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REPRODUCING MORAL AGENTS

The Concept of Human Nature in an Orthodox Jewish Community.

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In memory of my mother Eileen.

Name: **Eva von Hirsch Eriksen.**

Title: **Reproducing Moral Agents:**
The concept of human nature in an orthodox Jewish community.

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ABSTRACT OF THESIS.

The theoretical emphasis in this thesis is on the ideas that people have regarding the sociocultural construct of human nature. Regarded as a construct whose form and content is intrinsically connected to economic, historic and sociocultural factors, the thesis attempts to explain how specific circumstances have caused the orthodox Jewish community of Gateshead to re-negotiate and crystallize the concept of human nature in their quest to live ethical and moral lives. In the last fifty years this community has become known as a prominent centre for higher rabbinical studies and attracts students from all over the world. Apart from its high intellectual standards it has also gained a reputation as harbouring members who are devoted to inter-personal ethics. The contention of this thesis is that the community's level of compliance to such behaviours requires an awareness and a well-defined notion of one's "inner" self and its various components that govern the process of moral and ethical conduct.

Underpinning a wide range of sociocultural activities the thesis deals in particular with the way in which ideas of human nature are inherent to the content and form of indigenous educational theory. The process of child-rearing not only ensures the reproduction of competent sociocultural members, it also aids the child in acquiring an understanding of its "inner" self. The latter is in Gateshead defined as the locus of personal and individual responsibility and is consequently vital in making the child aware of its potentiality for moral conduct.

By carefully analyzing mother-child interactions it is revealed how the structure and content of these interactions are organized by and expressive of inherent ideas concerning the concept of human nature. Through active participation in these interaction sequences the child is provided with an opportunity to construct and acquire an understanding of itself as a moral agent.

CONTENT

	Page
Prologue	1 - 14
Introduction	15 - 24
Chapter 1.1 The place and people of of Gateshead: A setting	25 - 36
Chapter 2.1 From where and why did they arrive?	37 - 42
Chapter 2.2 Shtetl life	43 - 48
Chapter 2.3 Signs of heterogeneity in the Pale	49 - 61
Chapter 2.4 Newcastle: a solid, stable and profoundly Anglicised community	62 - 69
Chapter 2.5 The split of a community	70 - 77
Chapter 3.1 A change of direction: A way to a unique and independant niche	78 - 100
Chapter 3.2 Generating cultural competence	101 - 108
Chapter 4.1 Gateshead of today: A sub-group within Anglo Jewry, isolated from the society at large	109 - 122
Chapter 4.2 A two-dimensional self: contextualization of self-expression	123 - 142
Chapter 5.1 Indigenous theories: Too revealing to be ignored	143 - 161
Chapter 6.1 Avoidance of "inner" defilement	162 - 168
Chapter 6.2 Indigenous educational theory: A reflection of indigenous psychology	169 - 181
Chapter 6.3 The conducting of an "internal" orchestra	182 - 198
Chapter 7.1 Talk, not silence is golden	199 - 216
Chapter 7.2 Interrogation, or social	

knowledge transmission? 217 - 247

Chapter 8.1 Concluding remarks 248 - 258

Glossary 259 - 263

References 264 - 280

PROLOGUE

Five years of German occupation made a harsh impact on the people who later became the care-givers of my generation. Growing up in Norway in the fifties meant that the life of every adult in my surroundings had in one way or another been affected by the German occupupation. Wounds of varying kinds and degrees had been inflicted, some which would never heal.

Long before I became aware of the social distinction of class, I knew of the difference between those who had been against, as opposed to those few, but well defined who had collaborated with the Germans. The latter were looked upon as the "lepers" of our town. They were the ones to whom no one talked, only talked about.

My generation's understanding of foodrations, reprisals, Gestapo, torture and concentration camps were clear and vivid from an early age. As a young girl, I was perfectly able to point out the building where the Gestapo headquarters had been in my town. Stories of how people had jumped out of windows during interrogations were common knowledge and many of us had parents or grandparents who had been subjected to the methods of the Gestapo.

The details of their gruesome encounters with the "black uniforms" (Gestapo), was revealed in the multitude of reports and literature which appeared in these early years following the war. These men and women, many of them no longer amongst us, were hailed as the heroes of my generation.

Then there were the ones of whom we spoke with great awe, respect and compassion - those who had been sent to the concentration camps in Germany. One would normally find that they were unable or reluctant to talk about their experiences. But there were other signs. There were people who no longer spoke or those who constantly spoke to themselves. There were people haunted by nightmares and those without fingernails, people who could not stand closed doors, but by far the most common, people who just

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wanted to forget but found that they could not and who spent the rest of their lives in constant fear and anxiety.

I cannot remember how old I was when I realized that millions of Jews, twice as many as the entire Norwegian population, had been killed in those horrific places they called concentration camps. Although Norway has always had a relatively small Jewish population we, the first post-war generation, were early and well informed of the details and facts of the Jews' horrendous destiny in these camps. Real perception and detailed insight came later though, when in our mid-teens we discovered Leon Uris in our local library. He introduced us to the endless ingenuity of the human mind in terms of inflicting pain and horror upon fellow man. To me, like to most of my friends, Jews were all through my childhood the people so often portrayed in numerous documentary films and photographs. They were the ghostlike people with cadaverous faces, sunken eyes filled with terror or more often, devoid of life. Somehow, their faces all looked alike. Their awful predicament concealing the individual, the men and women who had at one time had hopes, desires, dreams and aspirations like ourselves. In those early years of my life, the image of Jews represented nothing but persecution, horror and death.

Growing up in Norway in the early fifties meant that we had a very limited knowledge of "foreigners" or people with different sociocultural backgrounds. Not counting the endless bus loads of blue-rinsed haired American widows, Frenchmen in over-loaded Renaults and English families in caravans who arrived faithfully each summer to experience the land of the midnight sun, the fjords and the saunas. People of different cultural origin did not live amongst us, in fact the people of the very north of our long and narrow country, the Saami, were as exotic to us living in the southern part of Norway as were the Hindus of India.

In the summer of 1962 I travelled with my parents to England and we went on a three day sight-seeing tour of London. It was a hot and humid summer which turned the underground stations into unusually attractive cool resorts. During one afternoon rush hour we entered a packed train and I found myself face to face with a boy of my own age. A miniature copy of his father who stood next to him, the boy looked like no other

twelve year old boy I had ever seen before. His dark suit, white open necked shirt, white strings hanging out of his trouser pockets, a black cap on his head (his father had a hat) and a long trailing curl on each side of his narrow and pale face, made him appear very different from his fellow travellers.

I remembered having seen in one of my grandfather's many travel books a picture showing street life in New York in which there were such men. My grandfather had told me that they were orthodox Jews. The revelation that there in front of me and alive, were individuals of the very people upon which so much suffering, inhumanity, cruelty and pain had been inflicted, had a momentous impact on me. I felt an immediate and strong urge to show him that I dissociated myself from the spirit which had designed and inflicted such suffering upon his people. I wanted him to recognize that I was friendly and sympathetic towards them.

More people entered the train. The boy and I were cramped. The adults towering above us opened newspapers and shut out the light. Smells and bodies took on powerful dimensions. Sensing that we shared the mutual predicament of being children in an adult world, I caught his eyes and smiled at him. Then I waited for a predicted smile in response to mine. What followed came as a suprise since I regarded it as a total refusal to recognize what I considered to be a friendly gesture. He simply gave me a blank look and then he turned his head away as if the incident was invalid. Never changing his expression his head remained turned away. Indignation, anger and disapointment might qualify to describe the feelings which this, in my mind, blatant rebuff left me with. I looked to his father for some kind of support. My own childhood experience told me that the boy's action was one which my parents would have condemned and deemed as unfriendly, unkind and rude. Hence it would have evoked some kind of reprimand. Here there was nothing. The father might not have observed my effort in demonstrating friendliness but he did see his son's head turned away at a sharp angle so as to avoid my look. The bearded man observed, said nothing and also looked away. I did not comprehend, how could it be that the father seemed to condone his son's behaviour? Was it because they mistook our Norwegian language to be German (a common mistake in England) or did they not like foreign people? Still, how could the father's reaction be

explained?

Much later, I have come to understand that what the boy and I did not share, was an agreement on the appropriate relation of actions to situations. Only later did I reaöize that this had been my first experience of the stuff of social anthropology, namely the puzzle of sociocultural differences. The father and the boy were in fact behaving in strict accordance with the rules which govern gender relationships among orthodox Jews. Men do not expose themselves to unnecessary contact with women to whom they are not related. Correct and modest behaviour calls for averting of eyes in contact with (strange) women. In my world, their behaviour was completely out of context, as was mine to them. I am not suggesting that this episode was decisive to my interest in anthropology, but it did somewhat influence my much later choice to do my doctoral thesis in an orthodox Jewish community. At the time, I simply walked away with the same attitude I so often hear expressed when people discover that I worked among orthodox Jews, I thought them both forbidding and arrogant.

To some extent, these experiences of my childhood and the emotional dualism concerning Jews which they provided me with, were typical of many Norwegians of my generation. Jews were people who most of us had never seen, at least not knowingly. Our image of them was one of suffering, persecution and death, mixed with the less pronounced yet pervasive notion that Jews have historically been devoted to an uncompromising and relentless rejection of the society at large. To the extent that Jews were never mentioned in our sociocultural milieu at all, they were a faceless impersonal group of people whose cruel destiny and separatism became their ethnic label. The emotions which this image brought forth towards Jews were a combination of compassionate sympathy with their historical suffering and a sense of anger at what was interpreted as Jewish notions of superiority. As could be expected, I have, after spending the last four years trying to come to grips with the reasoning underpinning the behaviours and attitudes of people in Gateshead, come to see them in a very different light. The crude stereotyping involved in my generation's sentiments concerning the Jews did not allow for distinctions or nuances, but they did serve to enhance the historical dichotomy existing between Jew and non-Jew.

Although, after four years of intensive study, there are still attitudes and reasonings which continue to intrigue me, there are also many values and convictions which I have come to regard as not only reasonable but as highly appropriate. The compassion, sincere interest in the well-being of others and tireless striving for self-improvement which I have observed among members in the community, have touched me deeply. It has also made me aware of the differing **meaning** or content which varying communities (as well as individuals) attach to cultural concepts such as morality, compassion, considerateness, ethics etc. Even though people in Gateshead and members of the society at large share these words, the **meanings** assigned to them differ. The qualitative content of their intense desire to "do good" and the tireless consideration which people in Gateshead show others, create I believe, a reality of difference between themselves and others (Cohen 1985) and unites members of Gateshead in a kind of opposition to outsiders. Over the period of time I spent in the community I learned to recognize this "reality" as a powerful boundary marker.

One of my concerns is that this thesis should not in any way give the impression of a community that harbours an unsophisticated group of fanatics. Far from it, they are deeply religious but also highly educated people who are dedicated to the impressive logic and reasonings of the Talmud. They are not ignorant of secular knowledge, nor are they unaware of what happens in the world which surrounds them. They have simply decided that it holds no attraction for them, rather it is regarded as an obstacle in their quest to serve G-D. Rejecting excessive materialism and guided solely by the halachic laws, these pious men and women are convinced that serving G-D is achieved through their service to their fellow men. Over the many months during which I visited the community, I have come to care a great deal for its members whose unselfishness, kindness and deep-felt commitment to G-D I have learned to deeply admire and respect.

During the time I spent in the community, I tried to adjust my behaviour to the ways of an orthodox Jewess. It was not enough to dress in subdued colours and chaste clothes and making sure that my hair was always covered, I also attempted to behave in an unassuming manner and avoid attracting attention as is required in female Jewish behaviour. My aim was one of trying to make the behavioural accomodations which

I see as vital in fieldwork. I was the one who was imposing myself upon them, hence it was up to me to make the necessary adjustments in my behaviour.

As would be expected, adjusting my behaviour to community standards became less problematic as the months passed by. In fact, some of the women did themselves help me and they showed great sensitivity in guiding me in this venture. I am also grateful to my parents whose insistence that politeness and respect be shown in all dealings with people, was an invaluable help in my fieldwork. It was never my intention to pretend to be like them, only to remove the sharp edges of differences which would otherwize have created an unsurmountable divide between us. In spite of all my efforts to behave like a Jewish female, I always remained "different" from them. Yet I believe that had I not adjusted my own behaviour, my fieldwork would not have been possible at all (Mitchell 1988, Belcov-Shalin 1988).

If my success in behaving like a Jewess was limited in the eyes of members of the community, I was certainly a great success seen through they eyes of the non-Jews in the area. Evidence of this was rife as I mingled with them in the nearby streets and shops. Being subjected on numerous occasions to the hurtful impact of persecution and prejudice was an unexpected aspect of my fieldwork which has enhanced my understanding of this particular aspect of ethnicity. It is a dimension of my fieldwork which has left me quite stunned and disillusioned.

People in Gateshead were never anxious to have an outsider take up their time and pry into the details of their lives. Yet they kindly let me into their homes, some reluctantly, but most of them showing friendliness and interest in my work. I experienced all the reactions which one would expect from a people who have reason to be suspicious of the society at large, are mistrustful of the printed secular word and tired of being depicted as "strange fanatics". In Gateshead, neither friendship nor trust are commodities easily and readily available to members of the society at large. Despite this, I have experienced what I consider to be the tender outlines of friendships in Gateshead. Members of the community have more than tolerated my inquiries into their lives, they have shown me frankness, trust and kindness. My gratitude for making this thesis at all possible must

therefore go to the people of Gateshead community who gave so much and asked for so little.

The many hours spent in their kitchens drinking tea, talking together and watching them go about their many household chores created a particular intimacy. Not only did I learn about their aspirations, beliefs and convictions, they also gained extensive insight into mine. Herein lies, I believe, one of the problems of ethics in fieldwork (Rynkiewich 1981). How to write objectively about people who have come to trust you and from whom you have accepted some kind of friendship, is a dilemma which is quite common among anthropologists. Increasingly, anthropologists are dealing with people who will eventually read what has been written about them and they may or may not like, recognize or even agree with the anthropologist's analysis. Some people might feel that I have betrayed their confidence by putting things in writing which to their mind were only intended for "the personal dimension" of our relationship. I beg of them to accept and understand that to the extent that notions such as "discretion", "personal" and "private" are subjective, I have tried to give a truthful and sympathetic account of my experience in the community. It is an account which by my own understanding should be harmful neither to individuals of the community nor to the community in general.

As an outsider and intruder, an anthropologist has no rights only obligations, yet in the name of science and our own ambitions we some times overstep the fine line of ethics in our fieldwork ventures. Like so many other anthropologists, I am left with a strong feeling of gratitude and obligations to my informants who not only shared their beliefs and ideas with me, but who trusted me enough to let me carry out my research. I in turn, feel committed to protect them from curiosity and sensationalism and to handle their "gift" with great care. This understanding has been foremost in my mind as I have tried to sift into the text the impressions and details which I have learned in the community. This is a difficult task, since it leaves it to the anthropologists' discretion to follow certain leads and consider others as unimportant. I have constructed a text which describes certain elements of life in Gateshead based upon specific events and a number of individuals' opinions and beliefs. Such a method will inevitably lead to a description which is at the mercy of the anthropologist's interpretation and is one which may or may

not be congruent with that of all of the community's members.

When I gained access into Gateshead it was on the condition that particular members of the community should be allowed to read and comment on all I wrote. Finding this at the time to be a reasonable request I accepted this condition. I had explained to members of the community that I intended doing research on their child-rearing methods. My initial intention was to gain an understanding of the process of reproducing **Frumkeit** or the process of socializing children into the state of being **frum**, which is the Yiddish expression for adhering strictly to the doctrines and practices of orthodox Judaism. This is a complex concept which defies simple explanations . In the Maussian sense, the conception of a frum person (personne) is a conception of the individual in relation to society as a whole. It was a focus of research which was relatively concrete and one which captured the interest of many members of the community. As my work progressed and I learned to recognise and found myself able to interpret the implied **meanings** underpinning members' reasonings, I became aware that my present concern with the **role** of being frum had distracted my attention from the morally significant subject matter of self (moi), whose local form was intrinsically tied to the community's socio-historical background (Carrithers 1985; Sanderson 1985). In the light of the cultural imperative which ethics and moral behaviour have been provided with in Gateshead in recent years, this was a dimension which could not be over-looked. This revelation caused me to redirect my focus to the community members' particular ideas concerning a human being's "inner" self - human nature - and the implications which such ideas have for various social activities, in particular to indigenous educational theory. Although this was a focus which gave my fieldwork a whole new dimension, it was also one which did not easily lend itself to factual and clear-cut descriptions. Attempts to explain this new focus were not always completely successful. An unfortunate effect of this was that some members might have been unaware of my concern with this problematic subject of inquiry.

The ways in which mothers speak to their children, the explanations they gave me and their ways of reasoning about the activity of child rearing, revealed a specific sociocultural understanding as to the nature of their own and their childrens' "inner" self.

It became quite evident that they reared their children according to explicit ideas concerning the complex construct of human nature and its receptiveness to external manipulation. Parts of this cultural model they were not only willing and able to discuss, they also frequently made explicit references to this concept. Other parts were simply **implied** in what the women said, yet when confronted with these "ideas", they had problems in giving a reasonable and detailed description of them. The problem in describing certain parts of the concept of human nature is indicative of a type of "knowledge" which we all possess and share intersubjectively with our fellow sociocultural members. It is part of those obvious facts concerning the world around us of which we are predominantly unaware and which are inherent in all societies. It is a "knowledge" which is felt, experienced and understood but rarely explicitly expressed. Since I am concerned with the interpretations of the **meaning** underpinning but not made explicit in what people say and do, my analyse makes it in parts a problem for the people involved to relate to. It forces them to try to elucidate that which is taken for granted but never reflected upon.

All the interpretations in this thesis are my own. Regardless of what people have volunteered to tell me, I must carry full responsibility for the way I have subsequently interpreted them. The details that I describe and quote are exactly as they were presented to me. I am aware that there are instances when the women have presented ideas and beliefs which to some degree diverge from the proper scriptural version. Deeply concerned with scriptural knowledge and their consequent sub-group reputation this may worry some members of the community. It is therefore important to recognize that this type of material will not be presented as the "truth" but simply as a selection of particular womens' personal interpretations. Although Gateshead represents a high degree of consensus in terms of religious precepts which form the basis for their sociocultural existence, it is important to bear in mind that the community is a conglomerate of many nationalities and backgrounds. This is a social situation, and here Gateshead is no exception, which thus allows for variations in the content and form of what might be called "Folk theories".

An in-built effect of any ethnic affiliation is the inclination towards presenting one's

own-group as cohesive and homogeneous. To the anthropologist who knows that social life represents a conglomerate of individual interpretations this is, if not a myth, then a social improbability. Burdened by the obvious responsibility which follows in the footsteps of an increased insight and awareness of areas considered accessible for own-group members only, I have decided that my own presentation is to be limited to those areas in which there is a high level of consensus and which will in no way compromise the reputation of the community.

The problem of interpreting data and deciding what is relevant to the argument, has both ethical and analytical dimensions. Having carefully kept this in mind throughout the construction of the text, it was somewhat worrying to be informed that the community objected to some of the chapters and that it was thought that I had made the community look "unsophisticated" and "unwordly". Naturally I did as promised, carefully consider all their comments and where possible I made amendments. In fact, the first draft of one chapter had been constructed, as was pointed out to me, in such a way as to easily lend itself to misinterpretations and was therefore re-constructed.

The agreement to allow particular people to read my chapters in advance and to correct "whatever I had misunderstood" had far reaching implications which I had not forseen. The problem of having a select few not only read, but also assess the anthropologists choice of data preferences and consequent interpretations, proved to be particularly problematic in a research which deals primarily with the often imprecise phenomenon of **meaning**. Although intersubjectively shared, various sociocultural concepts do also allow for individual interpretations. Any interpretation that draws upon individual life experiences and personal emotions is open to degrees of possible variation and imprecision. No one's scope of social experience is identical with anothers, hence interpretations entail elements which make them idiosyncratic.

Allowing the people we study not only to read but also have a say in what and how we write about them, is a predicament which I believe anthropologists will increasingly have to face. It is a situation which raises a number of ethical problems to which we still have provided very few answers. Hitherto, the anthropologist who finds him/herself faced with

this dilemma has got but one tool at his/her disposal, that of his/her own "conscience".

My challenging work in Gateshead could never have been realized had it not been for the support and help which I have received from family, friends colleagues and people at the Department of Anthropology in Durham throughout the years.

There is however one person whom I shall never be able to thank personally and that is the Rav of Gateshead Rabbi Rakow. Although he has at no time acknowledged my presence in the community (to my knowledge) I am quite aware that it was up to his discretion to effectively put a stop to my fieldwork at any time. Without his consent, all doors would have remained closed. This is why I owe my deepest thanks to this very special man whose deep concern for the community I am obliged to consider.

Someone whom I did get to know and whose help and support was invaluable in my fieldwork was Mrs. Leah Kohn. Her deep knowledge of the secular world, her extensive knowledge of theoretical and practical Judaism combined with her training in educational theory have been important to my work. Without her personal support and willingness to show other members in the community that she cared to be associated with me, I would not have been able to enter the community at all. She not only opened her own home to me, she also introduced me to several other families who, due to her introduction, allowed me into their homes. It was through these very valuable introductions that I was able to find ever new informants. Her frankness and analytic ability were always rewarding but it was her concern and understanding of the emotional implications and stress which the fieldwork caused me, which remain vivid in my mind. She has a very special place in my heart.

I also especially wish to thank Mr. Max Guttentag whose tireless support through these four years I could not have managed without. During my twenty months of fieldwork, I visited his and his wife Eva's home regularly. Their home became a "haven" in times of desperation and frustration when the various fieldwork problems seemed insurmountable. During these months, he introduced me to the complexity of the laws and codes, the rituals, festivals, holydays and symbols of Judaism. Explaining the

underlying philosophy, describing the various religious precepts and bearing with my many questions and arguments, he patiently helped me try to come to grips with the complexity of his religion.

The enthusiasm of Max's explanations, the comfort of Eva's many cups of tea, cookies and wonderful lunches, mingled with Max's mother's beautiful piano playing were all a tremendous source of strength and support to me. Not only did they encourage me when the fieldwork situation looked rather gloomy, they comforted me in times of sadness, explained when I could see no sense in my work, calmed me in times of frustration and encouraged me when I was filled with despair. For all this and so much more they have become very dear to me.

Also during the process of writing up this thesis, Max has been an invaluable help. He has not only sensitively checked my English for mistakes and provided me with scriptural references, he has also commented on each chapter and helped me construct several of the notes. His analytical mind and sensitive relation to Judaism was very useful to me and we have had many a rewarding discussion concerning my presentation of the community. Early in my fieldwork, he proved to possess a talent and willingness in realising what I, the anthropologist, was "driving at" (Rabinow 1977) and this has on many an occasion been a valuable asset to my work. Yet it is important to point out that there have been occasions in our discussions when Max has been been concerned about some of my interpretations, especially those which are not congruent with Jewish traditional teaching. Hence I wish to make it quite clear that any interpretations of Gateshead's female Folk models in this thesis are wholy my own.

I owe a very special thanks to my supervisor, Professor Robert Layton. I very much appreciate the interest he has shown in my work. The good advice he has given me in organizing my text, his interest in the ethical implications of my work, corrections of my most blatant English mistakes, his useful literary advice and his critical eye for inconsistencies and repetitions have all been decisive for the materialization of this thesis.

At a critical point of my work my word processor broke down and I "lost" a third of my

text and there seemed to be no way of retrieving it. I wish to thank Lena Arnborg for her expert help and effort to solve this problem which threatened the whole venture. Her generous help saved me a lot of time and worry.

Ola Persson very kindly helped me with the lay-out and transformed my manuscript into laseprint. Judith Narrowe deserves a special mention for the interest and enthusiasm she has shown in my work. I wish to thank her warmly for her many good and critical comments. Her enthusiasm has been a great source of inspiration.

There is one person who deserves a very special and warm recognition and he is Kjell Eriksen, my husband, whose pratical, economic but most of all emotional support have been invaluable to my work. At times when I felt that the pressure was too great, he not only gave me emotional support, he helped me organize my practical life in ways which made the whole venture at all possible. At a critical point of my doctoral work, our family life underwent profound changes and we eventually all moved back to Sweden. That my work could continue under these difficult circumstances is largely due to Kjell's willingness to give priority to my work. He has shown patience, tolerance and confidence in me at times when I needed it the most, for that I love him dearly.

Finally I extend my warmest gratitude and love to my two children, Helen and Karl, who have had all sorts of interferences in their lives occasioned by this project. I hope that my two children, who have had no real choice in the matter, have not suffered too greatly from having a mother whose physical and mental presence has at times been lacking. Throughout my project, their preseverance, consideration, patience, keen interest, many thoughtful reflections and love have been a never-ending reservoir of strength to me. The pride they take in my venture and their comforting hugs when I have needed them most I appreciate immensely. It is also a great consolation that although my work has at times deprived them of their mother, it has also imbued in Helen and Karl an understanding and tolerance for those who are different from themselves.

INTRODUCTION

Unlike a hassidic community, Gateshead is not a singing, dancing and hand-clapping community. Life in Gateshead is a serious and goal-directed undertaking in which it is both guided and constrained by deep knowledge of the Talmud. Adults who live their lives in this orthodox Jewish community, have made a conscious choice in their life. They have decided to live according to a specific code of conduct, based upon talmudic ethics, which posits that concern with the well-being of ones fellow men is of greater importance than the fulfilment of their own selfish desires. The outcome of this resolve provides the visitor with a pervasive impression of a community whose members show each other an unusual degree of considerateness and a sincere interest in each others welfare.

