frail health, virtually no one in the Lubavitch movement is willing to publicly speculate on the future.

"The fervent hope and prayer is that he will get better," said Rabbi Joseph Spielman, chairman of the Crown Heights Community Council. "There is no other agenda."

Neil Gillman, an associate professor of philosophy at the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York and longtime observer of the Lubavitch movement, predicted the rebbe's death could be justified along the same theological lines that propelled him into potential Messiah status, without rupturing the movement.

"They will quickly conclude that the generation wasn't ready, that they weren't good enough," Gillman said, referring to the Jewish

belief that there is a potential Messiah in every generation who will be revealed if and when the world is ready.

But for the Lubavitchers -- who have invested tremendously in a version of history that many say points to Schneerson as the Messiah -- there is a determination to hold onto that vision, even in the face of the rebbe's somber prognosis.

Under Schneerson's guidance, the movement has reached out to unaffiliated and disenfranchised Jews with an appeal of firm laws and religious certainties. There are an estimated 1,500 Lubavitch centers worldwide performing outreach and religious services.

Much of the lure has been the intensity surrounding Schneerson himself, who offered personal directives on everything from marriage partners to Hurricane Andrew and the 1991 Persian Gulf War.

Inner Circle Keeps Normalcy Going

Even with the rebbe in a virtually vegetative state, his inner circle managed to maintain a semblance of normalcy in the community. With the rebbe gone, some predict the center of the movement could collapse into demoralization and disarray.

The situation is exacerbated by the fact that Schneerson, the seventh leader of the spiritual sect founded in 18th century Russia, has no heir.

Nevertheless, the movement's leaders remain focused on the rebbe's recovery.

Butman points out that, according to the Hebrew calendar, the most recent stroke occurred exactly two years to the day after the rebbe's first stroke, in 1992.

"You can clearly see this is God's hand," Butman said.

And so, outside Beth Israel Medical Center, where Schneerson is reportedly in critical condition, hundreds of black-hatted followers huddled under umbrellas to recite prayers.

And in Lubavitch outposts across the globe, followers have intensified prayer and the observance of mitzvot, or religious commandments, in the hope of bringing their ailing leader a speedy recovery.

But a duty officer at the 71st Precinct in Crown Heights said police officials are monitoring the rebbe's condition, which they describe as the most serious ever, and have put officers throughout New York on standby in the event that "Operation Demise" has to be implemented.

Police expect millions of visitors to Crown Heights in the event of a funeral.

**ISRAELI SOLDIERS TOLD NOT TO FIRE
ON JEWS, ARMY OFFICIAL TELLS PANEL**

By Dvora Getzler

JERUSALEM, March 10 (JTA) -- Israeli soldiers throughout the West Bank had orders never to fire on Jews, even if they were shooting at Palestinians, a police official told the state commission of inquiry into the Hebron slayings.

Meir Tayar, commander of the border police in Hebron, told the commission on Thursday that

as he understood his orders, he could not have opened fire on Baruch Goldstein, even as Goldstein was shooting hundreds of unarmed worshippers.

This brought a rapid denunciation from the chairman of the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee, Ori Orr.

Orr said if such orders had been given, they were patently "stupid and wrong."

Gen. Shaul Mofaz of the Israel Defense Force confirmed the orders, telling the panel that the orders had been repeated in numerous briefings.

The Jews were not the enemy, it had been stressed to army personnel, he said.

But, Mofaz continued, it was also clear that Jews firing in clear breach of the law were to be dealt with by all available means.

Had he been present when Goldstein opened fire on Muslim worshippers in the Tomb of the Patriarchs, Mofaz said, "I suppose I would have shot at him."

The panel's questions, however, showed that its members were more than doubtful about how clear the orders had been.

The five-member panel is headed by Supreme Court Justice Meir Shamgar and includes an Arab judge.

Mofaz also told the panel that the reason Jews were allowed to enter the prayer halls at the Tomb of the Patriarchs carrying their weapons was that they were in danger of possible attack.

Among those seeking to testify before the commission is the B'Tselem human rights organization. The Israeli organization says it has details of 62 settler-perpetrated slayings of Palestinians and of attacks on Palestinian property, which it alleges have been improperly dealt with by the authorities during the seven years of the Palestinian uprising, or intifada.

But Kiryat Arba Mayor Zvi Katzover also seeks to testify, with details of hundreds of cases of Palestinians murdering Jews and attacking Jewish property.

Israeli police continued their efforts to confiscate weapons from extreme right-wing settlers.