It is a way of life which not only sets the community apart from the society at large, it has also provided the community with a specific sub-group position within the world of Jewry. The desire to comply with specific ethics, both defines and unifies the community. People in the community experience both a sense of within group similarity and a deep felt difference in comparison with non-group members, based on their particular attitude to inter-personal ethics. In other words, rules of ethics mark the beginning and the end of this community.

It has not always been so. Until about fifty years ago, this orthodox community had signalled a progressive willingness to adapt and adjust its life- style and sociocultural communalities to those of the society at large. Although strict in their religious observance, members of this petty trade community found themselves involved with the society at large in numerous social activities. They relied upon the society at large for sources of income, education, commodities and entertainment. However, this sociocultural proximity between members of the society at large and the Jewish community has slowly but surely been decreasing over a period of fifty years. In what follows, all references made to **Gateshead** denotes only the Jewish community of the town. The **society at large** pertains to the predominantly indigenous working class population of the town and the surrounding area.

The increased proximity came to a halt with the onset of the Nazi era, when the persecution of Jews in Europe forced thousands of Jews to flee the Continet. Many of the refugees came to England and of those who sought a **shomer shabbos** community, some made their way to Gateshead among whom there were two different strands who combined were to have a decisive impact on the community. Firstly a group of orthodox German Jews arrived whose experience with German culture and social life had provided them with a pronounced sense of the importance and potential which formal education has as a means of catering for the needs of the individual and society. Their experience with the Nazi regime and appreciation of the manipulative powers of education had convinced them that the future survival of their particular religiocultural lifestyle could only be ensured by way of educating their children in a pure Jewish atmosphere and segregating them from the society at large. It was primarily the ambition and tenacity of these German refugees which set in motion the building of schools in the community which were eventually to guarantee that all children in Gateshead could receive their entire education within the community and consequently only be exposed to a minimum of influence from the society at large.

The second strand was that of eminent scholars and intellectuals of the type who having once filled the many outstanding higher Jewish learning centres of Europe, especially Eastern Europe, now sought a place where the doctrines of a religion which seemed in threat of being rapidly extinguished, might be safeguarded. They were men dedicated to the **Litvishe derech** or the Lithuanian way of Talmud study and whose particular interest was the code of laws pertaining to inter-personal ethics. Motivated by the desire to achieve spiritual uplift in their relation to G-D, they adhered to the precepts of **Mussar.** This Jewish philosophy is concerned with ethical behaviour and spiritual warmth and regards man's constant improvment of his relations with his fellow men to represent a means of gaining holiness and closeness to G-D. **Mussar** is not simply an intellectual exercise, it is a whole way of life which with time, has had a profound impact upon the people living in Gateshead.

Within the last fifty years, the community has built up several learning institutions making it possible to educate Jews from the age of kindergarten up till the highest level of

rabbinical studies, all within the confine of the community. But it is the intellectual and personal quality of the teaching staff of the higher learning institutions, their specific approach to talmudic studies and their pronounced attention given to **Mussar** which have attracted students from all over the world. Commom to these students, whether they come from Australia or Britain, is that they wish to study the Torah for its own sake. They are men to whom the actual **act** of Torah study is considered to have a higher spiritual purpose. Deeply religious, these men are engaged in dignifying learning itself. They seek no other occupation and exhort men to study constantly on a life-long basis.

In post-war years the community has undergone many changes. It is no longer dependent upon the society at large for its economic survival, in fact it has become a secluded enclave whose members seek to avoid excessive contact with the non-Jews surrounding the community. Whereas the community members were always different from members of the society at large, some of its members did in pre-war years share a number of activities and interests with them. Today this has all ceased. The community has withdrawn and there are no common activities or mutual attraction.

This is not suprising. The community's post-war concern with inter-personal ethics has created an outlook on life and a behavioural style which is distinctive in comparison with non- group members. It is a preoccupation which not only sets them apart from the society at large, it also provides them with a particular sub-group position within ther own ethnic group. The community's sense of commonness is partly gained through their behavioural contrast with non-group members.

It is important to bear in mind that this contrast is not only in the minds of members of the community. There **is** indeed a very real difference in terms of ethical and moral conduct. The outcome of introducing **Mussar** into the lives of people is that today ethics guide peoples' inter-personal actions in every minute detail. Nothing is done randomly, nothing is unimportant. There is a pervading and deep-felt interest in the well-being of each other. This is demonstrated in the way people interact, in the sincere interest they have in each others lives, in the many examples of self-sacrifice and in their constant endeavours in supporting each other. Men and women in this community seek

to become ever more sensitive to those around them. The whole purpose of their lives is their devotion to G-D. This, they believe, also calls for faithful service to their fellow men. A pervasive characteristic and particular subject in the various learning institutions, **Mussar** philosophy also regulates the life and behaviour of all the community members'.

Although there are numerous visible and unvisible boundary markers between this community and the society at large (as well as other Jewish sub-groups) one of the most salient boundary markers in Gateshead, one which is not objectively apparent to the outsider, is the degree of pre-occupation with ethical and moral conduct prevailing in the community. By introducing and providing inter-personal ethics with a central and pervasive role in peoples lives, people have had to seek for answers as to how this type of conduct is secured. The latter involves an understanding of the locus for the origin of individual's particular course of action and the means for governing this operation. The answers, inherent in traditional Jewish understanding of **human nature**, were readily available but in need of being re-defined. What was required was an objective awareness of the existence, functions and limitations of this sociocultural concept. Ethical and moral conduct of the kind prescribed necessitates people recognizing themselves as moral agents. They must come to recognize that all behaviour originates from and relies upon their ability to govern their own "inner" self. This thesis is an attempt at explaining how the commmunity's dedication to inter-personal ethics, resulting from an interest in **Mussar,** is decisive to the way in which people understand and see their own human nature and that of others and how this understanding directs particular social activities.

Intersubjectively shared among members of the community the understanding of human nature has implications for a wide range of social activities. The notion of human nature is often vague and difficult for people to define. People know, recognize and show great skill in its use and meaning but can only describe it with some difficulty and seldom in any great detail. The use and content of human nature is inherent in what people say and do but it is a cultural model which is hard to define. Yet all members of a given sociocultural group must learn to negotiate this model. My own thinking about this problematic topic has been heavily influenced by the theoretical approach of D'Andrade (1987) whose description of the Western Christian Folk model of the mind carries

relevance to the Jewish model of human nature since the two share a common origin.

Interpretations and strategies which are founded upon peoples' unpronounced understanding and "knowledge" of human nature are seldom made explicit in any culture. Yet in Gateshead, events in post-war years have developed members' increased awareness of and ability to objectify parts of their "inner" self and its diverse processes. I have in this thesis attempted to reveal how this "knowledge" is reflected in indigenous educational theory in Gateshead.

Hence I regard educational theory not only as a vehicle for reproducing values and norms, but as a process whereby cultural models are revealed to the child. They are not specifically pointed out or labelled, they are simply part of the intersubjective meaning which every adult member shares and takes for granted, but which few can express in any great detail. A vital component of that which enables adults to operate as competent members of their sociocultural group is their ability to operate and recognize themselves as moral agents, furthermore it is essential that new members, children, acquire this same proficiency.

I have organized my material around indigenous educational theory from two separate angles: firstly as a means of showing how indigenous beliefs concerning human nature are inherent in and underpin the way in which adults rear their children and secondly how the children, by being exposed to rearing processes, acquire these very same beliefs and ideas. In order to achieve an understanding of the latter process, I have drawn on Wittgensteins (1958) concept of language-games. In other words, I approach the study of sociocultural reproduction from the standpoint that this process needs to be considered both as an aspect of concrete ongoing interactions, as well as a context- bound negotiation of socioculturally specific meanings. Through interactions with adults, chidren construct an understanding of their own human nature, thus enabling them to see themselves and operate as competent moral agents.

My material was collected between 1988 - 1990 when over a period of twenty months I was kindly allowed into the homes of about twenty five families in the community.

There I was able to interview and discuss with mothers their many reflections and ideas concerning children, rearing, growing up, becoming a "good" person, parents' responsibility etc. I was also able to observe how their ideas and convictions were inherent in the ways in which they treated their children and in the many interaction sequences between themselves and their children. Throughout those many months, they shared with me, some gladly, some reluctantly, their experiences of motherhood together with its pleasures and its problems. Although all the men that I met in Gateshead were very polite, only a few of them ever engaged themselves in any kind of conversation with me. Hence my material is predominantly "feminine" in kind. This is an important issue to bear in mind, since Gateshead is a community where men and women predominantly live very different kinds of lives. As Moore (1988) has pointed out, this is a social situation which provides men and women with quite unlike sociocultural environments. What follows then, is a description and analysis of a community's female members' understanding of **reality** and the world around them. I believe that this thesis would present itself differently had I collected my data (an impossible mission) from male informants whose life "reality" is based upon different experiences and an infinitely deeper knowledge of Torah and its talmudic rules of life.

The age of the children I was concerned with were between newly born up to the age of seven. Although I did meet and talk to many of the older children and this gave me great pleasure, I have limited my material to the younger children and their mothers. Throughout the thesis I have in accordance with Orthodox tradition, when spelling G-D, omitted the vowel "O". This is based upon the conviction that it reduces the risk of desecrating His name, should these papers end up in an "unclean" place.

Insofar as this is a study of peoples' life in a particular community, a life different from non-Jew and Jews alike who live their lives apart from the community, there is an indication of boundaries which separate those who belong to the community from those who do not. Although the by now well-known Barthian definition of **ethnic groups** as groups of people defined by themselves and others as different from all other groups of people (Barth 1969, Eidheim 1971) has had an important theoretical influence on this thesis, my concern is predominantly directed at that which this theory somewhat

neglected, the "cultural stuff" which such boundaries delimit. It is a concern with how people interpret, evaluate and reason about themselves and how this self-image not only provides notions of collective distinctiveness but also regulates and constrains various social behaviours.

The boundaries which separate members of the Gateshead community from non-members are not unimportant illusions. They are historically very real and well-defined. Apart from differences in dress, religious customs and values, there are other elements which underpin the ideology of close social association (Cohen 1982). In Gateshead, this is extensively dependent upon their common concern with and minute adherence to inter-personal ethics and morals. One could say that Gateshead constitutes a kind of "moral community" (Bailey 1971, Larsen 1982), where people are aware that their own particular life-style distinguishes them from others. Yet these relational boundaries tell us nothing of the reasoning behind the ideas and beliefs which members have and which make them act in the way they do. This thesis is an attempt at revealing the mental reasoning behind peoples' social activities.

For the most part, what follows is an analysis of the present. Despite this, it has seemed necessary to describe the present not as a timeless structure but as the momentary outcome of historical events. Although the historical data is both selective and incomplete it is, I contend, essential to an understanding of life in the community as it presents itself at present. This is why the plan of this thesis is as follows: Chapter 1 introduces the reader to the community and attempts to describe the visual particularities of the community and the surrounding area, chapter 2 deals extensively with the historical, philosophical, religious and socio-economic background of the community. It attempts to throw light on the various factors which in amalgamation created the foundation for the current community and its particular outlook on life. With this in mind I consider some of the factors and events which had taken place in Eastern Europe prior to the arrival of the Jews in the Tyne-side area in the nineteenth century. I also consider the impact which this influx had on the existing Jewish community of Newcastle and how this resulted in the creation of a new community; Gateshead.

Through the various historical stages, members of the community have shown a great capacity for change and adaptability and I present two such major periods in the life of the community, before and after the arrival of the intellectuals and their insistance on inter-personal ethics. Chapter 3 deals specifically with the second period, the one of today, and explains the various factors which combined have made it possible for Gateshead to gain a relatively autonomous position within the world of Jewry and to dislodge itself from its former dependence upon the economic structure of the society at large. It explains how Gateshead, as one of the world's leading centres for the transmission of formal Jewish culture, attracts new members from around the entire world.

Chapter 4 explains how ethnic relations have profoundly changed during this last period and whereas there was once a relatively cordial relationship between the Jews and their surrounding non- Jewish neighbours, there is today a pronounced tendency for people in the community to wish to isolate themselves from the society at large. Stringent adherence to halachic law and in particular to inter-personal ethics in the community has created a value compliance hierarchy in which the boundaries between themselves and non-community members is partly defined in relation to their differing position in this hierarchy. Herein lies the foundation for notions of **Gemeinschaft** and collective identity. Supporting a particular sociocentric self-dimension, the latter calls for specific and goal-oriented actions in an ethnic context.

Yet Jews in general, and Gateshead is no exception, rely on a distinctively individualistic understanding of human nature. Chapter 5 gives a detailed description of the socioculturally specific construct of human nature as it exists in Gateshead. It is a construct which deals with the self as a locus of personal and indivdual responsibility for ethical and moral conduct. Indigenous theories concerning peoples' "inner" self produce states of moral consciousness and are in effect, decisive to the cultural imperative of creating moral agents.

Chapter 6 deals with the problematic concept of the conscious- self, its receptiveness to external influences and its relationships with other internal components. The conscious

self's receptiveness to external stimuli has its advantages as well as its disadvantages. It is the concern that negative stimuli might contaminate the "inner" self which has called for recent tendencies of isolationism within the community. The re- negotiation of human nature has made people mindful of the effects which the environment might have on their "inner" self and causes people to carefully consider the "exposure" which they might provide or avoid.

On the other hand, the conscious self represents an inlet to the individual's "inner" self which resolves the problem of training children into becoming social members. Inherent in ideas of inter-personal ethics is that the well-being of society depends upon society's success in moulding the child into an individual who will, as Norman points out (1991), abide by the moral obligations and decrees upon which the collectivity's existence is based. Chapter 6 is concerned with showing that indigenous educational theory in Gateshead are formulated along the the same lines of reasoning that underpin their beliefs concerning the sociocultural construct of human nature.

Chapter 7 approaches the topic of sociocultural reproduction. Corporated into several social activities, peoples' notions and beliefs concerning human nature constitute a vital part of the "knowledge" which children must acquire as competent cultural members. Children in Gateshead must from an early age learn to recognize their own "inner" potentials for governing moral conduct. The problem of cultural reproduction has in recent years been approached along the same lines as language socialization patterns. In fact, these studies link indigenous ideas about values, society and self to the ways in which adults interact with children and to what children learn.

In this final chapter then, I show how care-givers' specific style of oscillating between interrogative and descriptive style in correctional sequences enables the child to construct a particular understanding of human nature. The latter provides a self-image which enables the child to see itself as an autonomous individual capable of governing and also carrying the responsibility for ethical and moral conduct. My contention is that beliefs concerning human nature underpin and influence the ways in which people interact and speak to children and that this provides the child with the opportunity of gaining an

understanding of and competence in the use of this crucial sociocultural construct. This is how children in Gateshead construct their world-reality and also how they become qualified community members who "know" that they are moral agents capable of and responsible for the obligation of living in accordance with the decrees of the Covenant.

PAGE

MISSING

IN

ORIGINAL

1.1 THE PLACE AND THE PEOPLE OF GATESHEAD: A SETTING

When entering the grey and wind-swept streets of Gateshead, a small city in the north east of England, there are few signs indicating to the visitor that this is a place of immense importance and held in high esteem by thousands of people world wide. To those people, orthodox Jews, Gateshead is looked upon as a kind of Oxbridge of Jewish religious studies. Here men and young boys from afar come to undertake higher religious studies and this is one of the centres to where the world's Jewry turns to satisfy an increasing demand for an orthodox rabbinate. An often occurring misconception in the society at large though, is the belief that these men come to the higher learning institutions of Gateshead simply to acquire a degree and consequent job prospects. Whilst some do intend eventually to take up a position as rabbi to a community and others might only spend a couple of years here before carrying on to universities or polytechnics, the dominant trend in Gateshead is increasingly for them to devote their lives to Torah study. The latter entails much more than intellectual effort, it also requires adherence to strict rules of behaviour in accordance with a particular world-view and its emphasis on religio-ethics. Those who choose to settle down in the community also make a conscious choice, a commitment, as to the manner in which they aim to live their lives.

It is a life where every conceivable detail is regulated by the specific code of Jewish law. It is also a life style which differs vastly from their non-Jewish neighbours, and the contrasts are stark and numerous. Living in close proximity the Jew and the non-Jew have little in common apart from their mutual feelings of prejudice. Although they share the same bitter climate, the same run-down surroundings and have to struggle under the same harsh financial restrictions, they still live in separate worlds. Or to put it more precisely; they live <u>in</u> the same, but are <u>of</u> differing worlds.

The world in which they all live is an area where coal mining, manufacturing and shipbuilding constituted the backbone of the area's economy. The effect of the current recession has been a steady increase in unemployment followed by inevitable social deprivation. In spite of the Team Valley Industrial Estate to the west of Gateshead, providing jobs for 15,000 people, the district still suffers badly from the loss of its shipyards, closure of many factories and pits. Of the four Tyneside districts; Newcastle, Gateshead, North Tyneside and South Tyneside, Gateshead covers the largest area and has a population of 208,000 (Robinson, 1988). Gateshead has had its share of disfiguring redevelopment in industry, housing and shopping areas in the 1960s and 1970s. The grey and bleak terraced houses mingling with shoddy graffiti-sprayed multi-storey blocks of flats in between derelict industrial buildings and numerous closed down shops, altogether give the town centre of Gateshead an aura of decay and disillusion so typical of Britain's depressed areas.

At one time though, this was the dominant area of Anglo-Saxon kingdom and a centre of education, missionary work, art, as well as exchange and trade through the Viking settlements. But it was the much later industrial revolution which was so greatly to influence and dominate the area. It brought prosperity and growth, providing the area with a vital role in Britain's economy during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. All this has changed in the twentieth century, for whilst in the 1920s about 45% of Tyneside's workforce were directly employed in manufacturing and mining, manufacturing today accounts for only 20% of jobs, and mining a mere 2% (Robinson, 1988).

Unlike the South and the Midlands, the North of England, and in particular the north east, has attracted fewer and more scattered pockets of ethnic settlements. It is therefore, to most people, somewhat surprising to find dozens of bearded men formally dressed in black suits, rushing along the streets of the unlikely town of Gateshead. "Why on earth did they choose Gateshead? There is nothing here to attract them!" are common comments among the members of the society at large. By this they mean that there seems to be little or no basis for the type of

"STENHOUSE", THE JEWISH FOOD STORE IN GATESHEAD.

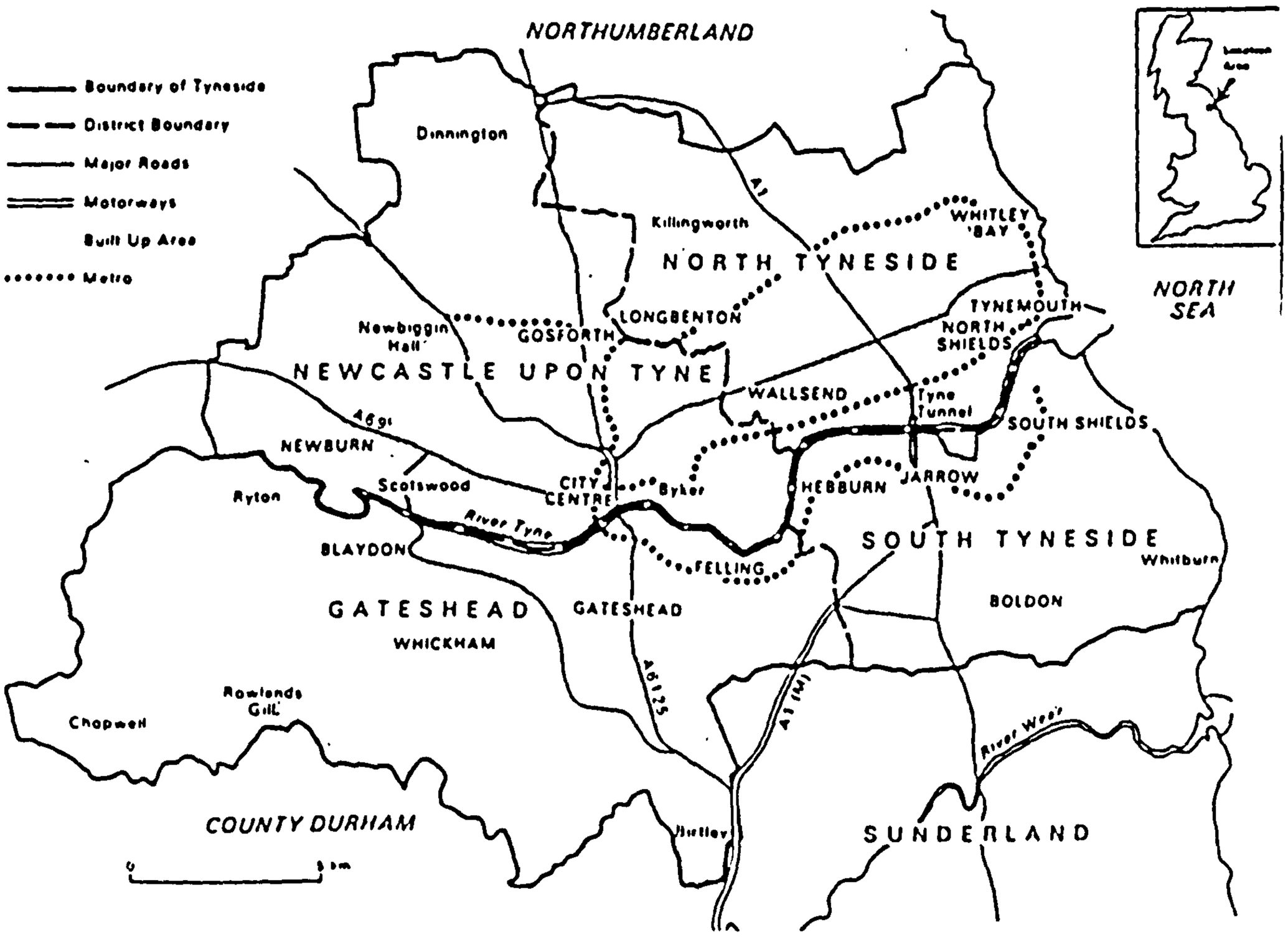
SHOPS ON BRINKBURN AVENUE.

business venture which so many non-Jews expect a Jew to be engaged in. True, there are a few general wholesalers, no watch makers or tailors, no gold or diamond dealers and certainly no money lenders ("The Merchant of Venice" is a remarkable piece of propaganda work) in Gateshead. Discussing and assessing the numerous aspects of stereotyping (Bringham, 1971; Levin 1972; Lange, 1981,1984; Bochner 1982) falls outside the scope of this thesis, but it is nonetheless of importance to keep in mind the anonymity and the rather obscure existence which the Jews retain among members of the society at large.

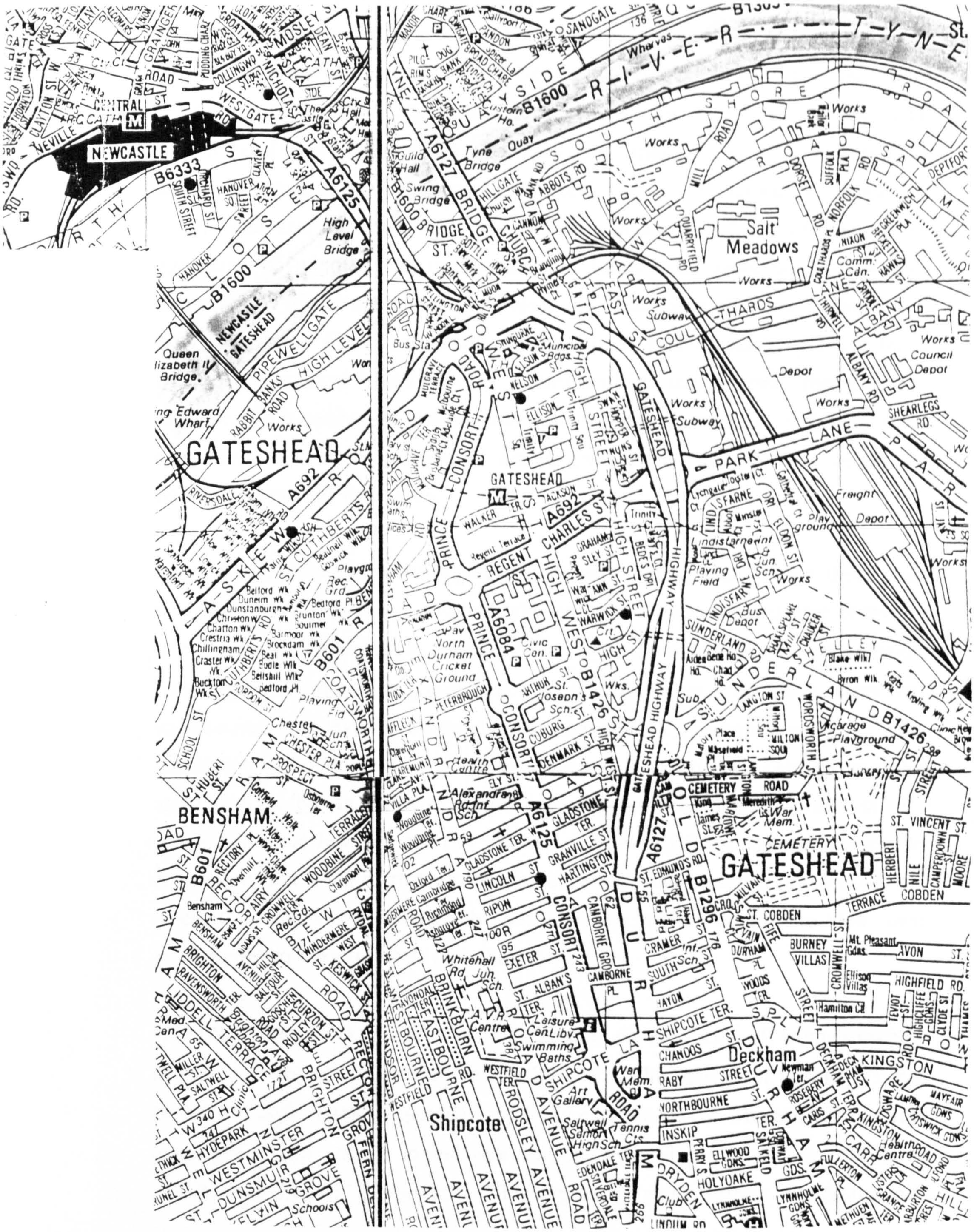
The neighbourhood which Jews and non-Jews alike share, the south side of the town (situated in the north eastern part of the Gateshead district), lies on the ridge sloping down towards the Team valley, between the Durham road and the Team Valley Trading Estate (Map 1). It is mostly a pre-First World War housing area, where some of the Victorian houses bear witness of grander and better days gone by, but which today generally smack of decay and where the facades of the houses and small front gardens are in need of paint and attention. The Jewish community occupies less than a square mile (Map 2). Like an old oak tree with its trunk, Brinkburn avenue, stretching upwards, and the many branches being small roads and terraces reaching out to the sides, the community stands there solid, and to those who are informed, monumentally impressive.

This is the place where orthodox Jews from all over the world amalgamate in the common quest to live and learn a particular type of life, and this is where reproduction of their specific religio/culture has been formalised. Walking down the streets of Gateshead one might be excused if one fails to find any signs revealing the importance and stature of this city. Brinkburn avenue, cutting right across the community, with its grey and dirty buildings, the small branch banks, local post office, dusty clothing and second-hand shops offering items of seeming little or no practical use, a small supermarket, chemist, stationers, bakery, T.V. repairers, and a betting shop, is where the Jews and non-Jews alike find most of their daily requirements. It is also on Brinkburn avenue that one finds Stenhouse, the Jewish corner shop with crude graffiti on doors and walls, and its grilled

FIGURE 1.1. TYNESIDE



map 1.


NEWCASTLE
CENTRAL
B6333
A6125
B1600
NEWCASTLE GATESHEAD
High Level Bridge
Queen Elizabeth II Bridge
GATESHEAD
A692
B601
BENSHAM
A6127
B1426
A6084
B1296
Tyne Bridge
Swing Bridge
Salt Meadows
Shipcote
Deckham
CEMETERY
GATESHEAD

Map 2.

windows (1). It is a busy street where pedestrians and cars provide constant movement and noise in an area which is otherwise quiet and where the pace of life is slower, compared to that of nearby Newcastle. Brinkburn avenue is also where the Jews and non-Jews mingle and meet in what seems to be a mutual and artful avoidance of each other. Here they pass each other with eyes seeming to make conscious attempts at pretending to be oblivious of one another's existence. Interactions are, as a rule, kept to a minimum in a silent and seemingly shared agreement of "minding their own business". Many of the Jews, especially women and children, are also wary of the **Goyim** (2) since this is also where **sheitels** (3) and **yarmulkes** (4) are snatched, insults hurled and, at times, physical blows handed out by local "**shkotsim**" (5). Anti-semitism takes varied forms, and in Gateshead it is neither refined nor inventive. Although mindful of this (6), there is no excessive concern expressed among people who accept being exotic and harassed as part of their lives.

Living as neighbours but belonging to different worlds, means that there is no borrowing of cups of sugar, no small talk across the fence, no exchange of favours or social visits. Here people are segregated by an invisible but immensely efficient boundary. Within each group inter-cultural differences are readily expressed, values compared, deviations highlighted and behaviours questioned, whilst excessive interaction is simultaneously avoided. And yet, these differing cultures co-reside and live their lives in a kind of resigned acceptance of the other's usefulness. To the non-Jew, the Jews are odd but peaceful and law abiding neighbours, whilst the Jews claim that living in an area holding little attraction and few distractions, and where the values and ethics of the non-Jews are in stark contrast to their own, helps maintain desired levels of isolation.

A certain measure of this isolation is noticeable as one turns off from Brinkburn avenue and enters one of the "Jewish Streets". The dozens of **kosher** (7) milk bottles on door steps, numerous top-floor extensions, the **Mezuza** (8) on front door-frames and tightly closed lace curtains everywhere, give these streets an austere and "foreign" impression. This impression gains further manifestation in

JEWISH WOMEN SHOPPING

ON BRINKBURN AVENUE.

the looks and behaviours of the people who live here. Walking with urgent and purposeful short steps, a gait especially noticeable in men, they convey the impression that the activity of walking here is a goal oriented activity (Hannerz,1969; Kochman,1972) which has nothing to do with strolling for the sole purpose of exercising or enjoying the fresh air. Here people have places to go to, tasks to perform, and duties that must be seen to. They have a "**tachlis**" (9) in life that may be felt or sensed as a quiet energy reflected in their walk, talk, and posture. Bodies are either in motion or about to set off, idleness nowhere to be seen. When meeting in the streets people converse attentively and at speed, with soft low-pitched voices and facial expressions showing friendly interest or patient concern. There is an air of sincere involvement in one another's lives expressed in tireless concern with the well-being of fellow community members and everywhere there is a kind of hush, as if the sound volume has been turned down. Here talk, laughter, and emotional outburst seem to be subdued, restrained, and somehow muted in compliance with sociocultural values of self-control and modesty.

The women of the community, often pushing prams or pushchairs, with a couple of toddlers holding on to the handles and their older siblings following in close pursuit, look pale and reserved as they hurry along on their way to the shops or the kindergarten down the road. The women and their children are neatly dressed as if they are on their way to some formal or important social function. Wearing subdued colours, longish coats and skirts, never trousers, long-sleeved blouses, heavy tights, sensible shoes and short and neatly groomed wigs, the women are less conspicuous than their older sons and husbands. They are the fullbearded serious men wearing black formal suits, some with white shirts unbuttoned at the neck and no tie, black hats tipped slightly at the back of their heads and with **tzitzis** (10) flowing our from under their jackets. At specific times of the day the men hurry along, often in pairs, to **shul** (11) or **yeshiva** (12) to **daven** (13) and might frequently be observed deeply engaged in an intense discussion, seemingly oblivious of the world around them. In a community where families with eight children are more common than those with only two, there are many children around. On days when the weather permits, children play outside on the pavement, three or four of them

in a group and never too far away from an open front door or the watchful eyes of their mothers. The little boys with small skullcaps (**yarmulkas**), **tzitzis** and **peyos** (14) play football, cricket or bicycle and girls in long pretty frocks and tidy hair styles play with their dolls, skip or play hopscotch. Like all children they squabble over their dolls or argue over football scores, but there is little physical aggression or shouting and no swearing or verbal insults.

During the day when the older children are in school and the men have left for their studies, the community seems very quiet and empty. This changes dramatically at lunchtime and in the late afternoon when the community comes alive and there is once again the sense of urgency as children, often hand in hand, and men of all ages, rush home for their meals. The many schools and higher education institutions all lie within the boundaries of the community (Diagram 1.) which means that all are within walking distance from people's homes. The home plays a central role in Jewish life and apart from the time spent in schools, higher learning institutions, at **shiurim** (15) or the **shul**, most religio- cultural activities are enacted within the confines of the home. Although homes in Gateshead (16) are spartan, it is in general not a look of poverty (17) but rather a kind of austerity where "unimportant" distractions, such as materialistic objects, are kept at a minimum. Gateshead is not a community which attracts "**alrightnicks**" (18). There are few decorative "knick-knacks", no television, no board games, cards or sports trophies, no magazines or daily national newspapers, very few musical instruments and not a pet in sight. Paint colours and wallpapers are discreet, furnishings practical and solid, intended to withstand wear and tear rather than reflect taste and income.

The room which in the society at large is referred to as the "front room", here serves as the men's study and is also where during **shabbos** (19) the families enjoy their meals together. This room, like most other rooms in the house, is lit by fluorescent ceiling lights with few other light points about. Extensive parts of the walls in this room are covered by book shelves, some with glass doors, filled with endless rows of beautifully leather-bound books with engraved golden Hebrew

Gateshead Jewish Educational Establishment

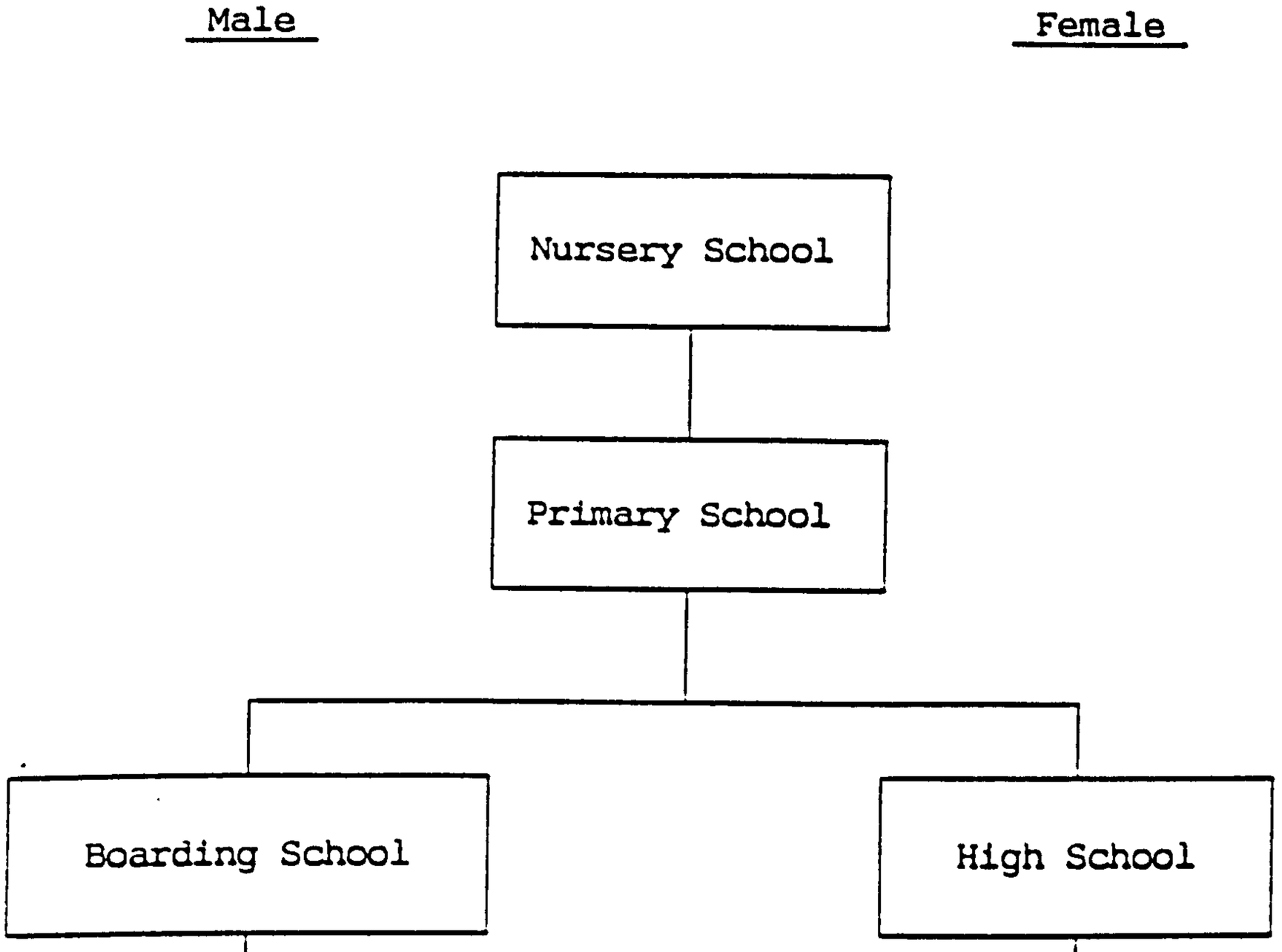
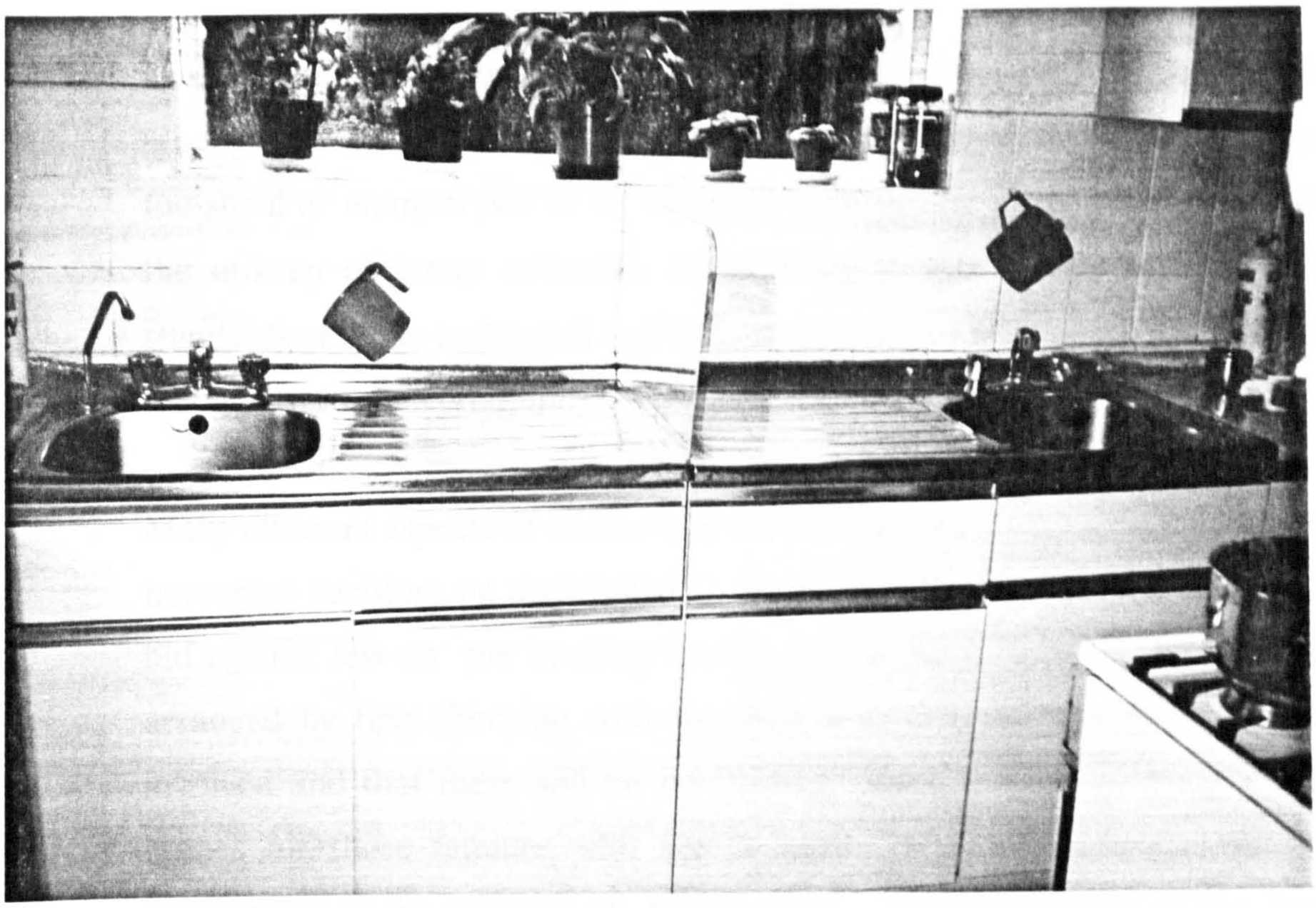


Diagram 1.

titles on their backs. The religio-cultural value of these books is demonstrated by the knowledge held, even by toddlers, that these are precious objects which must be handled with extreme care and reverence. Even the large expandable dining table might be covered with books, for this is where the men, when not in the **yeshiva** or the **kolel** (20), sit at home and learn. In a corner one inevitably finds a **shtender** (21), on the walls a painting or tapestry with a Biblical motif, and on the mantelpiece photos of famous rabbis and family, mostly male members.

At the end of the long corridor is the central assembly area, the kitchen, where family, friends, and visitors meet and where numerous activities take place. This is where the families have their meals during the weekdays, for logistical reasons often in turns, and this is where the children do their homework, babies are fed, toddlers play, and women meet and talk. In fact, the assembly area is only part of the kitchen. Due to laws of **kashruth** (7), milk and meat must be handled in separate areas and with separate utensils. To meet these requirements, most houses have had an extension built on to the kitchen which is where the food is prepared. Often this area has two sinks separated by a plastic screen to avoid the mixing and "contamination" of "milky" and "meaty" objects. Separate cabinets for the utensils, cutlery, china, and pots used for milk or meat further ensure that the dietary laws are minutely followed. With the boiler, large kitchen table, benches and chairs, toy cabinet and tricycle the kitchen is a crowded place where children's colourful Biblical drawings and postcards from friends and relatives on the walls, make this a friendly and relaxed area. Looking out through the back door one might be able to see, in the small back yard, a little hut with roofing of leafy branches and twigs. Looking uncomfortably out of place in the English climate, the **sukka** (22) is where the family eat their meals, and males at times sleep during the festival of Tabernacles in the autumn.

There are, in Gateshead, many prominent and esteemed rabbis and in accordance with Jewish tradition these are regularly sought out by the community members to **pasken** (23) or for blessings, an **eitzoh** (24) or **shaalo** (25). Although people seek different rabbis on different matters (26) it is the Rav, Rabbi Rakow who is the



Above: KOSHER KITCHEN WITH SEPERATE AREAS FOR "MEATY" AND "MILKY" FOOD.

Left: "FRONT ROOM" USED BY MEN WHEN LEARNING.

head of the community. Greatly respected and highly knowledgeable, his advice is sought on the slightest of matters, since few events or decisions are regarded as too small or unimportant to be discussed with the Rav. His influence and role in the upkeep of group cohesion, in achieving and retaining the highest possible standards of ethics and moral and in guiding people in the "right" direction, is widely recognised in the community.

Many different aspects of community life are the Rav's responsibility and he makes numerous decisions on their behalf. In this way he has decreed that Jew is not to bid against Jew on the housing market, hence house sales in the community are arranged by first checking with the Rav who ensures that no other family is involved and that there will be no bidding match. The purpose is to provide homes for those families who are in need, and to discourage the quest for profitability at the expense of fellow Jews. The supervision of the buying and selling of houses is but one among the many assignments which rest with the Rav, but it is an important one in a community where new, as well as ever-increasing families, are seeking houses. This is also reflected in the increasing number of houses bought by Jews from non-Jews in the area, as well as in the new 22-house complex erected in the past year. Although there is in the community much reluctance to discuss the size of its population, a fair estimate is about 2,200 persons, including approximately 800 students. On average there is a new member born each week and about 60-70 children are admitted to the Jewish primary school each year. In nearby Newcastle there has, according to the Jewish community's own statistics (1989 - 1990), only been born one child in the last four years. In 1992 the Newcastle King David Jewish primary school closed due to the reducing numbers of pupils, whilst the Primary school in Gateshead is having problems (with local health and security authorities) in finding space for an ever-increasing number of pupils. Gateshead has, in the last forty years of its existence, experienced an explosive population expansion which is a trend quite unique, apart from in Manchester, among Britain's provincial Jewish communities.

If we are to understand Gateshead's present widely accepted attraction and strength, thereby attempting to gain an insight into the ways in which people look at themselves and their lives, we shall have to go back in both time and space and search for a wide range of social, religious, philosophical, and economic details. Recently anthropologists have expressed an interest in the ways in which history legitimizes and helps ethnic groups acquire self-understanding and justification (Buckley, 1989; Schutte, 1989; McDonald, 1990). They demonstrate vividly the ways in which history is an operative tool in people's attempts and needs of consolidating who they are and how they differ from others. Though the life of orthodox Jews is biblically oriented, they have also traditionally relied on history as a means of manifesting their particular identity. Not only a long-standing history of persecution and suffering but also particular social, religious, and philosophical trends and movements have provided Jews with differing and varied bases for their ethnic identity and subsequently the rise of numerous sub-groups within the world's Jewry. These sub-groups consequently "need their past" (Layton, 1989) to verify and know who and what they are. Based upon and accepting the importance and the pronounced use of selective historical data in the structuring of their specific identity, I shall subsequently provide the reader with an insight into these historical details whose importance is highly acknowledged in Gateshead's Jewish community.

Notes to Chapter 1.1

1.
The local police have recorded a steady increase in damage to the property of, as well as recent harassment of Jews in the area.

2.
Goy (pl.Goyim) is a gentile or anyone who is not a Jew. The expression is culturally salient and loaded with cultural meaning (Mitchelle, 1988) based on the Jewish experience as a persecuted minority. It pertains to someone who is cold, heartless, dumb, or insensitive. It is important here to note that the idea of respect for others form an old, integral part of Jewish tradition. The label "Goy" holds the bitterness and contempt gathered through generations of a people whose endurance and understanding has been put through many tests. It is in a way a contemptuous synonym for the non-Jew but is not always, by everyone, used as such. It has, in some communities become the common expression for the non-Jew. Some do express concern that it is not "right" or "nice" to use it, but most still do. I will also use it in my thesis but only in situations where it is relevant to highlight people's emotions or evaluations.

3.
Sheitel is a wig traditionally worn by orthodox Askenazim women after they marry; nowadays many Sephardic women also use them.

4.
Yarmulka is the skullcap worn by orthodox males.

5.
Shkotsim (sing.sheygets) means "riff-raff", or people who, like hooligans, behave in a socially unacceptable fashion. Generally refers to aggressive looking non- Jewish youths.

6.
Though some mothers are worried that harm will come to their children as they walk back and forth to school etc., and children themselves express concern, the community members tend to play down this problem. This is a complicated topic,but one reason for the low key on this subject is the fear that highlighting it will in itself aggravate the situation.

7.
Kashrut: dietary Laws of Judaism. Kosher: ritually fit to be eaten.

8.
Mezuza is a little oblong container that is affixed on the right on the front door jamb, in a slanting position. It contains a tiny, rolled-up parchment on which are written verses from Deuteronomy 6:4-9,11:13-21.

9.
Tachlis: Hebrew for purpose.

10.
Tzitzis: the ritually knotted fringes at the four corners of a garment, the tallis katan worn under the shirt by male orthodox Jews. Tzitzis are meant as a reminder of one's duty to all the Mitzvot (Commandments). Numbers 15:37-41.

11.
Shul (Yiddish): the synagogue.

12.
Yeshiva (pl.yeshivot): from the Hebrew yeshov = to sit. In general it refers to a rabbinical college or seminary.

13.
Davening: means praying. It is traditionally done three times a day by orthodox Jews (shachris, minchan, maariv = morning, afternoon, evening).

14.
Peyos (Hebrew): the long, unshorn ear-ringlets and sideburns worn by orthodox Jewish males as instructed in Leviticus 19:27.

15.
Shiur (Hebrew, pl.shiurim): meaning "talk" or "lecture".

16.
The details which are about to be presented are not from any particular household. These describe merely the layout and details found in most homes in the community.

17.
Though there are clear signs of some families being better off than others, there is nowhere excessiveness or flaunting to be seen. Materialistic restrictiveness is everywhere apparent.

18.
Alrightniks: materialists who lack modesty, sensitivity or edelkeit (sensitive, refined, modest qualities).

19.
Shabbos or sabbath (Hebrew) meaning "rest" or "cessation" of labour.

20.
Kolel: a post graduate institution for Talmudic study.

21.
Shtender (Yiddish): wooden lectern to put books on when learning.

22.
Sukkah: a booth where during the festivals of Sukkoth: Tabernacles, people sit and have their meals. The booth is intended to look temporary for it represents the hastily set-up dwellings used by the Israelites in their forty years of wandering in the wilderness. Leviticus 23:42.

23.
To pasken: give a ruling on religious law or practice.

24.
Eitzoh: advice.

25.
Shaalo: A question for advice or ruling on a religious matter - on which the rabbi "paskens".

26.
Rabbi Falk is generally consulted on matters of Kashruth- dietary laws, and Rabbi Miller is often sought out to assist on ethical matters, whilst Rabbi Mattisyahu Salomon is frequently consulted on personal problems.

2.1 FROM WHERE AND WHY DID THEY ARRIVE?

Since Oliver Cromwell in 1650 permitted the re-settlement of Jews in Britain, whom Edward 1st had expelled in 1290, Britain has represented a place of security and hope for thousands of Jews. Jews, from numerous corners of the world with differing historical, social, economical and not least of all, religious backgrounds (1) arrived in Britain in stages, often reflecting the level of tolerance or degree of prejudice in their previous countries of residence.