And Binyamin Kahane, son of the late militant leader Rabbi Meir Kahane and leader of the Kahane Chai movement, was jailed for nine months for attacking policemen three years ago.

MEASURE WOULD GIVE FBI ACCESS TO CREDIT REPORTS OF TERRORISTS

By Steven Weiss

WASHINGTON, March 10 (JTA) -- An amendment giving federal authorities more investigative leeway in monitoring the activities of terrorists has been approved by a congressional committee.

The amendment, sponsored by Reps. Douglas Bereuter (R-Neb.) and Peter Deutsch (D-Fla.), would give the Federal Bureau of Investigation access to the credit reports of terrorists and terrorist organizations.

With such information, the FBI could more closely monitor the financial transactions of terrorist groups such as Hamas, the militant Palestinian group that opposes the peace accord between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization.

"The FBI should be able to investigate the transactions of individuals when they are known to be terrorists and there is reason to believe that serious crimes have been committed," Deutsch said in a statement.

The proposal passed by voice vote last Thursday in the House Banking Committee. It amends a consumer reporting reform bill designed to curtail abuses by credit bureaus and providers of credit data.

The consumer reporting bill was also approved by the committee last Thursday and is expected to reach the floor of the House of Representatives in a few months.

The amendment requires that the FBI use the report only for its investigation of the terrorist or terrorist group. The credit bureau must disclose the FBI's inquiry to the credit-holder.

An FBI spokesperson refused to comment on the legislation, but said the FBI follows certain guidelines when ascertaining who is a terrorist.

Such guidelines differ in foreign and domestic investigations, the spokesperson said.

Domestic investigation guidelines for identifying terrorists require that the individual or group violate a federal law under the FBI's jurisdiction or conspire to violate such a law.

Guidelines on foreign investigations are classified.

Deutsch said the amendment simply allows the FBI to access credit reports through a judicial proceeding, the same way it obtains access to other information.

"If American Express can obtain your credit report to see if you're a good candidate for a credit card, then the FBI should have access to the same information about terrorists for a counterintelligence investigation," Deutsch said.

ARRESTS OF BANK OFFICIALS SEEN BEHIND THE TEL AVIV MARKET CRISIS

By Dvorah Getzler

JERUSALEM, March 10 (JTA) -- More than \$4 billion were wiped out on the Tel Aviv stock market this week in what was described as a psychological -- rather than an economic -- phenomenon.

It is widely believed that the panic and crisis in confidence that was so spectacularly evident Wednesday and Thursday were a response to a wave of arrests and investigations of senior bank officials, notably those of the Discount Bank.

Earlier this week, two senior Discount Bank officials and the portfolio manager of the Central Securities Corp. were remanded on bail. They are suspected of fraudulently manipulating shares and of giving and taking bribes in a series of business deals affecting the shares of 13 companies over the past year.

The companies, some formerly regarded as blue-chip stocks, include Tadiran, Osem and the Dead Sea Industries.

The market fell across the board as small investors began to sell heavily amid rumors of further arrests of senior banking staff on suspicion of fraudulent dealing.

Ten years ago, Israel was shaken by a bank-shares crisis. The recommendations of the judicial committee of inquiry set up to investigate the scandal have largely been ignored.

**U.S. CIVIL RIGHTS NOMINEE
PLEDGES TO FIGHT BIGOTRY**

By Deborah Kalb

WASHINGTON, March 10 (JTA) -- Deval Patrick, President Clinton's nominee to head the civil rights division of the Justice Department, said this week that if confirmed he would "speak out as unequivocally as humanly possible to bigotry, wherever it comes from."

He also said the issue of hate crimes and organized bigotry deserves "the highest attention" of the civil rights division and should be a "very, very top, very, very serious priority."

Patrick, who is expected to have no problem being confirmed by the Senate as assistant attorney general for civil rights, made the comments at his confirmation hearings Thursday before the Senate Judiciary Committee.

"We certainly welcome his statement that (hate crimes) will be one of the priorities" for the civil rights division, said Michael Lieberman, associate director of the Anti-Defamation League's Washington office.

One senator raising the bigotry issue at the hearings was Sen. Edward Kennedy (D-Mass.). "Recently we've seen the emergence of some who seek to foment anti-Semitism (and) divide two historic allies," Kennedy said, in an apparent reference to the recent controversy over remarks made by a Nation of Islam official and subsequent friction between the black and Jewish communities.