Common to the immigrants who arrived, was the hope for religious toleration and the desire to escape persecution, as it was demonstrated and represented through Eastern and Central Europe in differing forms and kinds. During the Napoleonic years the Germans and Fench freed the Jews from many of the previous restrictions which had hitherto curbed their social and economic lives. They were freed from restrictions on marriage (2), settlement, occupation and special taxes. But it was not to last. After the fall of Napoleon in 1815, and the following period of economic depression and political restrictions, aspirations and hopes for emancipation were yet again destroyed for the thousand of Jews living in Central Europe and especially in Germany. Once again restrictions were imposed, sharply limiting and curbing both their lives and opportunities. Here one need only consider the effects which the restoration of the monopoly of the Christian guilds had on the Jewish communities, in that it denied any possible escape from economic deprivation.

Whilst deprived of the opportunities to prosper in their homeland, the German Jews who arrived in Britain during the eigtheenth and nineteenth century were equipped with a German education and an in-depth knowledge of German culture. The latter allowed them to adapt and adjust themselves with relative ease to life in Britain. Mostly they were German speaking (though Yiddish was their daily language) tradesmen or independent craftsmen who generally only observed the

rudiments of Judaism and little more (Pollin 1982). Neither learned nor wealthy they demonstrated great flexibility, willingness and ability to adapt to their new cultural environment. Notwithstanding this, they wished to retain selective parts of their Jewish identity and religion , hence they sought to remain Jewish whilst finding a way of living which was compatible with the ideologies of the host country.

The majority settled in the London area , but a few ventured further afield to the provinces. These then were the type of Jews who were to be the first Jewish settlers in Newcastle. They settled down in the town centre where small scale trading was most beneficial. Being close to the river Tyne where shipping and the surrounding factories represented sources of income , the West-end gave rise to a growing Jewish community between 1830 and the first world war. These early immigrants quickly settled down and became a well functioning part of the city's life, thoroughly anglicised in manners, appearance and not least of all in aspirations. There are records to show (Roth 1950, Levy 1956, Olsover 1981) that there has been a Jewish community in Newcastle since 1830 whilst tradition has it that there were Jews in the town as far back as 1775 (Guttentag 1977). By the early 1880's there were close to a thousand Jews in Newcastle, a figure which was to be dramatically increased with the onset of the pogroms (3) in Eastern Europe.

The political, social and industrial changes which transformed Western Europe in the early first half of the nineteenth century, arrived in Eastern Europe at the second half of the century. That is when the industrial revolution slowly started to change Eastern Europe and the lives of its millions of poor people. In Russia the industrial revolution created an exploited and suffering proletariat who had by the end of the nineteenth century, supported by the landless and oppressed peasantry, started to organize themselves in such a way as to indicate that they did indeed have the makings of a revolution.

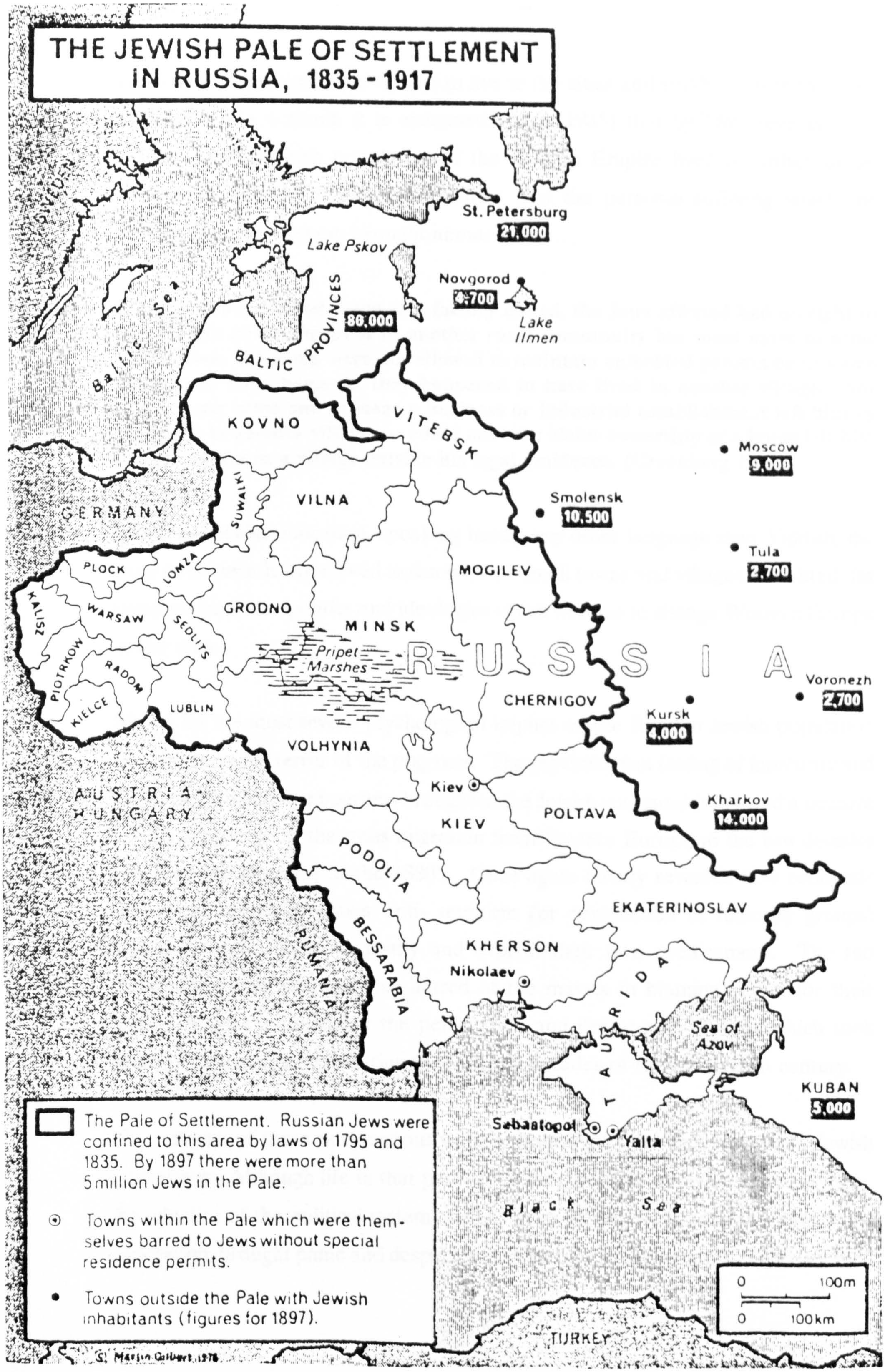
When on March the first 1881 Tsar Alexander II was assassinated the incident was used as an excuse for new anti-Jewish legislation. Although only one Jew, a woman by the name of Hesia Helfman (Baron 1976), was involved in the planning of the

assassination, rumours were spread around, that the Jews had played a leading part in this revolutionary scheme. This led to large scale and well organized anti-Jewish propaganda which in turn resulted in a series of bloody pogroms. What started off in Elizavetgrad (April 1881) as a single brutal incident soon swept through Kiev and Berdichev and in turn, through hundreds of smaller settlements. Whereas the Jews in Russia had experienced sporadic pogroms prior to the reign of AlexanderIll, the new regime established pogroms as a frequently recurring feature in the following two decades.

After his father's death, Tsar Alexander lll (1881-1894) appointed C.P. Pobedonostsev, a former professor of the university of Moscow, a lawyer and a firm believer in Russian nationality, as his personal adviser. Pobedonostsev called for the enactment of more restrictive laws against Jews. He introduced several oppresive taxes, demanded harsh terms for Jewish conscription in the Tsar's army, and saw to it that more restrictions on professions, property, land and education were imposed. Confined to living in the **Pale** (see map 3) , an area stretching from the Baltic in the north down to the Black sea in the south, meant that Jews were subject to an authority which was able to ensure persecution based on oppressive laws.

The restrictive May Laws (May, 1882) stipulating that Jews had not only to live in the Pale, they had also to live in the smaller towns and not in the larger cities or rural areas. The May Laws combined with a steady increase in the number of Jews in the area proved devastating to the community. A narrow basis of petty trades and crafts was increasingly attenuated in that the restrictive laws did not grant the Jews the opportunity to change and adapt to the changing needs of the community (Gartner 1973, 1974). Though the pattern was similar all over Eastern Europe, the strict anti-Jewish policy of the Tsarist Russian government, proved the most devastating.

The May Laws specifically stated that no new Jewish settlers would be permitted in the villages and hamlets of the Pale. In other words, Jews could no longer live


THE JEWISH PALE OF SETTLEMENT IN RUSSIA, 1835 - 1917
St. Petersburg
21,000
Lake Pskov
Novgorod
4,700
Lake Ilmen
88,000
BALTIC PROVINCES
Baltic Sea
KOVNO
VITEBSK
Moscow
9,000
SUWALKI
VILNA
Smolensk
10,500
GERMANY
Tula
2,700
PLOCK
LOMZA
MOGILEV
KALISZ
WARSAW
SEDLITS
GRODNO
MINSK
Pripet Marshes
RUSSIA
Voronezh
2,700
PIOTRKOW
RADOM
KIELCE
LUBLIN
CHERNIGOV
Kursk
4,000
VOLHYNIA
Kiev
Kharkov
14,000
AUSTRIA-HUNGARY
KIEV
POLTAVA
PODOLIA
EKATERINOSLAV
BESSARABIA
KHERSON
Nikolaev
RUMANIA
CRIMEA
Sea of Azov
KUBAN
5,000
Sebastopol
Yalta
Black Sea
TURKEY
0 100m
0 100km
The Pale of Settlement. Russian Jews were confined to this area by laws of 1795 and 1835. By 1897 there were more than 5 million Jews in the Pale.
Towns within the Pale which were themselves barred to Jews without special residence permits.
Towns outside the Pale with Jewish inhabitants (figures for 1897).
© Martin Gilbert, 1978

Map 3.

in the rural areas and were forced to live in the cities and small towns in the Pale, the **shtetl.** As a result, it is estimated (Sorin 1985) that by 1897 seventy eight percent of the Jewish population of the Russian Empire lived in urban areas. Greenberg (1965) provides some insight into the personal suffering which the restrictions of movement brought about:

If a village was burned down or a factory closed, the Jews affected had no right to seek shelter or employment in another rural community but must move to some city or town. Children were not allowed to maintain enfeebled parents or widowed mothers in their homes if they happened to have lived in another village. Nor might a son come and manage a business or industrial establishment left him by his father in another village; he could not even claim ownership of a home left him by his parents in a village outside his legal residence. (Greenberg 1965)

Given no secular education, speaking hardly any other language than Yiddish, the Jews of Eastern Europe lived isolated in the small towns and villages, the **shtetl,** far removed from the politics and ideologies which were so to change Western Europe at the time.

But by far the most severe psychological impact on the Russian Jewish population resulted from the terror of the pogroms. The psychological feeling of insecurity and helplessness which the pogroms brought to the Jewish communities played a decisive role in triggering off the mass migration from Eastern Europe in the two decades following the pogroms of the 1880's. Once again history revealed how economic and social misery increases anti- semitism (or persecution of minority groups) through peoples' need to justify and explain their own predicament. The too familiar story of utilising the hatred of the masses in blaming others for their misery, proved a success in the persecution and destruction of Jews which took place in Eastern Europe during the last two decades of the nineteenth century.

The effects of these persecutions were devastating to the East European Jewish community. Although life in that part of the diaspora had never been an easy one, the injustice of the political system and the brutality of elements of the indigenous population, brought panic and desperation to the Jewish settlements. There seemed

to be only one solution to their predicament and plight, that of flight. For the Jew there were two kinds of flight , namely that of either conversion or emigration. An indication of how serious the situation was in the area, was the dramatic increase in the numbers of converts from Judaism to Christianity after the pogroms of the 1880's. Though many Jews remained in the Pale, accepting deprivation, pogroms and hardship, the last two decades of the nineteenth century saw around a million Jews leaving the area, of which an estimated 100.000. came to Britain. To be able to fully appreciate the impact and effect which this influx from Eastern Europe had on the already existing and well established Jewish communities in Britain, it is important that we have some insight, a mental picture, of the sociocultural as well as the religious conditions which the immigrants had left behind.

NOTES CHAPTER 2.1.

1.
Jews arrived in two geographical sub-groups, each with its own religiocultural traditions; The Sephardic Jew is of Spanish or Portugese descent whilst the Askenazi Jews are of central and eastern European descent. The Ashkenazi moved from Northern France to Germanic cities along the Rhine , from where they fled from the Crusaders to Central and Eastern Europe, joining settlement of Jews who had emigrated long before, from Babylon and Palestine. Ahkenazi Jews are distinguished from Sephardic Jews in many ways. The Yiddish they speak, their style of thought, their pronunciation of Hebrew, aspects of their liturgy, many customs, food habits and ceremonials.

2.
Only the oldest son had previously been permitted to marry.

3.
Pogroms is the Russian word for "devastation". Has come to mean organized massacre (org. and esp. of Jews in Russia)

2.2. SHTETL LIFE

The Jews of Eastern Europe descended from a population whose migration was brought about by two historical convulsions. When Jews were forced into exile more than two thousand years ago, some fled directly to what we today know as Eastern Europe, via the Black sea, others settled in Italy, France and Germany. The latter were once again forced to move on when the Crusaders began their extermination of the Jews. This time they moved East to join their fellow brethren who had settled there at the exodus from their homeland. Together these Jews, the Ashkenazim, settled in small towns throughout Poland, Russia, Lithuania, Hungary and Romania. These small towns, known as **stetlekh** (4), became the stronghold of Jewish culture, rendering the Jews an opportunity to live their particular lifestyles in relative isolation and peace.

Although never free of tension, integration with the non-Jewish population was constantly sought in order for it to be kept at an amicable level in a mutual recognition of their interdependence. Most of these Shtetl were market towns where Jews and non-Jews (peasants) alike were involved in the process of providing a livelihood for themselves and their families. The Jew, prohibited from owning land lived mainly by trading and craftsmanship, he was urban and so were his products. The peasant on the other hand was the source of farming produce and recognized that the Jew provided an important economic function in an underdeveloped agricultural economy. Alternatively, representing two different aspects of the economy; customer and source of supply, they needed each other and acknowledged this interdependence by virtue of a relatively amicable relationship. In a somewhat simplistic description of the shtetl Zborowski (1952) has described the tension around the marketplace as follows:

As the economic centre of the Shtetl , the scene of buying, selling and mingling, the market place epitomizes the interdependence, the reciprocity, the ambivalence that exists between Jew and Gentile. The tension produced by their relations and mutual attitudes results in a working equilibrium which prevails until some accident upsets it. The area affected by this equilibrium is limited to the area of contact between the two groups, and each withdraws from it to lead his own separate life. (Zborowski 1952. p.67)

In order to reconstruct life in the shtetl we have to rely, in part, on historical sources which are based upon oral transmission. Particular to oral history is that it relies on the repeated recalling of individual experiences and are as such retrospective individual evaluations of significant events. The problem of evaluation is one which oral shares with written data (Carr 1987) but the former also has to consider the human memory. The problems in dealing with oral data -the issue of the human memory- have been extensively considered by Henige (1982) who argues that oral history draws on particular historical events whilst leaving out others. In other words people will transmit that which is seen to be memorable. It is upon those "memorable details" that we build much of our understanding and knowledge of the shtetl.

The shtetl was usually of a size permitting everyone to know everyone, though even the smallest ones had several hundred people, of whom not all were Jews. At the centre of the town's economic and social life was the marketplace. Here the peasants, men and women, from thousands of small farms many miles around, brought their carts and wagonloads with livestock, vegetables, grain, hides, fish, herbs and fruits, to be sold to the town dwellers, mostly Jews. At the marketplace the same peasants bought the Jews' urban products such as shoes, boots, cloth, tools, lamps, watches, combs or other imported city products. Filled with shops, booths and stands, it was a place of bustling life where bargaining, quarrels, laughter, music, animals' cries and childrens' play, created a certain tumult and energetic atmosphere.

Life in the shtetl provided for continuity in terms of traditions and values allowing for a life in accordance with halachic (5) precepts. A daily life saturated by religious

precepts, religious studies, a specific orientation towards G-D and a strong sense of community life strengthened their feeling of identity and crystallized their cultural style. In an elegant attempt at explaining how a shtetl background inspired to radicalism among American Jewish immigrants, Sorin (1985) claims that:

The linchpin holding the community together was an orientation toward G-D and otherwordly values. The ideal, so manifest in Jewish behaviour, literature, and folklore, however, was for the two "worlds" to come together eventually. Much of Jewish biblical eschatology was restorative, looking forward to a return to good, <u>old</u> times when the two "worlds" <u>had</u> been together (e.g., idealized views of the reigns of David and Solomon), but it also included the more radical, universalist style of the prophets (e.g., Isaiah 2), who expected the future not merely to be good but to be significantly different and better than ever. This was the messianic dimension that was a permanent feature, in varying degrees of intensity, of Jewish history. (Sorin 1985. p. 13)

The obligation and desire of the many pious Jews in the Shtetl to improve the world they lived in, was founded on a life style saturated by ethics, prophetic tradition and communal responsibility which was traditionally sought through Torah study. Apart from reliance on **cheder** (6), the place where young boys up till the age of their **Bar Mitzva** (7) were taught Hebrew and introduced to the Torah, fathers spent a significant amount of their restricted spare time **"learning"** (8) with their sons. The Shabbath often represented an opportunity to examine the young boys' progress and to provoke scholarly discussions. Though girls were not formally given religious education, they were introduced to Jewish values and laws through the behaviours and examples set by their pious mothers.

Far from being replicas of each other, the shtetl varied in terms of size, prosperity and social importance. The latter was, among Jews, for the most part founded on the reputation and recognition allocated to towns that had their own rabbinical academy, a **yeshiva** (9). Hundreds of boys from different towns and provinces devoted their time in these yeshivot under the supervision of eminent scholars, in **Talmudic** (10) studies. Although it was the ambition of many parents to send their sons to yeshiva (and for daughters to marry Yeshiva boys) most people in the shtetl **learned** at the local **shtibl** (11) together with their sons and other males. Nevertheless the levels of **learning** varied, creating the basis for social stratification

sharply felt in these small communities. Most Jews of the shtetl were **Amei Haaretzim** -uneducated- and what they learned in cheder, they often forgot in adulthood, having to work long hours with little time left for learning. All that remained was the ability to read the Hebrew of the Prayer Books or recite **Tehillim,** the psalms. In the Jewish tradition, religious knowledge was and is a most sought after "commodity", hence it was (is) intimately connected to prestige and status.

Apart from the yeshiva, life in the Shtetl provided the Jew with everything he needed in his life as a Jew; a **shtibl** (11) or a **synagogue** a **mikveh** (12), a **shochet** (13) and a **rabbi** to guide him in his daily life. The rabbi would be consulted on both religious and mundane questions, since the two were inseparable in the shtetl. The rabbi in turn was seen to judge, intercept, advise and guide with the absolute authority and spirit of the Torah.

In the tight-knit communities of the Shtetl communal responsibility provided members with assistance and support along with criticism and public insight. The price for group membership in a Shtetl was the loss of privacy which in turn meant that public opinion became an effective sanction, and public approval a much sought-after reward. The sense of mutuality and feeling of common origin and faith found in the shtetl has provided the Jews with a unique "togetherness" which few other ethnic groups have had at their disposal. The ever present threat of persecution welded the Jews together as much for mutual protection as for cultural unity. The close proximity in which people lived together in the shtetl, joined by their common culture and religion and vested together by their mutual distrust and fear of non-Jews, allowed for a special community bond which was to survive and continue in the face of continued persecution and consequent emigration.

NOTES CHAPTER 2.2.

4.
Shtetl is Yiddish, meaning village or small town, in particular the Jewish communities of Eastern Europe where the culture of the Ashkenazim flourished.

5.
Halachah: Generic term for the whole legal system of Judaism, embracing all its detailed laws and observances.

6.
Cheder is the elementary religious school where little boys start usually at the age of three.

7.
Bar Mitzva means "son of the Commandments". When a boy reaches the age of thirteen he becomes an adult. He is then duty bound to observe all the Mitzvot (Commandments) as an adult.

8.
Learning is an Anglicized term fot the Yiddish verb of **lernen** refering to the time spent in religious studies.

9.
Yeshiva (plur. yeshivot): Hebrew, from the verb to **yeshov** =to sit. In general it refers to a rabbinical college or seminary.

10.
Talmud is a massive and monumental compendium of sixty three tractates embracing everything from theology to contracts, cosmology to cosmetics, jurisprudence to etiquette, criminal law to diet, delusions, and drinking. It is resevoir of rabbinical thought on every then-known subject.The first division of the of the Talmud is the **Mishnah** which is the work of the Rabbis known as Tannaim and is the earliest codification of the Oral Torah (as opposed to the written Torah = Pentateuch) taught by G-D to Moses on Mt. Sinai and handed down through the generations until commited to writingby Rabbi Judah the Prince (c.130-220) who was its final redactor.The second division of the Talmud is the Gemara and is the record of the minute working through by the Amoraim (post Mishnac Rabbis) of the rulings of the Mishnah and also showing by means of hermeneutical rules, theirrelevance and connection with the laws of the Pentateuch and Scriptures. Also contains large sections of Aggada = homiletical and ethical material etc.

11.
Shtible: Yiddish for a small house or room where men meet to pray and engage in religious studies or discussions.

12.
Mikveh: a ritual bath.

13.
Shochet: an authorized slaughterer of animals, according to Halachic requirements.

2.3. SIGNS OF HETEROGENEITY IN THE PALE

Though there can be little doubt that life in the Shtetlekh, often dominated as it was by poverty, deprivation and insecurity, drew people together through the strong notion of sharing a common plight, it is necessary to point out that there was also scope for religious, philosophical and political differences within Eastern European Jewry. No sociocultural study or concern with an orthodox Jewish community is complete without taking into account these aspects of orthodoxy as they explain and allow for variations in religiocultural traditions and behaviours. There arose in Eastern Europe movements which have had an impact on the content and form of the Jewish communities of America and Western Europe, caused by the arrival of thousands of East European emmigrants there at the turn of the century. Four of these many movements; the **Hassidic, Mitnaged, Haskalah** and **Mussar** will here be presented to the reader, all of which have had an direct or indirect impact on the development and current state of Gateshead's Jewish community. Less pronounced and definitely more subdued, these variations within orthodoxy remain today, and not only as a matter of kind but also one of degree.

Eigthteenth century Rabbinic Judaism in Eastern Europe was based on the doctrine that the Torah was the sole source of religious authority. Studying, or learning the Torah was (is) not only a **Mitzva** (14), but also the primary way of achieving closeness to G-D. It has been claimed that scholarship in itself was a cult (Zborowski 1955) and certainly in eighteenth century's Eastern Europe Jewish world there was a ritualistic concern with scholarship. Regardless of the fact that many Jews set aside time for religious study, thus fulfilling the divinely decreed obligation to learn, only a minority reached the higher levels of knowledge. For the majority of East European Jews , educated only in the basics of Torah learning, the possibility of attaining high levels of spirituality through study remained an

unrealistic utopia. Forming the most important basis for social stratification, learning was regarded as a commodity in itself, but few had the economic resources permitting them to set practical work aside and devote themselves fully to Torah study. Instead, the majority of men engaged in the struggle of making a living for themselves and their families were only able to set aside a restricted time to the religious obligation to study.

The "learned", on the other hand, although not indifferent to the suffering of their fellow Jews, were immersed in Talmudic studies and unable to offer hope to the impoverished and oppressed masses. Rabbinic Judaism in its existing form created an ever widening gap which seperated two segments of the same people, the learned and unlearned, unequal in proportion and different in kind. It was a revolt against this "aristocracy" and their autocracy which brought on the reaction which was to completely change the character of orthodoxy in Eastern Europe.

As so often in Judaism we must turn to the often charismatic representative spiritual leaders if we are to gain an understanding or appreciation of the impact and consequences brought about by the differing movements and cults which arose in the eighteenth and nineteenth century Eastern European Jewish orthodoxy. The moral standards and quality of piousness which these movements called for were as a rule epitomized in the behaviours and personalities of their leaders. Two men emerged at this point in Jewish history who were to have a profound influence on its future development both within and outside of Eastern Europe. Both men were deeply religious and charismatic in character, and both men inspired others to follow their teachings. One emphasized the emotions, the other the intellect in man's religiosity and approach to G-D.

The first of the two, Israel Baal Shem Tov (1700-1760) (Amos 1970), was to become the founder of the **Hassidic** movement (15) thus bringing new hope and comfort to thousands of Jews first in Poland and the Ukrain and later spreading among Jews all over the Pale. Not only did the Jews of Eastern Europe feel that they had been "abandoned" by their own spiritual leaders, they also had to carry

the heavy burden of political disabilities, social inequality and severe economic restrictions which in turn affected Jewish institutions and leadership (Katz 1971). In an attempt to describe what he regards as an antithesis between **Baal Shem Tov** and the other important **Hassidic** leaders, the **Rebbe (18) of Kotzk** (16), Heschel (1973) describes the conditions in Eastern Europe in this descriptive and metaphorical manner:

> **in Eastern Europe the community of Israel was on its sickbed, full of sorrow and, following the weird end of the Sabbatian excitement, consumed with anguish. Oppressed and presecuted, the people were fainting, gasping, trembling. They nearly expired. When a person is having a fit and is in danger of wasting away, it is advisable to whisper his name into his ear, because his name has the power to call a person back to life. The Baal Shem saw that the Jewish heart was faint, torpid, in danger of laying down its life. So he called it by name; Jewish heart. And the Jews of Eastern Europe rallied, seing the light of the Messiah shining overhead.** (Heschel 1973.)

The metaphor of "illness" is here used to describe the state of the Jewish masses to whose spiritual condition the learned elite were largely indifferent, and who, the **Hassidim** believed could not aspire to reach those high standards. It might be claimed that the **Hassidic** movement, to whom religion, enthusiasm and devotion took precedence, was a revolt against the learned, the intellectuals.

The "remedy" or change arrived with **Israel Ben Eliezer** (1700- 1760). Born in the small shtetl of Okop in the province of Podolia (map 3), orphaned at an early age, greatly attracted to nature life and meditation, he first earned his living as a digger of lime which his wife sold in the town's (shtetl) market place. At the age of thirty six he revealed himself as a miraculous curer and became known as the **Baal Shem Tov** (Master of the Good (holy) Name). He believed that G-D dwells in all living things and that Holiness is within everything and that each person can attain spiritual heights and closeness to G-D through prayer and contemplation, and by joy and ecstasy. Never disregarding the crucial importance of the Torah and halachah he claimed that G-D could be sought everywhere and that people could, through simple but sincerely offered prayers, approach Him. He wished to make joyousness a religious principle and conforted his listeners with an optimistic faith in the

benevolence and forgiveness of G-D.

The intention of Baal Shem Tov was to prevent Jewish piety from hardening into mere routine where religious rituals had become exercises in repetition. He wished to awaken a zest for spiritual living **-hitlahavut-** or "being aflame", which refers to a state of spiritual exaltation. The idea of serving G-D through rejoicing and gladness had a profound effect on Jewish life in Eastern Europe. It revitalized and raised the self-esteem of the people by proclaiming that the unlearned were equals of the learned in the eyes of G-D. The result of the **Hassidic** teaching was a new style of living. Not only did the Baal Shem Tov call for the carrying out of G-D's commandments, he called for obedience given with passion, love and spontaneity. Thus, the **Hassidim** clapped their hands, danced, feasted, swayed their bodies at both prayer and in gatherings. They sang in the synagogues and homes to welcome the Shabbath and attatched great importance to emotional and spiritual aspects of Judaism.

The spirit of the **Hassidim** swept across both Eastern and Western Europe where they established themselves in hassidic groups, each organized by a **Tzadik** (17) or **Rebbe** (18). The Tzadikim (plural) were regarded as being endowed with holy qualities, supernatural powers and there flourished numerous tales and stories which told of the love and kindness they showed the down-trodden, sinners and social outcasts. Many of the tzadikim were charismatic men with deep humaneness. **Hassidism** eventually furnished its leaders with perceived supernatural powers that enabled them to serve as intermediaries between people and G-D Whom the hassidim believed to be most accessible via a Rebbe or Tzadik. In effect what arose was a kind of "saint worship" attatching great importance to the individual Tzadik's personality. With time, this type of "worship" formed the basis for a dynastic system in which the Tzadik's saintly position and authority was passed on to his son. To the traditional Rabbinic Judaism, the next-to deification of the Tzadikim was quite incompatible with a religious outlook in which G-D, and not a person, must at all times represent the point of focus. Localizing itself "within" orthodoxy, whilst propogating a diametrically different style of religious practice and

approach than previously practised, **Hassidism** was regarded by the Rabbinical authorities as a great menace and a very real threat to Judaism.

That the **Hassidic** movement was seen by the traditional Rabbinical authorities as posing a great threat to Judaism was displayed in the bitterness and vehemence with which the **Mitnagdim** (19) attacked the **Hassidim.** Among the traditionalists who ardently opposed the **Hassidim** was **Elijah ben Solomon** (BenSasson 1966), known universally as the **Vilna Gaon.** Born in Selets in Lithuania in 1720, he is said to have mastered the Bible at the tender age of six and most of the **Talmud** by the time of his **Bar Mitzva.** During long periods of living in seclusion and dire poverty, shut up behind closed windows and doors and engaged in solitary study of the Torah, he developed a particular philosophy and approach to learning and life in general. He was a man of great compassion and forbearance, with a deep understanding of human nature and a tender regard for peoples' feelings. The many stories about his life and activities tell us of a man who would endure a great many sacrifices in order that he might assist and comfort his fellow men.

A brilliant intellect, he studied maths, geometry, translated several books into Hebrew having himself written close to seventy books and treatises on various topics. His, at the time, unusual interest in secular subjects stemmed from his firm belief that all knowledge was holy and consequently an aid for reaching a deeper understanding of the Torah. He sought to revitalize the importance and position of the Torah in the lives of people. He believed that bringing learning to new heights, by dignifying learning itself and by inspiring the people to devote themselves to study, not only a select few but all men, would add a dimension of value in their lives.

The Vilna Gaon declared that everything past, present and future could be found in the Torah, therefore every man was obliged to study and research the Torah continously and with eagerness. The Torah could neither be changed nor diluted, it represented the original and eternal truth as presented by G-D to His people.

For centuries the yeshivot had in the exegesis of the Talmud, relied on the method of finding novel interpretations and the consequent rejection of other and contradicting views. As a result there were much competition and accusations of casuistry between the many yeshivot. It was this tradition of **pilpul** (dialectics), the excessive attention of finding and creating web-like and complicated interpretations of the Talmud which the Gaon sharply opposed. He insisted that **pilpul** complicated and obscured the true meaning of the Torah and the Talmud and that they should be explained according to the straightforward meanings inherent in the texts **-pshat-**, and that this could only be revealed by thorough examination of these texts and not through subtle casuistry. His specific approach to learning, his great commentary on the **Shulchan Aruch** and his many emendations of the texts of the Talmud became widely accepted and earned him much respect and several loyal disciples who in time came to dominate the yeshivot of Lithuania. The Gaon also insisted on and demonstrated faithful adherence to the Talmudic precept **Torah Lishmo**, that is to learn Torah for its own sake, and that the actual activity of study was not only intended as simply the acquisition of knowledge but as having a higher spiritual purpose. In other words the mitzvah **-Limud ha Torah lishmo-** was intended to dignify learning and to exhort and attract people to a heart-felt desire for continous study.

Although his life was devoted to study and writing, the impact which the **Hassidic** movement had on the Jewish communities, convinced the Vilna Gaon that it represented a threat to Judaism which could not be left unchallenged. Deemphasising religious study and endowing the Rebbe with holiness were blasphemous provocations to him. The ensuing battle of the **Mitnagdim** against the **Hassidim**, in which the Vilna Gaon played a crucial role, was one which literally split the Eastern Europea Jewish community into two camps. From the outset **Hassidism** had its stronghold in Poland and the Ukraine, whilst Lithuania was the original homeland of the **Mitnagdim.** But with time the two spread all over Eastern Europe. The feud, which twice drove the Vilna Gaon to excommunicate the **Hassidim** from the Jewish community in Vilna and to publicly burn their "heretical" books, raged for close to half a century and did not subside

until the beginning of the nineteenth century with the arrival of a mutual enemy - **Haskala** (20) - on the Jewish "scene".

The ideas of the Enlightenment in the eighteenth century, provided the disfranchised Jews with the hope of legal equality. Emanating from France, its ideas strongly appealed to, and firstly reached the Jewish communities of neighbouring Prussia. Here it was pre-eminently available to the wealthy Germanized Jews who had established numerous contacts with non- Jews in both Germany and France. Berlin, the industrial and progressive centre of Prussia, provided the meeting ground and opportunity for Jews to gain insight and knowledge of the ideas of the French Enlightenment, whose ideas called for all men to be treated as equals. The assumption that guided by reason, with education and escape from the bonds of ignorance all men, regardless of background, would become good citizens held hitherto unknown possibilities and hopes for the Jews. The idea that reason, not dogmatic religion or superstition should guide the institutions which regulate society had a special appeal to those Jews whose aspirations were out of tune with their severely curbed legal position. In other words, in their desire to acquire legal and political emancipation many Jews of the Prussian economic elite were quite willing and eager to turn against their faith and traditions.

The German-Jewish philosopher **Moses Mendelsson** (1729-1786), regarded as the originator of the **Haskalah** (known as the Berliner Haskalah) and father of the later **Reform** (21) movement, sought in the true spirit of the Enlightenment to raise the educational level of the Jews. According to Mendelsson's ideas, Jews were not only to be taught the Pentateuch and Talmud (the traditional subjects of the **cheder**) but should also achieve competence in German, French, modern Hebrew and other general secular subjects. Existing Jewish laws and customs had to be brought up to date. The **Maskilim** (22) attempted to build a bridge between the strict traditionalists and those who believed that assimilation was the only hope for the Jewish people. They talked about Jews as a nation, a notion which in due time developed into Zionism. It was a program which gained many enthusiastic

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Map 4.

adherents among progressive German, Polish and Russian Jews, in that it offered modernization of Jewish education as a means of achieving civic rights and social equality. Though one might argue that East European **Haskalah** would have occured independently of the Prussian Enligtenment, the two were intrinsically connected and developed through commercial and cultural interplay. Coming into full force in Eastern Europe about fifty years later than in Germany (about the beginning of the nineteenth century), its ideas were often brought to the former via Galician scholars and merchants. Galicia (map 4), for a time a province of Austro-Hungary and now a province of southern Poland, was the bridge to Eastern Europe for Western European intellectual Jews as well as those involved in trade. Due to its proximity **Haskalah** first spread from Prussia to Galicia and from there to Russia and Poland. This often occurred in the form of travelling Galician intellectuals who accepted work as teachers in Jewish schools in the Southwestern part of Russia. Schools established and headed by Galician intellectuals in the area at the beginning of the century, such as Uman, Odessa and Vilna, demonstrate the attempts of the Galician **Maskilim** to make an impact in this part of the Pale.

Though their efforts did not bring about the interest, optimism nor the euphoria among Russian and Polish Jewry that it had stirred up in Prussia, orthodox leaders regarded **Haskalah** as a very real and powerful threat. They were convinced that if left unchallenged the **Haskala** could threaten the entire concept of what had hitherto been regarded as Judaism. The **Maskilim's** advocacy of familiarization with secular education and culture and for severing their ties with and freeing themselves from the "burden" of the traditional Jewish patterns of thinking and rigid patterns of behaviour was perceived, by both **Hassidim** and **Mitnagdim,** as a threat to the faith as a whole. Well aware of the effects and consequences, that is the many apostasies that Haskalah had brought to Jewry in Western Europe and which were now threatening the East, both sides recognized the need to diminish their internal fight and to jointly do battle against the **Haskalah.**

The aim and ideas of the **Haskalah** movement was to create a new kind of Jew, a middle-class person, well versed in secular education and culture. Remaining,

faithful to parts of his religion such a Jew had simultaneously to be acquainted with and be adjusted to the political and social world around him/her, and to accept the reality of a modern Europe. In fact it was a type of Jewish person for whom there was at that particular historical time and area, little social scope or tolerance. In the Pale there was no general desire to participate in the surrounding non-Jewish world. Accustomed to living in a secluded sociocultural world of their own, keeping inter-group interactions at a minimum, Jews of Russia and Poland had never been mentally, culturally or linguistically prepared for any unnecessary contact with the world outside the ghetto-like life of the shtetl.

The literary medium of Yiddish speaking **Maskilim** was Hebrew, a language with which the Jews of Eastern Europe were in general unacquainted. Thus, much of the writings of the **Maskilim** (Mordecai Aaron Gunzburg 1795-1846, Abraham Dob Lebenson 1794- 1878, Isaac Baer Levinson 1788-1860.) were an important influence and aspiration but to a few intellectuals. Far from being illiterate, most Jews in the Pale, women as well as men could read and were quite familiar with Jewish codes of values written in their native tongue of Yiddish, and most men were given training, if only the basic, in the Pentateuch and Talmud. Living restricted lives both socially and economically, there was little or no attraction to secular subjects since there seemed little hope or even little desire to participate in the world of the society at large. Contrary to the wishes of the **Maskilim**, their movement was frequently regarded, encouraged by the rabbinate, as an attempt to undermine the Jewish faith. Enhanced by decades of resistance towards change and innovation, Eastern European rejection of **Haskalah** was founded on the deep conviction that it would eventually lead to atheism.

One of **Haskalah**'s major centres in Eastern Europe was in Vilna in Lithuania. Lithuania was also where, around the mid nineteenth century the longstanding tradition in Judaism of **Mussar** was revitalized and took on the significance of a movement. To some extent, the movement can be regarded as a reaction towards the obvious threats of **Haskalah.** In any case it was a movement whose long-term legacy was to remain intrinsically connected to the Lithuanian Yeshivot. The main

in memory of the righteous

rabbi zundel of salant

RABBI JOSEPH ZUNDEL was born in 5545 (1786) and studied in the Voloshin Yeshivah under its founder Rabbi Chayim, the disciple of the Gaon of Vilna. He must have been one of the first students of Voloshin. When he finished his studies there he still returned from Salant (a small Lithuanian town halfway between Riga and Kovno where he had settled) periodically, to Voloshin in order to benefit from Rabbi Chayim. He thereby followed the latter's example who himself had kept on visiting the Gaon in Vilna regularly for decades even when he was already well established as Rabbi of Voloshin. After Rabbi Chayim's passing, Rabbi Zundel chose Rabbi Akiva Eger as his mentor and travelled repeatedly to distant Posen in order to see him. But everything Rabbi Zundel thus took in turned out to be a seed, which produced a rich harvest. In Salant Providence made *him* meet young Israel Lipkin, who had come to live there. There must have existed a tremendous spiritual kinship between the two, which made Rabbi Zundel transmit all his newly articulated insights on the subject of moral self-perfection to his younger disciple. to attain fame later as Rabbi Israel Salanter.

To Israel

When he found he had completed Rabbi Israel's character education, Rabbi Zundel felt his mission in the Golah was fulfilled and he decided to go and live in Jerusalem. In the Golah he had all the time lived as befitted an exile, taking its name and object-lesson literally. His profession had been transporting goods across the German-Russian frontier. Most people saw in him no more than this capacity, which was just what he desired. He shunned publicity, fame, status and all earthly attainments. He lived more than frugally but his trust in the Almighty was such that he was not at all surprised, when the future Chief Rabbi of Jerusalem for almost 70 years, Rabbi Shmuel Salant, a child prodigy much in demand, asked to marry his daughter.

When Rabbi Zundel reached Jerusalem in 5599 (1839) the Ashkenazim there were without a leader as Rabbi Israel of Shklov, one of the greatest pupils of the Gaon of Vilna had just passed away. So Rabbi Zundel accepted the spiritual leadership temporarily, but was glad after two years in office to hand over to Rabbi Shmuel, his son-in-law, who had by now followed him. But he still remained a Dayan there for the remaining 25 years of his life, although in a purely honorary capacity. He and his wife produced and sold vinegar for a living and again were so full of trust in the Almighty that they even ventured to keep a married daughter and family from their obviously very restricted earnings. Still Rabbi Zundel was one of the architects of Jerusalem communal life as it exists to-day. He saw to it that in Jerusalem Torah was learned round the clock, he himself taking part in the night shifts. He of course claimed no privileges and lived as unpretentiously as ever.

No Funeral Orations

When he died on Cheshvan 3rd 5626 (1865) his Will stipulated that no funeral orations be held nor any titles be put on his tombstone.

Although he did his best to conceal the fact, we know now that Rabbi Zundel was almost a replica of the Gaon of Vilna, his teacher's teacher. It has even been said that in his capacity for self-effacement Rabbi Zundel exceeded the Gaon.

In his mind the written and oral Torah united with Kabbalah into a harmonious whole, which demanded literal and honest application in all spheres of life. Discussion for mere intellectual amusement was alien to him. Any surplus money which came his way he spent on books. Science, Grammar and Languages he used freely as aids towards the better understanding of the Torah. He was no mean text critic. His method of study was strictly systematic. No subject, he said, should be revised more than ten times consecutively. Everything studied should be approached as if it were of immediate practical importance. He made lots of notes as well as short well-reasoned summaries of involved subjects.

He was the pioneer of Mussar as a branch of applicable knowledge. We may say that long before his time there had been many perfect and exemplary characters in Jewry. But they grew instinctively from intuition rather than from conscious effort. But this was not good enough for ensuring widespread character perfection in our Nation. For perhaps a thousand years Halachah had concentrated on things which can be measured, weighed, expressed in concrete terms and are impersonal.

The more abstract discipline of character formation had been neglected, partly even for lack of a suitable terminology, party because of the need to differentiate between individuals and the consequent impracticability of laying down general rules, and partly owing to the aggadic and seemingly non-obligatory nature of many of its sources. Besides people always shy away from conclusions leading to self-criticism. There had been many lone voices protesting against this state of affairs and a literature to remedy it had been created. Rabbi Zundel probably considered himself no more than another such voice, especially as he in his modesty did not think he had the right to teach the public at large. But to Rabbi Israel Salanter he passed on all he could. He took him for long walks in the open country and made him appreciate the contrast between the Divine majesty of Nature on one hand and the pettiness and futility of human affairs on the other. He taught him how to extract clear rules of conduct out of Midrashic homilies, parables and stories, he made *him* understand human psychology and the conscious shaping of mind and character. He showed how necessary it is to look at ourselves in a detached and impersonal way, in order to discern our short-comings. To remove them we must even sometimes get really angry with ourselves.

Key to Mussar

Our Teachers of old have left us a rich legacy on all these subjects, it is for us to make full use of it. Rabbi Zundel thus handed the keys to Mussar as a discipline to Rabbi Israel, who although as self-effacing as his teacher, felt it his duty also to voice his ideas in public. Rabbi Zundel, on the other hand will for ever remain the perfect image of a Ba'al Mussar in the highest sense. It was his historic destiny to show that life in all its length can be lived literally and truly according to the maxims of Mussar. Had he not demonstrably done so, people could still have argued, Mussar is meant solely for recluses or for utterly unworldly types. Rabbi Zundel, who deliberately lived as an ordinary citizen of this world, proved that life can be lived and is worth living fully according to Mussar. Thus his pupil Rabbi Israel saw his aim was attainable for a wider public and he decided he could start a movement. It hardly needs saying that creating such a movement was an uphill struggle but the results certainly justified the effort. In a way, whenever the postulates of Mussar and the demands of real life seem to clash, one ought to refer back to Rabbi Zundel, asking oneself how he would have reacted. There hardly exists a situation in which the slightest doubt about Rabbi Zundel's choice could be entertained.

rabbi o. feuchtwanger

Fig. 1

IN MEMORY OF THE RIGHTEOUS

RABBI SHMUEL SALANT

By RABBI O. FEUCHTWANGER

DURING the latter part of the Middle Ages Jerusalem's handful of Jews made up no more than a token community, just sufficient to proclaim the Jewish Nation's title to its Holy City. With the expulsion of the Jews from Spain an influx of Sephardi Jews gradually increased Jerusalem's Jewish population. Ashkenazim, i.e. Central and East European Jews, started going to live in Jerusalem only just over 250 years ago.

For the first century and a half of their settlement their presence in Jerusalem was little more than symbolic. It is well known that at a certain time they had in order to have a מנין of their own to ask a Persian Jew to join. Up to about one hundred years ago they were only tolerated in Jerusalem by the Moslem authorities and hardly had any individual rights nor communal status. Thus they had to hold prayers in a hut.

Irresistible Spell

Fifty to sixty years ago however, still under the rule of the Turks, all this had radically changed. Jerusalem's Ashkenazi Community had by then become the leading one casting its almost irresistible spell and attraction over World Jewry. Literally, our very greatest spiritual leaders have during the last century only been too eager to find an excuse which enabled them to retire to Jerusalem.

They naturally set an example encouraging many more average people to follow suit. This almost magic transformation came about while the fortunes of Jerusalem, spiritual as well as material, were in a true fatherly fashion guided for seventy years by the uncanny genius of Rabbi Shmuel Salant. European Jews, such as the disciples of Rabbi Israel Ba'al Shem Tov, the founder of Chassidism, and of the Gaon of Vilna, had generally settled in Safed and Tiberias rather than Jerusalem, as they might have been held responsible there for unpaid debts owed by the first European settlers of two hundred and fifty years ago.

These debts were officially cancelled only just over a hundred and thirty years ago. Thus Jerusalem was made again accessible to Ashkenazim. One hundred and twenty-six years ago an earthquake destroyed Safed completely and made it imperative for its surviving Jews to seek refuge in Jerusalem. This calamity was generally considered a punishment for the Ashkenazim's neglect of Jerusalem. Their spiritual leader, Rabbi Israel of Shklov, one of the outstanding pupils of the Gaon of Vilna and the first fundamental codifier in his מאת השלחן of all Halacha specifically affecting Eretz Israel, now finally settled there but passed away within two years.

Human Perfection

Luckily, Divine Providence had already provided for the succession. Rabbi Joseph Zundel Salanter, thus called after Salant, a small Lithuanian townlet, which at that time was a centre of sublimest Jewish scholarship, suddenly decided to leave for Jerusalem, probably under the impact of the earthquake mentioned. He himself had been a pupil of Rabbi Akiva Eger and Chayim Voloshiner who were hardly equalled in their time, but by now he was, besides being therefore naturally a giant in Halacha, the living example of the greatest possible human perfection in character as well as in the service of G-d and his fellow creatures.

He, on principle, would never officiate as a Rabbi. Neither did his pupil Rabbi Israel Salanter, who formulated and disseminated the theory underlying Rabbi Joseph Zundel's so strictly practised self-discipline. Theory and practice, inseparable as they are, were given the name of מוסר.

Rabbi Israel, now being about 30 years, Rabbi Zundel probably felt, correctly as we know, that he had completed his task of mentor and could safely leave him on his own. When Rabbi Zundel, still in his prime, and world famous in spite of his extreme modesty, thus arrived in Jerusalem about one hundred and twenty-five years ago, he was greatly welcomed and immediately appointed the spiritual head of the Ashkenazim.

But Rabbi Zundel would not compromise on his principle not to officiate as a Rabbi, thereby faithfully following the precept and example of the Rambam (cf. his comments on Mishnah Avoth IV, 5). As there was no one else as qualified as himself he accepted temporarily, only on condition that he was allowed to eke out a living from the production of vinegar, which he did all the nearly 30 years he lived in Jerusalem. He was only too glad when within a few years he could hand over office to his son-in-law Rabbi Shmuel Salant, who had by then also settled in Jerusalem.

This was the beginning of a seventy years stewardship of the Holy City which, although already an important part of its history, is still noticeable in many of its beneficial creations there.

Unique Atmosphere

Rabbi Shmuel was born in 5576 (1816) near Bialystok. When he was seven he was sent to Vilna where Rabbi Abbele Posvaller, the Head of the Rabbinate, was so impressed by his unusual intellect that he accepted him as his personal pupil. When he was 10 years old he went to Salant, where the local Rabbi was the great Rabbi Hirsh, to whom even Rabbi Akiva Eger looked up respectfully. He had a very select group of pupils around him, all of whom, in due course, were counted amongst the supreme Talmudic authorities of their times. Rabbi Zundel and Rabbi Israel were amongst them and all helped to create a unique atmosphere of G-dliness, which produced so many unmatched spiritual guides for our nation. Rabbi Shmuel delivered his דרשת בר מצה in Vilna.

A few years later only Rabbi Abbele Posvaller, his former teacher, could find no one better qualified to supervise the delivery of complicated גט than Rabbi Shmuel. When Rabbi Shmuel was about 20 he left Salant, after he had been married there to the daughter of Rabbi Zundel, for Voloshin, where he was treated not like a student but like a visiting lecturer. During the two years he stopped there he, an outsider, was asked to deliver שעורים to the ישיבה. He also corresponded with Rabbi Israel of Shklov in Jerusalem.

He was at that time invited to become the Rabbi of Brisk, a community which up to the time of its destruction by Hitler could always afford to choose its Rabbi from amongst the very greatest and saintliest scholars of the time. He was also offered the succession of his teacher, the greatly venerated Rabbi Hirsh of Salant.

Friendship with Sir Moses Montefiore

But Rabbi Shmuel, before he was 25, declined all these offers which would have more than tempted many others twice his age. As his lungs were slightly touched he was advised to live in a warmer climate. His natural choice in the circumstances could of course be only Eretz Israel. When his intention became known he was asked when he was still in Russia to become the Rabbi of the Ashkenazim in Jerusalem, relieving Rabbi Zundel. But he would not commit himself.

On his way to Jerusalem he spent Sukkoth in Constantinople, where he met Sir Moses Montefiore. Thus their lifelong mutual friendship which brought so many blessings to Jerusalem in its trail began. On arrival in Jerusalem in 5601 (1841) Rabbi Shmuel did take up his appointment as Rabbi and set up a Beth Din over which he presided. This was the foundation of the present Chief Rabbinate of Israel. He had to leave Jerusalem a number of times in order to raise funds in Europe for its poor and its institutions. During these journeys he became a personal friend of people as widely apart as the first Gerer Rebbe, Rabbi Yitzchak Meir, and the Frankfurt and Paris Rothschilds.

● **To be continued in our next issue**

Fig. 2.

IN MEMORY OF THE RIGHTEOUS

Rabbi Mendele Kotzker and Rabbi Israel Salanter Compared

BY RABBI O. FEUCHTWANGER

RABBI Mendele Kotzker passed away on Shevat 22nd, 5619, at the age of 72 and Rabbi Israel Salanter on Shevat 25th, 5642, at the age of 73. We thus have an occasion to point out a number of aspirations they had in common.