Kennedy added that he had been impressed by remarks Patrick made to the Anti-Defamation League in Boston last year on the need for sensitivity between Jews and African Americans.

"Could you tell us your views on those who seek to foment division and tension between these groups?" the senator asked the nominee.

Patrick responded that he feels "very strongly that as a nation we will rise or fall together. And I think that, as I indicated in my remarks to the ADL in Boston, in some respects in the black community and in the Jewish community, we expect more of each other."

To Speak 'Unequivocally' Against Bigotry

He said he hoped to use what has "been described to me as the bully pulpit of this post, if I am confirmed, to speak out as unequivocally as humanly possible to bigotry, wherever it comes from. And I've been encouraged to view this post that way."

A Boston civil rights attorney, Patrick was nominated to the Justice Department post Feb. 1. The position has been vacant since the start of the Clinton administration, and Jewish organizations have been among those eagerly waiting for someone to fill the post.

Jewish groups responded positively to the nomination, in contrast to the concern expressed by some Jewish organizations last year when Clinton nominated Lani Guinier, a University of Pennsylvania law professor. Clinton withdrew Guinier's nomination after negative response to her writings, which appeared to call for quotas.

"The fact that Patrick appears able to command not only a majority of the committee but perhaps unanimous support augurs well for his ability to work with Congress in enforcing the nation's civil rights laws," said Mark Pelavin,

Washington representative of the American Jewish Congress.

Patrick mentioned that at one time the civil rights division had a task force that targeted skinheads and said, "I think organized bigotry -- if you will, a subset of hate crimes -- is something that deserves as well the highest attention of the division."

Patrick could "be a very good and forceful advocate for improved race relations and diminished tensions," said the ADL's Lieberman. "We are looking to him for leadership on that" issue.

Patrick, a 1982 graduate of Harvard Law School who grew up in a poor neighborhood of Chicago, previously worked for the Legal Defense and Educational Fund of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.

**JEWS MOST FREQUENT TARGETS OF
HATE CRIMES BASED ON RELIGION**

By Steven Weiss

WASHINGTON (JTA) -- Jews were the most frequent targets of hate crimes based on religion in 1992, according to a new FBI report.

Crimes against Jews constituted an overwhelming 87 percent of all reported crimes motivated by bias against religious groups in 1992. The figure was 86 percent in 1991.

The Anti-Defamation League welcomed the report, but called for broader future studies that would make the statistics more reliable.

According to Michael Lieberman, associate director of ADL's Washington office, less than half of American law-enforcement agencies provided information for the FBI's report.

In addition, Lieberman said, the FBI report does not list hate crimes for counties or cities, making it harder to pinpoint problem areas.

"We commend the FBI for its initial outreach and education program, but there is still much work to be done," Melvin Salberg, ADL national chairman, and Abraham Foxman, ADL national director, said in a statement Tuesday.

The FBI is required by the Hate Crimes Statistics Act to submit this report annually.

"A message must be sent to hatemongers that this country believes in zero tolerance when it comes to bias-related crimes," said Rep. Charles Schumer (D-N.Y.), who sponsored the legislation that calls for this report.

The report divides hate crimes into four categories: crimes motivated by a bias against religion, race, ethnicity and sexual origin.

Crimes motivated by religious bias constituted 15.4 percent of all hate crimes reported.

Anti-Jewish crimes made up 13.4 percent of all hate crimes from any category. In 1991, when far fewer enforcement agencies reported their hate crime statistics to the FBI, anti-Jewish crimes constituted 16.7 percent of the total.

The next most targeted religious group in 1992 was Protestants, at 0.4 percent. Crimes against Muslims made up 0.2 percent of the total.

The report was released following an attack on Lubavitch students on the Brooklyn Bridge in New York in which one died and another remains gravely wounded.

That attack "serves as a reminder to all Americans that we have a moral obligation to confront anti-Semitism wherever it surfaces," Schumer said.

**YIDDISH MAKES A COMEBACK
WITH HELP FROM SOME FRIENDS**

By Alexandra J. Wall

NEW YORK (JTA) -- A Yiddish summer language institute had to turn away applicants for lack of space. National Public Radio will broadcast Yiddish stories narrated by Hollywood actors such as Leonard Nimoy and Carol Kane.

And thanks to actor Mike Meyers' Barbra Streisand-worshiping character Linda Richmond on "Saturday Night Live," thousands of gentiles can express themselves as feeling "farklempt" (choked-up).