The now 250 years old movement of Chassidism arrived so to speak at the cross roads about half way through this period, i.e., about 120 years ago when Rabbi Mendele Kotzker flourished. The 20 years he officiated as "Rebbe" might have been a turning point in the movement. As they were not, contrary to Rabbi Mendele's expectations, he died a disappointed man who had gone into semi-seclusion for the last years of his life.

His position in Chassidism is similar to that of Rabbi Salanter in non-Chassidic Lithuanian Jewry. Rabbi Mendele clearly saw that the age of the great leaders and thinkers of Chassidim had passed and that there hardly were any more original ideas forthcoming. Thus Chassidism had slowly become a typical mass movement stressing uncritical conformity rather than true values.

New Challenge

A new challenge was badly needed. Rabbi Mendele therefore aimed at creating an elite in intellect, character and selflessness. He was prepared to lead the few hundred he envisaged joining him to the pinnacle of other worldliness, if necessary even by taking them entirely out of their social setting. His trust in the Almighty was so firm that he had no doubts that their families would have been looked after by Divine providence in a way he might have predicted although to others it would have appeared miraculous.

Such a course would naturally have revolutionised the Chassidic movement. The masses could not have helped defecting yet his elite, he hoped, was going to create an ever present image of the ideal Jewish life. He demanded complete self-denial, exclusive to devotion to studying the Torah and performing the Mitzvoth, ruthless self-criticism and an ever increasing urge to attain still greater heights. He found a number of such devotees but his expected figure of hundreds was probably right from the start an overestimate of human capacities. But even many of those, who for a time accepted Rabbi Mendele's lead, dropped out afterwards, only very very few, mostly geniuses, persisting long enough to come up to Rabbi Mendele's standards.

Ethical Improvement

The most famous of them was the חידושי הרי"ם, Rabbi Yitzchak Meir, the first Gerer Rebbe, who was Rabbi Mendele's near equal. Another pupil of his, however, Rabbi Mordechai Joseph of Isbitze, objected to the exclusiveness imposed on Rabbi Mendele's elite and finally parted company with his teacher.

We find a similar development in the Mussar Movement founded by Rabbi Israel Salanter to counteract shallow conventionalism in the observance of Judaism. Rabbi Israel's demands for merciless introspection and ethical improvement up to total elimination of the ego were originally addressed to the masses, who however didn't understand these terms. His pupils then introduced his teachings into the Yeshivoth where they became a subject rather than a strict code of behaviour. They did however provide the theoretical basis for the educational methods applied in the Yeshivoth.

Only one of Rabbi Israel's pupils, Rabbi Joseph Hurwitz of Nowardok, attempted to base his widespread network of Nowardoker Yeshivoth on the minute performance of all his teacher's demands. No worldly nor selfish pursuit was allowed even to come up in a person's mind, including caring for one's appearance, and everyone had to ask someone else to tell him all his faults in a most outspoken manner in return for his performing a similiar service. As this was done in public by all at the same time it was called the "Character Exchange", but this was taking Rabbi Israel's teaching to the extreme.

True, these Yeshivoth existed until the Second World War and during the Russian Revolution performed veritable feats of heroic defiance, but again they make no impact on the ordinary Yeshivoth and today even those Nowardoker Yeshivoth, which still continue under this name, have turned their doctrines into a subject. But it is characteristic that Rabbi Israel Salanter himself, being a psychologist of renown never ever tried to impose his ideas as an actual demand.

He probably foresaw that they were too far reaching and suitable only for a chosen and select few. In a way it is regrettable that we have thus been deprived of seeing before us living examples of the true Chassid based on the description in מסלת ישרים to live up to which Rabbi Mendele demanded, as well as of visible specimens of the full-blooded Ba'al Mussar as exemplified by Rabbi Israel Salanter.

On the other hand it appears to be providential that any movement in Judaism which can only take in a very limited number of exceptional people and thus neglects and condemns the rest of the nation is fore-doomed to failure. There cannot be תורת ישראל without עם ישראל.

Yet in spite of the failure of what they directly propagated both Rabbi Mendele and Rabbi Israel made a lasting impact on Jewish History. Rabbi Mendele's influence ensured that the study of the Talmud now became a foremost aim of Chassidism and that ideas as potent and compelling as those of Maharal of Prague became part of a person's mental make-up. Since Rabbi Mendele there have been many "Rebbes" who even if they had been ordinary Rabbis and no Chassidic leaders would have been among the topranking Talmudists and spiritual guides of their generation such as the already mentioned first Gerer Rebbe and his Grandson and successor, the שפת אמת, besides Rabbi Mendele's Son-in-law, Rabbi Abraham Bornstein of Sochatshov, author of שו"ת אבני נזר ושו"ת אגלי טל and finally the Ostrovtzer Rebbe.

Heritage

Rabbi Israel Salanter's heritage was the adoption of character forming methods of education in the Yeshivoth. The most fertile training ground for tutors capable of applying same has been the בית תלמוד תורה הגדול in Kelm, founded by Rabbi Israel's disciple, Rabbi Simcha Zisel Sief. Unfortunately this unique institution did not survive the last World War. Here also the lustrous and fructifying ideas of Maharal of Prague were allotted a major part of their syllabus of study.

If today, not only peaceful coexistence but also fruitful cooperation between Chassidim and non-Chassidim is possible, it is chiefly thanks to Rabbi Mendele and Rabbi Israel, whose influence created movements so similar that they were bound to converge.

Fig. 3.

force behind this movement, Rabbi Israel Lipkin (1810-1883) universally known as **Reb Yisroel Salanter** (Mene 1973) since his place of residence for over a decade was Salant in the province of Kovno (map.3), devoted his attention to, in his opinion, the much neglected ethical aspects of Judaism. Reb Yisroel Salanter had been a student under the saintly Rabbi Yosef Zundel (Bacon 1987) (fig. 1) who claimed that successful combat of one's evil inclinations demanded more than just theoretical knowledge of the Talmudic laws (fig.1). He introduced the idea that repetition of Talmudic statements on ethical issues would induce the proper mood for soul-searching and consequent self-improvement. Zundel only pressed these thoughts upon a select few, his disciples, and it was Reb Yisroel Salanter who was to bring them, in an organized framework, to the Jews at large (fig.2-3).

Reb Yisroel Salanter held that the study of Torah, incumbent on every Jew, should also include ethical works. The latter should be studied on an intensive daily basis. Basic to the **Mussar** philosophy is the conviction that through intensive daily study of moralistic works, their sombre repetition, meditation and self-criticism, man can retrain as well as restrain his emotions and that in time the shunning of the evil inclination will become ingrained in men's behaviours and lives. In other words, the studying and repetitions of Talmudic statements on ethical issues would help man to recognize and combat his evil inclination (Yetzer Hora). The overall goal of the **Mussar** movement was through self-improvement to turn peoples' lives to the service of G-D and service to one's fellow men. As man is created in the image of G-D, and as G-D is merciful, so must man be. Salanter claimed that **Mussar** , with its stress upon ethical knowledge and behaviours which would provide man with a spiritual uplifting in his relation with G-D, was a process which did not end until man left this world.

Reb Yisroel Salanter's own life reflected his deep dedication to the service of his fellow men. There are endless stories still told today of his selflessness and feeling of responsibility for the unfortunate and suffering, how he in every way possible showed consideration, compassion, tolerance and respect for people around him. He was (and still is) regarded as the living proof that constant preoccupation with

ethical Talmudic knowledge combined with introspection could not only assist man in his battle against his passions and drives, it could in time create a perfect ethical life where anything contrary to this way of living would seem loathsome to that person.

Bacon (1987) argues that although Reb Yisroel Salanter intended the **Mussar** movement to serve as a device with which to battle against the **Haskalah**, his stress on ethical behaviours indicate that he in many ways shared the **Maskilim's** criticism of the social conditions of Jewish society at the time. But rather than turning to secular education (Enlightenment) for solutions to these ailments, Reb Yisroel Salanter postulated that a revival of Talmudic ethics would improve standards of social relations and the imbalances in Jewish society. Although Reb Yisroel Salanter attempted to establish **Mussar** as a mass movement it eventually became clear that in spite of his personal prestige he could not instigate the wider social response which he had aimed at. Establishing **Mussar Stiblech** (Moral gathering places) in a few shtetlekh in Lithuania, Reb Yisroel Salanter's ideas became predominantly available to a somewhat exclusive group. His disciples would gather in these **Mussar Stiblech** to recite passages from the Torah, meditate upon sin and the consequent punishment, upon man's encounter with the Heavenly Judge and seek self-discipline and self-denial as a course for self- improvment and of serving one's fellow men.

Eventually his teaching spread to the yeshivot of Lithuaunia whose students he found to be receptive to his ideas. In effect, by concentrating on the yeshivot in Lithuania, Reb Yisroel Salanter's ideas appealed to, unlike the mass movement of **Hassidim**, a rather small number of people. Attracting its opposition and criticism in rabbinical circles, though it never challenged the Lithuanian centrality of Talmudic studies, it was seen by some as to set **Mussar** above Torah, whilst others regarded it as holding the potentials of sectarianism. Nevertheless the movement prevailed and in spite of resistance from more traditional yeshiva leaders, **Mussar** eventually became a separate yeshiva topic of study in several Lithuanian yeshivot. Almost all the Lithuanian styled yeshivot featured daily **Mussar** studies

and provided the **Mashgiach**, the supervisor of the yeshiva, with a central role within the institution (Helmreich 1982).

Weekly, the **Mashgiach** would deliver a **Mussar schmuess** (Mussar talk) which focused upon specific incidents of daily life and show how a particular law or value from the Talmud provided guidance for behaviour in these mundane situations. Apart from **schmuessen** the yeshivot would expose their students, in groups, to daily **Mussar** in the form of Talmudic study or other ethical works as well as discussions dealing with reward and punishment, human inclinations and life after death.

In 1857 Rabbi Yisroel Salanter moved to Germany in an attempt to spread **Mussar** in Western Europe and while he was there, he kept in continuous contact with his disciples in Lithuania. His many letters were later collected to constitute the basic formulation of the **Mussar** philosophy. The successors of Reb Yisroel Salanter, mostly his disciples, ensured that **Mussar** became and continued to be an essential feature in the curriculum of Lithuanian yeshivot.

Notes Chapter 2.3.

14.
Mitzva (plural: Mitzvot) has two meanings: 1) Divine Commandment, 2) A meritious act, one that expresses G-D's will; a good work, a truly virtuous, kind considerate and ethical deed.

15.
Hassidim are the followers of the Chasidic philosophy and way of life.

16.
The Kotzker Rebbe was a hassidic rebbe in Poland (1787-1859).

17.
Tzadik, 1) a most righteous or saintly man. 2) a holy man of surpassing virtue (and possibly supernatural powers).

18.
Rebbe, when used among the Hassidim this means their leader. Though well-grounded in Jewish learning, he does not necessary have a formal ordination from a seminary or yeshiva, but has either assumed the role of leader through inheritance from his father or because of his personal qualities.

19.
Mitnagdim, is the name of those who were opposed to the Hassidic movement.

20.
Haskalah is the name of the Enligtenment in Hebrew.

21.
In Reform Judaism specific adjustments have been made which claim to make Judaism better adapted to this time and age. Specific rituals and laws, such as Sabbath observation and Kashrut, have been abrogated, and new elements (like organ playing and the mixing of men and women in the synagogue) have been introduced.

22.
The followers of the Haskalah movement called themselves the "enlightened" ones, or the Maskilim.

2.4. NEWCASTLE: A SOLID, STABLE AND PROFOUNDLY ANGLICISED COMMUNITY

Previous chapters have provided an insight into the restricted and difficult conditions which incited many Jews to leave Eastern Europe at the end of the the nineteenth century as well as pointing to the complexity of their particular religiocultural heritage. An understanding of the latter is indeed essential if we are to appreciate how it was that Gateshead came to be a community which attracts predominantly orthodox Jews who are dedicated to **Mussar,** as well as being an international and important centre for rabbinical studies.

The historical background of this remarkable community would be incomplete without paying some attention to the nearby city of Newcastle, the place where it all started. By the middle of the nineteenth century, the Jewish community of Newcastle was a well established unit whose economic status had continued to improve. Though the majority of Newcastle's Jewish population were members of the lower strata, the German immigrants that arrived during the eighteenth century had, with their German education and cultural knowledge, shown an unprecedented rate of social mobility between generations. By the end of the century an increasing number of Jews , mostly children of the German immigrants who had moved into wholesale and manufacturing thus making "the climb" into the middle-class, had started to leave the west-end. They had moved into the more prosperous area of Jesmond. By the beginning of the twentieth century about a hundred families (Olsover 1981) had settled in Jesmond creating the need for a Synagogue in that area.

Like other provincial communities, such as those of Leeds, Manchester, Hull and many more, Newcastle hosted the development of an anglicised middle-class Jewish community who struggled for social acceptance and political freedom. Undeniably, the ensuing community did not represent a homogenous group in terms of

socio/economic conditions. There were on the one side the settled community, the shopkeepers, oversea importers and share brokers, the providers of essential goods and services to the English middle classes. On the other hand there were the factory workers, tailors, slippermakers, glaziers and peddlers. Common to the majority of the community's members was the belief in the necessity to emphasize English ideals like the social sophistication, education and stability of the hosting English society. The inculcation of and adaptation to English ideals and aspirations had its price. It called for a slackening in religious observance and numerous religiocultural compromises.

To some of these early Jewish arrivals in Newcastle, the English milieu was so fully satisfying that they more or less abandoned the ways of their traditional Judaism (Borowitz 1973). The extent of this trend and the effects which it had on religious practices, had limited social significance until the arrival of the pious East European Jews in the second half of the century. This tendency towards diminished importance of the religious aspects of Judaism was not restricted to German Jews of Britain but was also to be found, as Gartner (1974) points out, in America:

> **The essence of Judaism was only moral and ethical, while the externals of traditional way of life were classified among changeable outwards observances and consequently abandoned. Yet persons who did not practice or believe in any Jewish religious principles were still regarded as Jews. The ethnic basis of Judaism remained alive among the German Jews, but subdued, until vigorously thrust forward by the new arrivals from Easter Europe.**(Gartner 1974.p. 41)

The Jews of Newcastle, like so many other communities in Britain, showed no pleasure at the arrival of the Eastern European immigrants (Freedman, 1955, Brotz 1955, Gartner 1974, Williams 1985). The resentment of the "old" immigrants towards their Eastern European brethren was due both to the economic burden which the new immigrants imposed (1) but also the undesirable "image" which they presented to the non-Jews. To many Jews in Britain, by now a minority group whose aspiration it was to achieve social and political emancipation , the arrival of the Yiddish speaking Jews with their "foreign" manners their obvious poverty, "medieval" attitudes, distinctive dress and religious requirements, represented an

acute embarrassment. It was feared that they would damage the acquired "good name" of the community.

The newcomers, arriving from Eastern Europe, were perceived as a threat not only to the community's internal organization but also to its relationship with the general society. The new arrivals came to occupy a sub-group both in terms of economic and ethnic stratification, The German Jews did not want to be identified with "the strange ways" of the newcomers, neither in terms of class nor ethnicity. By the time of the great influx of the Easterners, the former were to a great extent aspiring to be middle-class and less concerned with outward signs of ethnicity. The newcomers on the other hand were mostly very poor, strict in their observance (many were **shomer shabbos** (2)) as well as extremely "visible" in their ethnicity. In terms of economic stratification the newcomers occupied the lower strata, but did not, apart from material deprivation, have much in common with the German Jews in the same situation and did, as it were, come to hold a position below that of the established "working class" Jew. In other words they occupied an entirely separate and distinct sub-group (Poll 1975, Steinberg 1981) position within the larger ethnic group.

The Jews of Newcastle were in no way unique in their reception of their Eastern European brethren (Freedman 1955, Levy 1956, Gartner 1974, Williams 1985, Kokosalakis 1982, Brooks 1989), for it was a reaction which, at the time, also dominated the Jewish scene in America (Gartner 1974). Hannerz (1974), who has analysed how minority groups in America have been able to put ethnic strategies to successful use as a means of modifying or avoiding the dominance of the society at large, also discusses the relationship between social mobility and ethnic identity. Hannertz explains how the nineteenth century American Jewish community, as in Britain, was:

> **largely of German origin and in rather comfortable citcumstances. From then on, however, the Jewish immigrants were overwhelmingly Eastern European, and these soon outnumbered the German Jews. They were of a very different cultural background, much more concerned with their ethnic identity as they came from areas where there was little assimilation and where they had been subjected to**

persecution, and among them were represented forms of orthodoxy, Zionism and political radicalism which were foreign to the German Jews. To this, then, was added lower class-status. In this situation there was a strong negative element in the reaction of the German Jews to the newcomers. As other Americans worried about the immigrants changing the character of the American society, the established Jewish community , with equally limited sympathy for the ways of the Eastern Europeans, feared that the latter might arouse anti- Semitism. (Hannertz 1974.p. 65)

In an enlightening presentation, Gartner (1974) discusses the problems which the formation of American Jewry faced with the arrival of the Eastern European immigrants. His point is that the amalgamation of the two different influxes created a situation where conflict existed side by side with cohesion. Regardless of whatever the established community thought of the newcomers, they were still duty bound, by religious/traditional obligations, to take responsibility for the newcomers. Hence conflict and cohesion could co-exist, albeit with considerable tension, within the same group. It would seem reasonable to expect that the newcomers were aware that they were an undesirable and troublesome burden to the established community and consequently resented the ambivalent attitudes of the well- established German Jews. That the notions of ethnic solidarity became, under these conditions, more tenuous is what Gartner (ibid) highlights when he claims that:

The immigrants were acutely conscious of the native American Jews' social distance from them, and of their haughtiness and condesension. Even their vaunted charities were cold and impersonal, miscalled "scientific", vacant of sympathy and kindness. (Gartner 1974. p.45)

Similarly the arrival of the new immigrants in Newcastle caused considerable strain and concern to the established Jewish community as well as hurt and disappointment to the newcomers. Though help, support and guidance were forthcoming, the newcomers were still regarded as, and made to feel, distinctively "out of place". Consequently the Eastern European immigrants who arrived at Tyneside:

went their different ways, these people with the foreign tongues and excitable mannerism. (Dunbrow 1972. p. 1)

But Olsover (1981) is at pains to play down the internal conflicts which occurred with the arrival of the newcomers and to regard the building of a "tailor made" Synagogoue (the Beth Hamedrash)for the newly arrived immigrants' "special needs" as an expression of the existing community's benevolence and compassion for their brethren in their new homeland. He claims that:

The host community understood well the distress of the newer immigrants, for they themselves (or their parents) had undergone a similar experience when they first arrived in their new homeland. (Olsover 1981. p.36)

Yet it seems highly unlikely, in the light of their widely differing skills and education, unequal levels of religiosity and assimilation that their confrontations with their new homeland would provide them with "similar experiences" with which there could be the foundation of a frictionless and mutual understanding. Dissimilar backgrounds are not likely to provide similar experiences and strategies with which to meet new challenges.

The community which the newcomers encountered when they arrived in Newcastle at the tail-end of the nineteenth century was a well-established community whose leadership and institutions (synagogues, school, council) were all in the hands of the old elite. This elite saw themselves as the leaders of the whole community but the new immigrants maintained a social life quite withdrawn from many aspects of the established communal life as well as from that of the society at large. The elite members, were known as:

the Jesmondites and were regarded as snobs by the newer immigrants still living in the Westmorland road area, on account of their condescending attitude to the newcomers. Olsover 1980. p.45

The newcomers lived in the deprived west-end, near the river Tyne with its docks, shipping and trade. Here they maintained a life- style distinctively different from the community's other members. What the latter regarded as "medieval" and "fanatic" in the former's behaviour and requirements, were in fact the outward signs

of a life-style based on a staunch adherence to traditional Judaism as it had been expressed and preserved through centuries in Eastern Europe. Living by the rules of the **Shulchan Aruch** (3), their willingnes to comply with the society at large's requirements, was severely restricted and curbed. Specific dietary laws and strict observance of the Shabbath were, amongst others, rules which emphasized their ethnic identity.

Unlike the established German community members, many of the Eastern European Jews were pious and non-selective in their religious observances. The enrolment of the Eastern European Jews into the existing Newcastle Jewish community eventually exhibited within-group variations in religious practice. By the end of the nineteenth century the established German community members showed signs that the ritualistic elements had tended to overshadow the religious dimension of their Judaism and they had to a large extent become what Goldstein (1974) has labelled "moderate observers". They did not find it necessary to segregate themselves from the society around them in order to continue to function as Jews neither did they perceive adjusting their religious precepts to time and space as abandoning their Jewishness. Theirs was a religion where rituals, and not heart-felt faith. dominated their religious activities.

In sharp contrast to the "moderate observers", were the **Frum** (4) Jews of Eastern Europe who, with their love of G-D and whose deep commitment to an authentic Jewish life meant punctilious implementation of the 613 **Mitzvot** (commandments), had in effect excluded themselves from participation in extensive parts of modern Western life. The attitudes and aspirations of the established community to participate in that kind of life, was to some of the newcomers reminiscent of the aspirations of the **Maskilim** back home. Traditional Rabbinic Judaism left little scope for compromise or adaptation.

As this was an unlikely outcome the Eastern European Jews were faced with the choice between either retaining their ethnic identity and thus remaining a part of the lower social strata, or accepting de-ethnicization and enjoying consequent social mobility.

NOTES CHAPTER 2.4.

1.
In Judaism charity is a Mitzva, a Commandment, a religious obligation which can never be ignored. There are many forms of charity, from the **"pushke"**, a can or container for smaller amounts found often in the kitchen or on the mantlepiece in many Jewish homes, to larger amounts given directly for yeshiva or any philanthropical work. The "new" immigrants would, according to the religious obligation of charity, be given financial help and support.

2.
Shomer shabbos means that they adhere strictly to <u>all</u> the rules, Mitzvot, connected with the Sabbath. Being shomer shabbos has also become a religious yardstick, and therefore pertains to a person's degree of religiosity and commitment to the halachic laws.

3.
Shulchan Aruch (Lit. The set table) is the title of the great compendium of Halacha compiled by Rabbi Joseph Caro.

4.
Frum, a religious, observant and pious Jew.

2.1 FROM WHERE AND WHY DID THEY ARRIVE?

Since Oliver Cromwell in 1650 permitted the re-settlement of Jews in Britain, whom Edward 1st had expelled in 1290, Britain has represented a place of security and hope for thousands of Jews. Jews, from numerous corners of the world with differing historical, social, economical and not least of all, religious backgrounds (1) arrived in Britain in stages, often reflecting the level of tolerance or degree of prejudice in their previous countries of residence.

Common to the immigrants who arrived, was the hope for religious toleration and the desire to escape persecution, as it was demonstrated and represented through Eastern and Central Europe in differing forms and kinds. During the Napoleonic years the Germans and Fench freed the Jews from many of the previous restrictions which had hitherto curbed their social and economic lives. They were freed from restrictions on marriage (2), settlement, occupation and special taxes. But it was not to last. After the fall of Napoleon in 1815, and the following period of economic depression and political restrictions, aspirations and hopes for emancipation were yet again destroyed for the thousand of Jews living in Central Europe and especially in Germany. Once again restrictions were imposed, sharply limiting and curbing both their lives and opportunities. Here one need only consider the effects which the restoration of the monopoly of the Christian guilds had on the Jewish communities, in that it denied any possible escape from economic deprivation.

Whilst deprived of the opportunities to prosper in their homeland, the German Jews who arrived in Britain during the eigtheenth and nineteenth century were equipped with a German education and an in-depth knowledge of German culture. The latter allowed them to adapt and adjust themselves with relative ease to life in Britain. Mostly they were German speaking (though Yiddish was their daily language) tradesmen or independent craftsmen who generally only observed the

PAGE NUMBERING AS ORIGINAL

rudiments of Judaism and little more (Pollin 1982). Neither learned nor wealthy they demonstrated great flexibility, willingness and ability to adapt to their new cultural environment. Notwithstanding this, they wished to retain selective parts of their Jewish identity and religion , hence they sought to remain Jewish whilst finding a way of living which was compatible with the ideologies of the host country.

The majority settled in the London area , but a few ventured further afield to the provinces. These then were the type of Jews who were to be the first Jewish settlers in Newcastle. They settled down in the town centre where small scale trading was most beneficial. Being close to the river Tyne where shipping and the surrounding factories represented sources of income , the West-end gave rise to a growing Jewish community between 1830 and the first world war. These early immigrants quickly settled down and became a well functioning part of the city's life, thoroughly anglicised in manners, appearance and not least of all in aspirations. There are records to show (Roth 1950, Levy 1956, Olsover 1981) that there has been a Jewish community in Newcastle since 1830 whilst tradition has it that there were Jews in the town as far back as 1775 (Guttentag 1977). By the early 1880's there were close to a thousand Jews in Newcastle, a figure which was to be dramatically increased with the onset of the pogroms (3) in Eastern Europe.

The political, social and industrial changes which transformed Western Europe in the early first half of the nineteenth century, arrived in Eastern Europe at the second half of the century. That is when the industrial revolution slowly started to change Eastern Europe and the lives of its millions of poor people. In Russia the industrial revolution created an exploited and suffering proletariat who had by the end of the nineteenth century, supported by the landless and oppressed peasantry, started to organize themselves in such a way as to indicate that they did indeed have the makings of a revolution.

When on March the first 1881 Tsar Alexander II was assassinated the incident was used as an excuse for new anti-Jewish legislation. Although only one Jew, a woman by the name of Hesia Helfman (Baron 1976), was involved in the planning of the

assassination, rumours were spread around, that the Jews had played a leading part in this revolutionary scheme. This led to large scale and well organized anti-Jewish propaganda which in turn resulted in a series of bloody pogroms. What started off in Elizavetgrad (April 1881) as a single brutal incident soon swept through Kiev and Berdichev and in turn, through hundreds of smaller settlements. Whereas the Jews in Russia had experienced sporadic pogroms prior to the reign of AlexanderIll, the new regime established pogroms as a frequently recurring feature in the following two decades.

After his father's death, Tsar Alexander lll (1881-1894) appointed C.P. Pobedonostsev, a former professor of the university of Moscow, a lawyer and a firm believer in Russian nationality, as his personal adviser. Pobedonostsev called for the enactment of more restrictive laws against Jews. He introduced several oppresive taxes, demanded harsh terms for Jewish conscription in the Tsar's army, and saw to it that more restrictions on professions, property, land and education were imposed. Confined to living in the **Pale** (see map 3) , an area stretching from the Baltic in the north down to the Black sea in the south, meant that Jews were subject to an authority which was able to ensure persecution based on oppressive laws.

The restrictive May Laws (May, 1882) stipulating that Jews had not only to live in the Pale, they had also to live in the smaller towns and not in the larger cities or rural areas. The May Laws combined with a steady increase in the number of Jews in the area proved devastating to the community. A narrow basis of petty trades and crafts was increasingly attenuated in that the restrictive laws did not grant the Jews the opportunity to change and adapt to the changing needs of the community (Gartner 1973, 1974). Though the pattern was similar all over Eastern Europe, the strict anti-Jewish policy of the Tsarist Russian government, proved the most devastating.

The May Laws specifically stated that no new Jewish settlers would be permitted in the villages and hamlets of the Pale. In other words, Jews could no longer live

in the rural areas and were forced to live in the cities and small towns in the Pale, the **shtetl.** As a result, it is estimated (Sorin 1985) that by 1897 seventy eight percent of the Jewish population of the Russian Empire lived in urban areas. Greenberg (1965) provides some insight into the personal suffering which the restrictions of movement brought about:

If a village was burned down or a factory closed, the Jews affected had no right to seek shelter or employment in another rural community but must move to some city or town. Children were not allowed to maintain enfeebled parents or widowed mothers in their homes if they happened to have lived in another village. Nor might a son come and manage a business or industrial establishment left him by his father in another village; he could not even claim ownership of a home left him by his parents in a village outside his legal residence. (Greenberg 1965)

Given no secular education, speaking hardly any other language than Yiddish, the Jews of Eastern Europe lived isolated in the small towns and villages, the **shtetl**, far removed from the politics and ideologies which were so to change Western Europe at the time.

But by far the most severe psychological impact on the Russian Jewish population resulted from the terror of the pogroms. The psychological feeling of insecurity and helplessness which the pogroms brought to the Jewish communities played a decisive role in triggering off the mass migration from Eastern Europe in the two decades following the pogroms of the 1880's. Once again history revealed how economic and social misery increases anti- semitism (or persecution of minority groups) through peoples' need to justify and explain their own predicament. The too familiar story of utilising the hatred of the masses in blaming others for their misery, proved a success in the persecution and destruction of Jews which took place in Eastern Europe during the last two decades of the nineteenth century.

The effects of these persecutions were devastating to the East European Jewish community. Although life in that part of the diaspora had never been an easy one, the injustice of the political system and the brutality of elements of the indigenous population, brought panic and desperation to the Jewish settlements. There seemed

to be only one solution to their predicament and plight, that of flight. For the Jew there were two kinds of flight , namely that of either conversion or emigration. An indication of how serious the situation was in the area, was the dramatic increase in the numbers of converts from Judaism to Christianity after the pogroms of the 1880's. Though many Jews remained in the Pale, accepting deprivation, pogroms and hardship, the last two decades of the nineteenth century saw around a million Jews leaving the area, of which an estimated 100.000. came to Britain. To be able to fully appreciate the impact and effect which this influx from Eastern Europe had on the already existing and well established Jewish communities in Britain, it is important that we have some insight, a mental picture, of the sociocultural as well as the religious conditions which the immigrants had left behind.

NOTES CHAPTER 2.1.

1.
Jews arrived in two geographical sub-groups, each with its own religiocultural traditions; The Sephardic Jew is of Spanish or Portugese descent whilst the Askenazi Jews are of central and eastern European descent. The Ashkenazi moved from Northern France to Germanic cities along the Rhine , from where they fled from the Crusaders to Central and Eastern Europe, joining settlement of Jews who had emigrated long before, from Babylon and Palestine. Ahkenazi Jews are distinguished from Sephardic Jews in many ways. The Yiddish they speak, their style of thought, their pronunciation of Hebrew, aspects of their liturgy, many customs, food habits and ceremonials.

2.
Only the oldest son had previously been permitted to marry.

3.
Pogroms is the Russian word for "devastation". Has come to mean organized massacre (org. and esp. of Jews in Russia)

2.2. SHTETL LIFE

The Jews of Eastern Europe descended from a population whose migration was brought about by two historical convulsions. When Jews were forced into exile more than two thousand years ago, some fled directly to what we today know as Eastern Europe, via the Black sea, others settled in Italy, France and Germany. The latter were once again forced to move on when the Crusaders began their extermination of the Jews. This time they moved East to join their fellow brethren who had settled there at the exodus from their homeland. Together these Jews, the Ashkenazim, settled in small towns throughout Poland, Russia, Lithuania, Hungary and Romania. These small towns, known as **stetlekh** (4), became the stronghold of Jewish culture, rendering the Jews an opportunity to live their particular lifestyles in relative isolation and peace.

Although never free of tension, integration with the non-Jewish population was constantly sought in order for it to be kept at an amicable level in a mutual recognition of their interdependence. Most of these Shtetl were market towns where Jews and non-Jews (peasants) alike were involved in the process of providing a livelihood for themselves and their families. The Jew, prohibited from owning land lived mainly by trading and craftsmanship, he was urban and so were his products. The peasant on the other hand was the source of farming produce and recognized that the Jew provided an important economic function in an underdeveloped agricultural economy. Alternatively, representing two different aspects of the economy; customer and source of supply, they needed each other and acknowledged this interdependence by virtue of a relatively amicable relationship. In a somewhat simplistic description of the shtetl Zborowski (1952) has described the tension around the marketplace as follows:

As the economic centre of the Shtetl , the scene of buying, selling and mingling, the market place epitomizes the interdependence, the reciprocity, the ambivalence that exists between Jew and Gentile. The tension produced by their relations and mutual attitudes results in a working equilibrium which prevails until some accident upsets it. The area affected by this equilibrium is limited to the area of contact between the two groups, and each withdraws from it to lead his own separate life. (Zborowski 1952. p.67)

In order to reconstruct life in the shtetl we have to rely, in part, on historical sources which are based upon oral transmission. Particular to oral history is that it relies on the repeated recalling of individual experiences and are as such retrospective individual evaluations of significant events. The problem of evaluation is one which oral shares with written data (Carr 1987) but the former also has to consider the human memory. The problems in dealing with oral data -the issue of the human memory- have been extensively considered by Henige (1982) who argues that oral history draws on particular historical events whilst leaving out others. In other words people will transmit that which is seen to be memorable. It is upon those "memorable details" that we build much of our understanding and knowledge of the shtetl.

The shtetl was usually of a size permitting everyone to know everyone, though even the smallest ones had several hundred people, of whom not all were Jews. At the centre of the town's economic and social life was the marketplace. Here the peasants, men and women, from thousands of small farms many miles around, brought their carts and wagonloads with livestock, vegetables, grain, hides, fish, herbs and fruits, to be sold to the town dwellers, mostly Jews. At the marketplace the same peasants bought the Jews' urban products such as shoes, boots, cloth, tools, lamps, watches, combs or other imported city products. Filled with shops, booths and stands, it was a place of bustling life where bargaining, quarrels, laughter, music, animals' cries and childrens' play, created a certain tumult and energetic atmosphere.

Life in the shtetl provided for continuity in terms of traditions and values allowing for a life in accordance with halachic (5) precepts. A daily life saturated by religious

precepts, religious studies, a specific orientation towards G-D and a strong sense of community life strengthened their feeling of identity and crystallized their cultural style. In an elegant attempt at explaining how a shtetl background inspired to radicalism among American Jewish immigrants, Sorin (1985) claims that:

The linchpin holding the community together was an orientation toward G-D and otherwordly values. The ideal, so manifest in Jewish behaviour, literature, and folklore, however, was for the two "worlds" to come together eventually. Much of Jewish biblical eschatology was restorative, looking forward to a return to good, old times when the two "worlds" had been together (e.g., idealized views of the reigns of David and Solomon), but it also included the more radical, universalist style of the prophets (e.g., Isaiah 2), who expected the future not merely to be good but to be significantly different and better than ever. This was the messianic dimension that was a permanent feature, in varying degrees of intensity, of Jewish history. (Sorin 1985. p. 13)

The obligation and desire of the many pious Jews in the Shtetl to improve the world they lived in, was founded on a life style saturated by ethics, prophetic tradition and communal responsibility which was traditionally sought through Torah study. Apart from reliance on **cheder** (6), the place where young boys up till the age of their **Bar Mitzva** (7) were taught Hebrew and introduced to the Torah, fathers spent a significant amount of their restricted spare time **"learning"** (8) with their sons. The Shabbath often represented an opportunity to examine the young boys' progress and to provoke scholarly discussions. Though girls were not formally given religious education, they were introduced to Jewish values and laws through the behaviours and examples set by their pious mothers.

Far from being replicas of each other, the shtetl varied in terms of size, prosperity and social importance. The latter was, among Jews, for the most part founded on the reputation and recognition allocated to towns that had their own rabbinical academy, a **yeshiva** (9). Hundreds of boys from different towns and provinces devoted their time in these yeshivot under the supervision of eminent scholars, in **Talmudic** (10) studies. Although it was the ambition of many parents to send their sons to yeshiva (and for daughters to marry Yeshiva boys) most people in the shtetl **learned** at the local **shtibl** (11) together with their sons and other males. Nevertheless the levels of **learning** varied, creating the basis for social stratification

sharply felt in these small communities. Most Jews of the shtetl were **Amei Haaretzim** -uneducated- and what they learned in cheder, they often forgot in adulthood, having to work long hours with little time left for learning. All that remained was the ability to read the Hebrew of the Prayer Books or recite **Tehillim,** the psalms. In the Jewish tradition, religious knowledge was and is a most sought after "commodity", hence it was (is) intimately connected to prestige and status.

Apart from the yeshiva, life in the Shtetl provided the Jew with everything he needed in his life as a Jew; a **shtibl** (11) or a **synagogue** a **mikveh** (12), a **shochet** (13) and a **rabbi** to guide him in his daily life. The rabbi would be consulted on both religious and mundane questions, since the two were inseparable in the shtetl. The rabbi in turn was seen to judge, intercept, advise and guide with the absolute authority and spirit of the Torah.

In the tight-knit communities of the Shtetl communal responsibility provided members with assistance and support along with criticism and public insight. The price for group membership in a Shtetl was the loss of privacy which in turn meant that public opinion became an effective sanction, and public approval a much sought-after reward. The sense of mutuality and feeling of common origin and faith found in the shtetl has provided the Jews with a unique "togetherness" which few other ethnic groups have had at their disposal. The ever present threat of persecution welded the Jews together as much for mutual protection as for cultural unity. The close proximity in which people lived together in the shtetl, joined by their common culture and religion and vested together by their mutual distrust and fear of non-Jews, allowed for a special community bond which was to survive and continue in the face of continued persecution and consequent emigration.

NOTES CHAPTER 2.2.

4.
Shtetl is Yiddish, meaning village or small town, in particular the Jewish communities of Eastern Europe where the culture of the Ashkenazim flourished.

5.
Halachah: Generic term for the whole legal system of Judaism, embracing all its detailed laws and observances.

6.
Cheder is the elementary religious school where little boys start usually at the age of three.

7.
Bar Mitzva means "son of the Commandments". When a boy reaches the age of thirteen he becomes an adult. He is then duty bound to observe all the Mitzvot (Commandments) as an adult.

8.
Learning is an Anglicized term fot the Yiddish verb of **lernen** refering to the time spent in religious studies.

9.
Yeshiva (plur. yeshivot): Hebrew, from the verb to **yeshov** =to sit. In general it refers to a rabbinical college or seminary.

10.
Talmud is a massive and monumental compendium of sixty three tractates embracing everything from theology to contracts, cosmology to cosmetics, jurisprudence to etiquette, criminal law to diet, delusions, and drinking. It is resevoir of rabbinical thought on every then-known subject.The first division of the of the Talmud is the **Mishnah** which is the work of the Rabbis known as Tannaim and is the earliest codification of the Oral Torah (as opposed to the written Torah = Pentateuch) taught by G-D to Moses on Mt. Sinai and handed down through the generations until commited to writingby Rabbi Judah the Prince (c.130-220) who was its final redactor.The second division of the Talmud is the Gemara and is the record of the minute working through by the Amoraim (post Mishnac Rabbis) of the rulings of the Mishnah and also showing by means of hermeneutical rules, theirrelevance and connection with the laws of the Pentateuch and Scriptures. Also contains large sections of Aggada = homiletical and ethical material etc.

11.
Shtible: Yiddish for a small house or room where men meet to pray and engage in religious studies or discussions.

12.
Mikveh: a ritual bath.

13.
Shochet: an authorized slaughterer of animals, according to Halachic requirements.

2.3. SIGNS OF HETEROGENEITY IN THE PALE

Though there can be little doubt that life in the Shtetlekh, often dominated as it was by poverty, deprivation and insecurity, drew people together through the strong notion of sharing a common plight, it is necessary to point out that there was also scope for religious, philosophical and political differences within Eastern European Jewry. No sociocultural study or concern with an orthodox Jewish community is complete without taking into account these aspects of orthodoxy as they explain and allow for variations in religiocultural traditions and behaviours. There arose in Eastern Europe movements which have had an impact on the content and form of the Jewish communities of America and Western Europe, caused by the arrival of thousands of East European emmigrants there at the turn of the century. Four of these many movements; the **Hassidic, Mitnaged, Haskalah** and **Mussar** will here be presented to the reader, all of which have had an direct or indirect impact on the development and current state of Gateshead's Jewish community. Less pronounced and definitely more subdued, these variations within orthodoxy remain today, and not only as a matter of kind but also one of degree.

Eigthteenth century Rabbinic Judaism in Eastern Europe was based on the doctrine that the Torah was the sole source of religious authority. Studying, or learning the Torah was (is) not only a **Mitzva** (14), but also the primary way of achieving closeness to G-D. It has been claimed that scholarship in itself was a cult (Zborowski 1955) and certainly in eighteenth century's Eastern Europe Jewish world there was a ritualistic concern with scholarship. Regardless of the fact that many Jews set aside time for religious study, thus fulfilling the divinely decreed obligation to learn, only a minority reached the higher levels of knowledge. For the majority of East European Jews , educated only in the basics of Torah learning, the possibility of attaining high levels of spirituality through study remained an

unrealistic utopia. Forming the most important basis for social stratification, learning was regarded as a commodity in itself, but few had the economic resources permitting them to set practical work aside and devote themselves fully to Torah study. Instead, the majority of men engaged in the struggle of making a living for themselves and their families were only able to set aside a restricted time to the religious obligation to study.

The "learned", on the other hand, although not indifferent to the suffering of their fellow Jews, were immersed in Talmudic studies and unable to offer hope to the impoverished and oppressed masses. Rabbinic Judaism in its existing form created an ever widening gap which seperated two segments of the same people, the learned and unlearned, unequal in proportion and different in kind. It was a revolt against this "aristocracy" and their autocracy which brought on the reaction which was to completely change the character of orthodoxy in Eastern Europe.

As so often in Judaism we must turn to the often charismatic representative spiritual leaders if we are to gain an understanding or appreciation of the impact and consequences brought about by the differing movements and cults which arose in the eighteenth and nineteenth century Eastern European Jewish orthodoxy. The moral standards and quality of piousness which these movements called for were as a rule epitomized in the behaviours and personalities of their leaders. Two men emerged at this point in Jewish history who were to have a profound influence on its future development both within and outside of Eastern Europe. Both men were deeply religious and charismatic in character, and both men inspired others to follow their teachings. One emphasized the emotions, the other the intellect in man's religiosity and approach to G-D.

The first of the two, Israel Baal Shem Tov (1700-1760) (Amos 1970), was to become the founder of the **Hassidic** movement (15) thus bringing new hope and comfort to thousands of Jews first in Poland and the Ukrain and later spreading among Jews all over the Pale. Not only did the Jews of Eastern Europe feel that they had been "abandoned" by their own spiritual leaders, they also had to carry

the heavy burden of political disabilities, social inequality and severe economic restrictions which in turn affected Jewish institutions and leadership (Katz 1971). In an attempt to describe what he regards as an antithesis between **Baal Shem Tov** and the other important **Hassidic** leaders, the **Rebbe (18) of Kotzk** (16), Heschel (1973) describes the conditions in Eastern Europe in this descriptive and metaphorical manner:

> **in Eastern Europe the community of Israel was on its sickbed, full of sorrow and, following the weird end of the Sabbatian excitement, consumed with anguish. Oppressed and presecuted, the people were fainting, gasping, trembling. They nearly expired. When a person is having a fit and is in danger of wasting away, it is advisable to whisper his name into his ear, because his name has the power to call a person back to life. The Baal Shem saw that the Jewish heart was faint, torpid, in danger of laying down its life. So he called it by name; Jewish heart. And the Jews of Eastern Europe rallied, seing the light of the Messiah shining overhead.** (Heschel 1973.)

The metaphor of "illness" is here used to describe the state of the Jewish masses to whose spiritual condition the learned elite were largely indifferent, and who, the **Hassidim** believed could not aspire to reach those high standards. It might be claimed that the **Hassidic** movement, to whom religion, enthusiasm and devotion took precedence, was a revolt against the learned, the intellectuals.

The "remedy" or change arrived with **Israel Ben Eliezer** (1700- 1760). Born in the small shtetl of Okop in the province of Podolia (map 3), orphaned at an early age, greatly attracted to nature life and meditation, he first earned his living as a digger of lime which his wife sold in the town's (shtetl) market place. At the age of thirty six he revealed himself as a miraculous curer and became known as the **Baal Shem Tov** (Master of the Good (holy) Name). He believed that G-D dwells in all living things and that Holiness is within everything and that each person can attain spiritual heights and closeness to G-D through prayer and contemplation, and by joy and ecstasy. Never disregarding the crucial importance of the Torah and halachah he claimed that G-D could be sought everywhere and that people could, through simple but sincerely offered prayers, approach Him. He wished to make joyousness a religious principle and conforted his listeners with an optimistic faith in the

benevolence and forgiveness of G-D.

The intention of Baal Shem Tov was to prevent Jewish piety from hardening into mere routine where religious rituals had become exercises in repetition. He wished to awaken a zest for spiritual living **-hitlahavut-** or "being aflame", which refers to a state of spiritual exaltation. The idea of serving G-D through rejoicing and gladness had a profound effect on Jewish life in Eastern Europe. It revitalized and raised the self-esteem of the people by proclaiming that the unlearned were equals of the learned in the eyes of G-D. The result of the **Hassidic** teaching was a new style of living. Not only did the Baal Shem Tov call for the carrying out of G-D's commandments, he called for obedience given with passion, love and spontaneity. Thus, the **Hassidim** clapped their hands, danced, feasted, swayed their bodies at both prayer and in gatherings. They sang in the synagogues and homes to welcome the Shabbath and attatched great importance to emotional and spiritual aspects of Judaism.

The spirit of the **Hassidim** swept across both Eastern and Western Europe where they established themselves in hassidic groups, each organized by a **Tzadik** (17) or **Rebbe** (18). The Tzadikim (plural) were regarded as being endowed with holy qualities, supernatural powers and there flourished numerous tales and stories which told of the love and kindness they showed the down- trodden, sinners and social outcasts. Many of the tzadikim were charismatic men with deep humaneness. **Hassidism** eventually furnished its leaders with perceived supernatural powers that enabled them to serve as intermediaries between people and G-D Whom the hassidim believed to be most accessible via a Rebbe or Tzadik. In effect what arose was a kind of "saint worship" attatching great importance to the individual Tzadik's personality. With time, this type of "worship" formed the basis for a dynastic system in which the Tzadik's saintly position and authority was passed on to his son. To the traditional Rabbinic Judaism, the next-to deification of the Tzadikim was quite incompatible with a religious outlook in which G-D, and not a person, must at all times represent the point of focus. Localizing itself "within" orthodoxy, whilst propogating a diametrically different style of religious practice and

approach than previously practised, **Hassidism** was regarded by the Rabbinical authorities as a great menace and a very real threat to Judaism.

That the **Hassidic** movement was seen by the traditional Rabbinical authorities as posing a great threat to Judaism was displayed in the bitterness and vehemence with which the **Mitnagdim** (19) attacked the **Hassidim.** Among the traditionalists who ardently opposed the **Hassidim** was **Elijah ben Solomon** (BenSasson 1966), known universally as the **Vilna Gaon.** Born in Selets in Lithuania in 1720, he is said to have mastered the Bible at the tender age of six and most of the **Talmud** by the time of his **Bar Mitzva.** During long periods of living in seclusion and dire poverty, shut up behind closed windows and doors and engaged in solitary study of the Torah, he developed a particular philosophy and approach to learning and life in general. He was a man of great compassion and forbearance, with a deep understanding of human nature and a tender regard for peoples' feelings. The many stories about his life and activities tell us of a man who would endure a great many sacrifices in order that he might assist and comfort his fellow men.

A brilliant intellect, he studied maths, geometry, translated several books into Hebrew having himself written close to seventy books and treatises on various topics. His, at the time, unusual interest in secular subjects stemmed from his firm belief that all knowledge was holy and consequently an aid for reaching a deeper understanding of the Torah. He sought to revitalize the importance and position of the Torah in the lives of people. He believed that bringing learning to new heights, by dignifying learning itself and by inspiring the people to devote themselves to study, not only a select few but all men, would add a dimension of value in their lives.

The Vilna Gaon declared that everything past, present and future could be found in the Torah, therefore every man was obliged to study and research the Torah continously and with eagerness. The Torah could neither be changed nor diluted, it represented the original and eternal truth as presented by G-D to His people.

For centuries the yeshivot had in the exegesis of the Talmud, relied on the method of finding novel interpretations and the consequent rejection of other and contradicting views. As a result there were much competition and accusations of casuistry between the many yeshivot. It was this tradition of **pilpul** (dialectics), the excessive attention of finding and creating web-like and complicated interpretations of the Talmud which the Gaon sharply opposed. He insisted that **pilpul** complicated and obscured the true meaning of the Torah and the Talmud and that they should be explained according to the straightforward meanings inherent in the texts **-pshat-**, and that this could only be revealed by thorough examination of these texts and not through subtle casuistry. His specific approach to learning, his great commentary on the **Shulchan Aruch** and his many emendations of the texts of the Talmud became widely accepted and earned him much respect and several loyal disciples who in time came to dominate the yeshivot of Lithuania. The Gaon also insisted on and demonstrated faithful adherence to the Talmudic precept **Torah Lishmo**, that is to learn Torah for its own sake, and that the actual activity of study was not only intended as simply the acquisition of knowledge but as having a higher spiritual purpose. In other words the mitzvah **-Limud ha Torah lishmo-** was intended to dignify learning and to exhort and attract people to a heart-felt desire for continous study.

Although his life was devoted to study and writing, the impact which the **Hassidic** movement had on the Jewish communities, convinced the Vilna Gaon that it represented a threat to Judaism which could not be left unchallenged. Deemphasising religious study and endowing the Rebbe with holiness were blasphemous provocations to him. The ensuing battle of the **Mitnagdim** against the **Hassidim**, in which the Vilna Gaon played a crucial role, was one which literally split the Eastern Europea Jewish community into two camps. From the outset **Hassidism** had its stronghold in Poland and the Ukraine, whilst Lithuania was the original homeland of the **Mitnagdim.** But with time the two spread all over Eastern Europe. The feud, which twice drove the Vilna Gaon to excommunicate the **Hassidim** from the Jewish community in Vilna and to publicly burn their "heretical" books, raged for close to half a century and did not subside

until the beginning of the nineteenth century with the arrival of a mutual enemy - **Haskala** (20) - on the Jewish "scene".

The ideas of the Enlightenment in the eighteenth century, provided the disfranchised Jews with the hope of legal equality. Emanating from France, its ideas strongly appealed to, and firstly reached the Jewish communities of neighbouring Prussia. Here it was pre-eminently available to the wealthy Germanized Jews who had established numerous contacts with non- Jews in both Germany and France. Berlin, the industrial and progressive centre of Prussia, provided the meeting ground and opportunity for Jews to gain insight and knowledge of the ideas of the French Enlightenment, whose ideas called for all men to be treated as equals. The assumption that guided by reason, with education and escape from the bonds of ignorance all men, regardless of background, would become good citizens held hitherto unknown possibilities and hopes for the Jews. The idea that reason, not dogmatic religion or superstition should guide the institutions which regulate society had a special appeal to those Jews whose aspirations were out of tune with their severely curbed legal position. In other words, in their desire to acquire legal and political emancipation many Jews of the Prussian economic elite were quite willing and eager to turn against their faith and traditions.