As the last generation of immigrant Yiddish speakers passes away, it has long been predicted that the use of Yiddish would disappear with them. While specialists have been predicting the decline of Yiddish for some years, groups around the country are determined not to allow it to the brink of extinction.

The language in which parents could converse secretly in front of their children is enjoying a resurgence among everyone from university students to feminists to television sitcom characters.

"The number of Yiddish speakers in the world is actually rising," said Aaron Lansky, president of the National Yiddish Book Center, in South Hadley, Mass. Lansky said that with the high birthrate of Chasidim, who use Yiddish as their everyday language, new generations are still being raised in the mother tongue, the "mammeloshen."

But the insular Chasidic community is not interested in modern Yiddish literature because of its secular themes.

"The first modern Yiddish story appeared in 1846," said Lansky, whose study of Jewish history sparked his interest in Yiddish as an undergraduate.

Lansky, along with the National Yiddish Book Center, which he founded, is responsible for rescuing more than 1 million Yiddish books from being destroyed.

"Until the Nazi era, 45,000 Yiddish titles appeared. And most addressed a theme that American Jews are still concerned with, mainly how does the Jew fit into the modern world?" Lansky said in an interview.

Assimilation A Solution For Immigrants

Assimilation was the solution for many immigrants, Holocaust survivors among them, who wanted to begin their lives anew. And the desire to cast away anything associated with their past was part of that process.

Yiddish was one of the first casualties.

"Jews began to recoil from their world, which was destroyed," said Lansky. "But now that initial trauma has passed."

It was a desire to learn about the Jewish world before the Holocaust that guided writer and feminist activist Irena Klepfisz to Yiddish.

Klepfisz, a child survivor of the Holocaust, was raised in the Yiddish-speaking world of the Bund labor movement in Poland. She has taught Yiddish classes at various American universities as well as Jewish women's studies courses.

According to Klepfisz, although much scholarship focuses on the Holocaust, little of it delves into the Jewish world that existed before.

"I wanted to reconnect with my Yiddish background," said Klepfisz, who is a poet and author of "A Few Words In The Mother Tongue," a poetry anthology, and "Dreams of an Insomniac," a book of "Jewish feminist essays, speeches and diatribes."

"It was such a vibrant community, with so much happening, and I was interested in learning more about the women activists who played such a prominent role in the Bund and its organization," Klepfisz said.

Klepfisz is currently working in conjunction with the National Council of Jewish Women to organize a conference on women and Yiddish. The conference is scheduled for October.

The YIVO Institute for Jewish Research's Uriel Weinreich Program in Yiddish Language, Literature and Culture offers a six-week summer program at Columbia University, in which students immerse themselves in Yiddish through language classes, lectures and film.

College students are a group among which Yiddish culture seems to be maintaining a high level of interest. An estimated 30 universities across the United States offer Yiddish courses.

Janet Hadda, Yiddish professor at the University of California, Los Angeles, said that while the numbers of students studying the language has decreased in the past few years, enrollment is up in her Yiddish literature in translation classes.

Number Of Non-Jews Enrolled Increased

Hadda added that the number of non-Jewish students enrolled in her Yiddish literature classes was also increasing.

Carol Stein of Eugene, Ore., said it was her daughter's study of Yiddish in college that inspired her to organize a Yiddish-speaking group through her synagogue. It meets twice a month.

While facilitating the group comes easy for Stein, a middle-school teacher and librarian, she herself does not understand very much. Yet she is committed to keeping the language alive.

"It is amazing to me, how once you get involved in something like this, how many Yiddish speakers come out of the woodwork," said Stein.

"There are rich little veins of Yiddish, in the most obscure places. There is even a Yiddish radio program in Portland, (Ore.)," she said.

Such study groups are prompting a curiosity in people who have no knowledge of Yiddish beyond the few requisite phrases learned from family members, or inevitably, from television.

"Yiddish has always been present in Hollywood, just because of the large numbers of Jews there," said Lansky. Now, he said, it is increasing as "Jews are more self-affirming."

But Klepfisz does not see such commercial usage as positive. "It is a real denigration of the language. It is becoming a T.V. language, associated only with comedy, or schmaltz," she said. Said Lansky, "Making Yiddish accessible to people who are not Yiddish speakers is one of our aims."

The book center's new home, on the campus of Hampshire College in Amherst, Mass., is scheduled for completion in 1996. It will feature interactive exhibits and programs designed to make Yiddish more available to the center's visitors.

"I'm under no illusion that Yiddish will once again become a spoken language among Jews," said Lansky. "I'm not trying to revive the past, just to make it more accessible."