The German-Jewish philosopher **Moses Mendelsson** (1729-1786), regarded as the originator of the **Haskalah** (known as the Berliner Haskalah) and father of the later **Reform** (21) movement, sought in the true spirit of the Enlightenment to raise the educational level of the Jews. According to Mendelsson's ideas, Jews were not only to be taught the Pentateuch and Talmud (the traditional subjects of the **cheder**) but should also achieve competence in German, French, modern Hebrew and other general secular subjects. Existing Jewish laws and customs had to be brought up to date. The **Maskilim** (22) attempted to build a bridge between the strict traditionalists and those who believed that assimilation was the only hope for the Jewish people. They talked about Jews as a nation, a notion which in due time developed into Zionism. It was a program which gained many enthusiastic

adherents among progressive German, Polish and Russian Jews, in that it offered modernization of Jewish education as a means of achieving civic rights and social equality. Though one might argue that East European **Haskalah** would have occured independently of the Prussian Enligtenment, the two were intrinsically connected and developed through commercial and cultural interplay. Coming into full force in Eastern Europe about fifty years later than in Germany (about the beginning of the nineteenth century), its ideas were often brought to the former via Galician scholars and merchants. Galicia (map 4), for a time a province of Austro-Hungary and now a province of southern Poland, was the bridge to Eastern Europe for Western European intellectual Jews as well as those involved in trade. Due to its proximity **Haskalah** first spread from Prussia to Galicia and from there to Russia and Poland. This often occurred in the form of travelling Galician intellectuals who accepted work as teachers in Jewish schools in the Southwestern part of Russia. Schools established and headed by Galician intellectuals in the area at the beginning of the century, such as Uman, Odessa and Vilna, demonstrate the attempts of the Galician **Maskilim** to make an impact in this part of the Pale.

Though their efforts did not bring about the interest, optimism nor the euphoria among Russian and Polish Jewry that it had stirred up in Prussia, orthodox leaders regarded **Haskalah** as a very real and powerful threat. They were convinced that if left unchallenged the **Haskala** could threaten the entire concept of what had hitherto been regarded as Judaism. The **Maskilim's** advocacy of familiarization with secular education and culture and for severing their ties with and freeing themselves from the "burden" of the traditional Jewish patterns of thinking and rigid patterns of behaviour was perceived, by both **Hassidim** and **Mitnagdim**, as a threat to the faith as a whole. Well aware of the effects and consequences, that is the many apostasies that Haskalah had brought to Jewry in Western Europe and which were now threatening the East, both sides recognized the need to diminish their internal fight and to jointly do battle against the **Haskalah.**

The aim and ideas of the **Haskalah** movement was to create a new kind of Jew, a middle-class person, well versed in secular education and culture. Remaining,

faithful to parts of his religion such a Jew had simultaneously to be acquainted with and be adjusted to the political and social world around him/her, and to accept the reality of a modern Europe. In fact it was a type of Jewish person for whom there was at that particular historical time and area, little social scope or tolerance. In the Pale there was no general desire to participate in the surrounding non-Jewish world. Accustomed to living in a secluded sociocultural world of their own, keeping inter-group interactions at a minimum, Jews of Russia and Poland had never been mentally, culturally or linguistically prepared for any unnecessary contact with the world outside the ghetto-like life of the shtetl.

The literary medium of Yiddish speaking **Maskilim** was Hebrew, a language with which the Jews of Eastern Europe were in general unacquainted. Thus, much of the writings of the **Maskilim** (Mordecai Aaron Gunzburg 1795-1846, Abraham Dob Lebenson 1794- 1878, Isaac Baer Levinson 1788-1860.) were an important influence and aspiration but to a few intellectuals. Far from being illiterate, most Jews in the Pale, women as well as men could read and were quite familiar with Jewish codes of values written in their native tongue of Yiddish, and most men were given training, if only the basic, in the Pentateuch and Talmud. Living restricted lives both socially and economically, there was little or no attraction to secular subjects since there seemed little hope or even little desire to participate in the world of the society at large. Contrary to the wishes of the **Maskilim**, their movement was frequently regarded, encouraged by the rabbinate, as an attempt to undermine the Jewish faith. Enhanced by decades of resistance towards change and innovation, Eastern European rejection of **Haskalah** was founded on the deep conviction that it would eventually lead to atheism.

One of **Haskalah**'s major centres in Eastern Europe was in Vilna in Lithuania. Lithuania was also where, around the mid nineteenth century the longstanding tradition in Judaism of **Mussar** was revitalized and took on the significance of a movement. To some extent, the movement can be regarded as a reaction towards the obvious threats of **Haskalah.** In any case it was a movement whose long-term legacy was to remain intrinsically connected to the Lithuanian Yeshivot. The main

force behind this movement, Rabbi Israel Lipkin (1810-1883) universally known as **Reb Yisroel Salanter** (Mene 1973) since his place of residence for over a decade was Salant in the province of Kovno (map.3), devoted his attention to, in his opinion, the much neglected ethical aspects of Judaism. Reb Yisroel Salanter had been a student under the saintly Rabbi Yosef Zundel (Bacon 1987) (fig. 1) who claimed that successful combat of one's evil inclinations demanded more than just theoretical knowledge of the Talmudic laws (fig.1). He introduced the idea that repetition of Talmudic statements on ethical issues would induce the proper mood for soul-searching and consequent self-improvement. Zundel only pressed these thoughts upon a select few, his disciples, and it was Reb Yisroel Salanter who was to bring them, in an organized framework, to the Jews at large (fig.2-3).

Reb Yisroel Salanter held that the study of Torah, incumbent on every Jew, should also include ethical works. The latter should be studied on an intensive daily basis. Basic to the **Mussar** philosophy is the conviction that through intensive daily study of moralistic works, their sombre repetition, meditation and self-criticism, man can retrain as well as restrain his emotions and that in time the shunning of the evil inclination will become ingrained in men's behaviours and lives. In other words, the studying and repetitions of Talmudic statements on ethical issues would help man to recognize and combat his evil inclination (Yetzer Hora). The overall goal of the **Mussar** movement was through self-improvement to turn peoples' lives to the service of G-D and service to one's fellow men. As man is created in the image of G-D, and as G-D is merciful, so must man be. Salanter claimed that **Mussar**, with its stress upon ethical knowledge and behaviours which would provide man with a spiritual uplifting in his relation with G-D, was a process which did not end until man left this world.

Reb Yisroel Salanter's own life reflected his deep dedication to the service of his fellow men. There are endless stories still told today of his selflessness and feeling of responsibility for the unfortunate and suffering, how he in every way possible showed consideration, compassion, tolerance and respect for people around him. He was (and still is) regarded as the living proof that constant preoccupation with

ethical Talmudic knowledge combined with introspection could not only assist man in his battle against his passions and drives, it could in time create a perfect ethical life where anything contrary to this way of living would seem loathsome to that person.

Bacon (1987) argues that although Reb Yisroel Salanter intended the **Mussar** movement to serve as a device with which to battle against the **Haskalah,** his stress on ethical behaviours indicate that he in many ways shared the **Maskilim's** criticism of the social conditions of Jewish society at the time. But rather than turning to secular education (Enlightenment) for solutions to these ailments, Reb Yisroel Salanter postulated that a revival of Talmudic ethics would improve standards of social relations and the imbalances in Jewish society. Although Reb Yisroel Salanter attempted to establish **Mussar** as a mass movement it eventually became clear that in spite of his personal prestige he could not instigate the wider social response which he had aimed at. Establishing **Mussar Stiblech** (Moral gathering places) in a few shtetlekh in Lithuania, Reb Yisroel Salanter's ideas became predominantly available to a somewhat exclusive group. His disciples would gather in these **Mussar Stiblech** to recite passages from the Torah, meditate upon sin and the consequent punishment, upon man's encounter with the Heavenly Judge and seek self-discipline and self-denial as a course for self- improvment and of serving one's fellow men.

Eventually his teaching spread to the yeshivot of Lithuaunia whose students he found to be receptive to his ideas. In effect, by concentrating on the yeshivot in Lithuania, Reb Yisroel Salanter's ideas appealed to, unlike the mass movement of **Hassidim,** a rather small number of people. Attracting its opposition and criticism in rabbinical circles, though it never challenged the Lithuanian centrality of Talmudic studies, it was seen by some as to set **Mussar** above Torah, whilst others regarded it as holding the potentials of sectarianism. Nevertheless the movement prevailed and in spite of resistance from more traditional yeshiva leaders, **Mussar** eventually became a separate yeshiva topic of study in several Lithuanian yeshivot. Almost all the Lithuanian styled yeshivot featured daily **Mussar** studies

and provided the **Mashgiach**, the supervisor of the yeshiva, with a central role within the institution (Helmreich 1982).

Weekly, the **Mashgiach** would deliver a **Mussar schmuess** (Mussar talk) which focused upon specific incidents of daily life and show how a particular law or value from the Talmud provided guidance for behaviour in these mundane situations. Apart from **schmuessen** the yeshivot would expose their students, in groups, to daily **Mussar** in the form of Talmudic study or other ethical works as well as discussions dealing with reward and punishment, human inclinations and life after death.

In 1857 Rabbi Yisroel Salanter moved to Germany in an attempt to spread **Mussar** in Western Europe and while he was there, he kept in continuous contact with his disciples in Lithuania. His many letters were later collected to constitute the basic formulation of the **Mussar** philosophy. The successors of Reb Yisroel Salanter, mostly his disciples, ensured that **Mussar** became and continued to be an essential feature in the curriculum of Lithuanian yeshivot.

Notes Chapter 2.3.

14.
Mitzva (plural: Mitzvot) has two meanings: 1) Divine Commandment, 2) A meritious act, one that expresses G-D's will; a good work, a truly virtuous, kind considerate and ethical deed.

15.
Hassidim are the followers of the Chasidic philosophy and way of life.

16.
The Kotzker Rebbe was a hassidic rebbe in Poland (1787-1859).

17.
Tzadik, 1) a most righteous or saintly man. 2) a holy man of surpassing virtue (and possibly supernatural powers).

18.
Rebbe, when used among the Hassidim this means their leader. Though well-grounded in Jewish learning, he does not necessary have a formal ordination from a seminary or yeshiva, but has either assumed the role of leader through inheritance from his father or because of his personal qualities.

19.
Mitnagdim, is the name of those who were opposed to the Hassidic movement.

20.
Haskalah is the name of the Enligtenment in Hebrew.

21.
In Reform Judaism specific adjustments have been made which claim to make Judaism better adapted to this time and age. Specific rituals and laws, such as Sabbath observation and Kashrut, have been abrogated, and new elements (like organ playing and the mixing of men and women in the synagogue) have been introduced.

22.
The followers of the Haskalah movement called themselves the "enlightened" ones, or the Maskilim.

2.4. NEWCASTLE: A SOLID, STABLE AND PROFOUNDLY ANGLICISED COMMUNITY

Previous chapters have provided an insight into the restricted and difficult conditions which incited many Jews to leave Eastern Europe at the end of the the nineteenth century as well as pointing to the complexity of their particular religiocultural heritage. An understanding of the latter is indeed essential if we are to appreciate how it was that Gateshead came to be a community which attracts predominantly orthodox Jews who are dedicated to **Mussar,** as well as being an international and important centre for rabbinical studies.

The historical background of this remarkable community would be incomplete without paying some attention to the nearby city of Newcastle, the place where it all started. By the middle of the nineteenth century, the Jewish community of Newcastle was a well established unit whose economic status had continued to improve. Though the majority of Newcastle's Jewish population were members of the lower strata, the German immigrants that arrived during the eighteenth century had, with their German education and cultural knowledge, shown an unprecedented rate of social mobility between generations. By the end of the century an increasing number of Jews , mostly children of the German immigrants who had moved into wholesale and manufacturing thus making "the climb" into the middle-class, had started to leave the west-end. They had moved into the more prosperous area of Jesmond. By the beginning of the twentieth century about a hundred families (Olsover 1981) had settled in Jesmond creating the need for a Synagogue in that area.

Like other provincial communities, such as those of Leeds, Manchester, Hull and many more, Newcastle hosted the development of an anglicised middle-class Jewish community who struggled for social acceptance and political freedom. Undeniably, the ensuing community did not represent a homogenous group in terms of

socio/economic conditions. There were on the one side the settled community, the shopkeepers, oversea importers and share brokers, the providers of essential goods and services to the English middle classes. On the other hand there were the factory workers, tailors, slippermakers, glaziers and peddlers. Common to the majority of the community's members was the belief in the necessity to emphasize English ideals like the social sophistication, education and stability of the hosting English society. The inculcation of and adaptation to English ideals and aspirations had its price. It called for a slackening in religious observance and numerous religiocultural compromises.

To some of these early Jewish arrivals in Newcastle, the English milieu was so fully satisfying that they more or less abandoned the ways of their traditional Judaism (Borowitz 1973). The extent of this trend and the effects which it had on religious practices, had limited social significance until the arrival of the pious East European Jews in the second half of the century. This tendency towards diminished importance of the religious aspects of Judaism was not restricted to German Jews of Britain but was also to be found, as Gartner (1974) points out, in America:

> **The essence of Judaism was only moral and ethical, while the externals of traditional way of life were classified among changeable outwards observances and consequently abandoned. Yet persons who did not practice or believe in any Jewish religious principles were still regarded as Jews. The ethnic basis of Judaism remained alive among the German Jews, but subdued, until vigorously thrust forward by the new arrivals from Easter Europe.**(Gartner 1974.p. 41)

The Jews of Newcastle, like so many other communities in Britain, showed no pleasure at the arrival of the Eastern European immigrants (Freedman, 1955, Brotz 1955, Gartner 1974, Williams 1985). The resentment of the "old" immigrants towards their Eastern European brethren was due both to the economic burden which the new immigrants imposed (1) but also the undesirable "image" which they presented to the non-Jews. To many Jews in Britain, by now a minority group whose aspiration it was to achieve social and political emancipation , the arrival of the Yiddish speaking Jews with their "foreign" manners their obvious poverty, "medieval" attitudes, distinctive dress and religious requirements, represented an

acute embarrassment. It was feared that they would damage the acquired "good name" of the community.

The newcomers, arriving from Eastern Europe, were perceived as a threat not only to the community's internal organization but also to its relationship with the general society. The new arrivals came to occupy a sub-group both in terms of economic and ethnic stratification, The German Jews did not want to be identified with "the strange ways" of the newcomers, neither in terms of class nor ethnicity. By the time of the great influx of the Easterners, the former were to a great extent aspiring to be middle-class and less concerned with outward signs of ethnicity. The newcomers on the other hand were mostly very poor, strict in their observance (many were **shomer shabbos** (2)) as well as extremely "visible" in their ethnicity. In terms of economic stratification the newcomers occupied the lower strata, but did not, apart from material deprivation, have much in common with the German Jews in the same situation and did, as it were, come to hold a position below that of the established "working class" Jew. In other words they occupied an entirely separate and distinct sub-group (Poll 1975, Steinberg 1981) position within the larger ethnic group.

The Jews of Newcastle were in no way unique in their reception of their Eastern European brethren (Freedman 1955, Levy 1956, Gartner 1974, Williams 1985, Kokosalakis 1982, Brooks 1989), for it was a reaction which, at the time, also dominated the Jewish scene in America (Gartner 1974). Hannerz (1974), who has analysed how minority groups in America have been able to put ethnic strategies to successful use as a means of modifying or avoiding the dominance of the society at large, also discusses the relationship between social mobility and ethnic identity. Hannertz explains how the nineteenth century American Jewish community, as in Britain, was:

largely of German origin and in rather comfortable citcumstances. From then on, however, the Jewish immigrants were overwhelmingly Eastern European, and these soon outnumbered the German Jews. They were of a very different cultural background, much more concerned with their ethnic identity as they came from areas where there was little assimilation and where they had been subjected to

persecution, and among them were represented forms of orthodoxy, Zionism and political radicalism which were foreign to the German Jews. To this, then, was added lower class-status. In this situation there was a strong negative element in the reaction of the German Jews to the newcomers. As other Americans worried about the immigrants changing the character of the American society, the established Jewish community , with equally limited sympathy for the ways of the Eastern Europeans, feared that the latter might arouse anti- Semitism. (Hannertz 1974.p. 65)

In an enlightening presentation, Gartner (1974) discusses the problems which the formation of American Jewry faced with the arrival of the Eastern European immigrants. His point is that the amalgamation of the two different influxes created a situation where conflict existed side by side with cohesion. Regardless of whatever the established community thought of the newcomers, they were still duty bound, by religious/traditional obligations, to take responsibility for the newcomers. Hence conflict and cohesion could co-exist, albeit with considerable tension, within the same group. It would seem reasonable to expect that the newcomers were aware that they were an undesirable and troublesome burden to the established community and consequently resented the ambivalent attitudes of the well- established German Jews. That the notions of ethnic solidarity became, under these conditions, more tenuous is what Gartner (ibid) highlights when he claims that:

The immigrants were acutely conscious of the native American Jews' social distance from them, and of their haughtiness and condesension. Even their vaunted charities were cold and impersonal, miscalled "scientific", vacant of sympathy and kindness. (Gartner 1974. p.45)

Similarly the arrival of the new immigrants in Newcastle caused considerable strain and concern to the established Jewish community as well as hurt and disappointment to the newcomers. Though help, support and guidance were forthcoming, the newcomers were still regarded as, and made to feel, distinctively "out of place". Consequently the Eastern European immigrants who arrived at Tyneside:

went their different ways, these people with the foreign tongues and excitable mannerism. (Dunbrow 1972. p. 1)

But Olsover (1981) is at pains to play down the internal conflicts which occurred with the arrival of the newcomers and to regard the building of a "tailor made" Synagogoue (the Beth Hamedrash)for the newly arrived immigrants' "special needs" as an expression of the existing community's benevolence and compassion for their brethren in their new homeland. He claims that:

The host community understood well the distress of the newer immigrants, for they themselves (or their parents) had undergone a similar experience when they first arrived in their new homeland. (Olsover 1981. p.36)

Yet it seems highly unlikely, in the light of their widely differing skills and education, unequal levels of religiosity and assimilation that their confrontations with their new homeland would provide them with "similar experiences" with which there could be the foundation of a frictionless and mutual understanding. Dissimilar backgrounds are not likely to provide similar experiences and strategies with which to meet new challenges.

The community which the newcomers encountered when they arrived in Newcastle at the tail-end of the nineteenth century was a well-established community whose leadership and institutions (synagogues, school, council) were all in the hands of the old elite. This elite saw themselves as the leaders of the whole community but the new immigrants maintained a social life quite withdrawn from many aspects of the established communal life as well as from that of the society at large. The elite members, were known as:

the Jesmondites and were regarded as snobs by the newer immigrants still living in the Westmorland road area, on account of their condescending attitude to the newcomers. Olsover 1980. p.45

The newcomers lived in the deprived west-end, near the river Tyne with its docks, shipping and trade. Here they maintained a life- style distinctively different from the community's other members. What the latter regarded as "medieval" and "fanatic" in the former's behaviour and requirements, were in fact the outward signs

of a life-style based on a staunch adherence to traditional Judaism as it had been expressed and preserved through centuries in Eastern Europe. Living by the rules of the **Shulchan Aruch** (3), their willingnes to comply with the society at large's requirements, was severely restricted and curbed. Specific dietary laws and strict observance of the Shabbath were, amongst others, rules which emphasized their ethnic identity.

Unlike the established German community members, many of the Eastern European Jews were pious and non-selective in their religious observances. The enrolment of the Eastern European Jews into the existing Newcastle Jewish community eventually exhibited within-group variations in religious practice. By the end of the nineteenth century the established German community members showed signs that the ritualistic elements had tended to overshadow the religious dimension of their Judaism and they had to a large extent become what Goldstein (1974) has labelled "moderate observers". They did not find it necessary to segregate themselves from the society around them in order to continue to function as Jews neither did they perceive adjusting their religious precepts to time and space as abandoning their Jewishness. Theirs was a religion where rituals, and not heart-felt faith, dominated their religious activities.

In sharp contrast to the "moderate observers", were the **Frum** (4) Jews of Eastern Europe who, with their love of G-D and whose deep commitment to an authentic Jewish life meant punctilious implementation of the 613 **Mitzvot** (commandments), had in effect excluded themselves from participation in extensive parts of modern Western life. The attitudes and aspirations of the established community to participate in that kind of life, was to some of the newcomers reminiscent of the aspirations of the **Maskilim** back home. Traditional Rabbinic Judaism left little scope for compromise or adaptation.

As this was an unlikely outcome the Eastern European Jews were faced with the choice between either retaining their ethnic identity and thus remaining a part of the lower social strata, or accepting de-ethnicization and enjoying consequent social mobility.

NOTES CHAPTER 2.4.

1.
In Judaism charity is a Mitzva, a Commandment, a religious obligation which can never be ignored. There are many forms of charity, from the **"pushke"**, a can or container for smaller amounts found often in the kitchen or on the mantlepiece in many Jewish homes, to larger amounts given directly for yeshiva or any philanthropical work. The "new" immigrants would, according to the religious obligation of charity, be given financial help and support.

2.
Shomer shabbos means that they adhere strictly to <u>all</u> the rules, Mitzvot, connected with the Sabbath. Being shomer shabbos has also become a religious yardstick, and therefore pertains to a person's degree of religiosity and commitment to the halachic laws.

3.
Shulchan Aruch (Lit. The set table) is the title of the great compendium of Halacha compiled by Rabbi Joseph Caro.

4.
Frum, a religious, observant and pious Jew.

2.5 THE SPLIT OF A COMMUNITY

The passionate Judaism and level of piety of some of the Eastern European Jews proved to be a source of continuous religio- cultural conflict within the community. Neither impressed nor pleased with the standard of religious observance in the established Newcastle community, the newcomers often sought to separate themselves from the existing Anglicised community. The co-existence of two separate sub-groups within the same community in Newcastle could not aspire to cohesion and harmony, but the events that led to the formation of an entirely separate and new community in Gateshead were not as abrupt or sudden as the present local version might indicate. This local version which coincides with that Donbrow's (1972) version, promotes the religio/ideological aspects which led to the "split" and consequent rise of a Jewish community in Gateshead. It is a version which must be regarded, like many other historical interpretation, as having moral implications since peoples' morals and values underpin the selection of facts, causes, and interpretation of causes. But this version still has, I believe, importance in that it highlights the heterogeneous conditions, in terms of degrees and importance of religious observance, prevalent in the Newcastle community at the time. In other words, it is an historical event which is explained in terms of specific and selective historical "facts", whilst choosing to discriminate or ignore others. The concern that the process of selecting and organising historical "facts" will influence the historical interpretation is also expressed by Carr (1987) when he claims that:

> **relation of the historian to his causes has the same dual reciprocal character as the relation of the historian to his facts. The causes determine his interpretation of the historical process, and his interpretation determines his selection and marshalling of the causes. The hierarchy of causes, the relative significance of one cause or one set of causes or of another, is the essence of his interpretation.**
> (Carr, 1987:103)

I would argue that the tendency of gathering "facts" "selectively" has ethnographic value in that it provides the ethnographer with the added opportunity (1) of gaining insight into cultural values and social concerns. Bearing this in mind, Donbrow's (1972) interpretation of how and why Gateshead's Jewish community developed,

based upon a combination of "selective" facts, are here accepted as a means of highlighting in-group religious heterogeneity. As objective as any other interpretation of the historical events leading to the formation of the Gateshead community, hers is one which seems to coincide with the explanation provided by both of today's Gateshead and Newcastle Jewish communities:

The turning point of this story occurred through an unfortunate, or perhaps fortunate, incident figuring a sheep's head in the Newcastle butcher's market. Orthodox Jews may eat only kosher meat that has been slaughtered in a special way. Before it leaves the butcher's counter it has to undergo a process called "treberring" by which all the veins and certain parts regarded as "tref" (impure) are extracted. There was no Jewish butcher in Newcastle in those days but kosher meat was served by a non- Jewish butcher under the constant supervision of a "shomer" (watcher). On a certain day, it chanced that two sheep's heads were lying on the butcher's counter in the market. One had been "treberred" and the other had not. The "shomer" for some reason had temporarily slipped away when a customer came along. This dutiful customer had taken it upon himself to do the shopping for his neighbours and on this day he wanted a sheep's head to share out among about six families. In the absence of the shomer, the non-Jewish butcher inadvertently handed over the head that had not been "treberred". The customer unthinkingly took the head and walked off, well pleased with his purchase. He cut it into portions and distributed them among the various participants, who unsuspectingly, prepared, cooked and ate their bit with relish.When the shomer came back and discovered the error, he was aggrieved, and sent couriers around the town with all speed in a desperate attempt to get the head back again. Alas, it was too late. Several people had been made guilty of the sin of eating "trefa" meat. Their dishes and cooking utensils could not be used any more and had to be replaced, and all because of the irresponsibility of one man. Many of Newcastle's citizens were content to let sleeping dogs lie, but Zeyda, who as well as being extremely orthodox was a man of wild and fiery temper, immediately dubbed the city a "trefa shtat" (unholy town) and the unfortunate man who had bought the offending sheep's head and made no effort to atone for his discrepancy "Trefa Kopf" (unholy head). Long battles raged between Zeyda and Trefa Kopf. At last Trefa Kopf whose mounting anger was a fair match for Zeyda's snapped out, "If you're not satisfied with the kashrus (purity) of this town, get out!" (Donbrow, 1972:4-5)

And get out he did. The story has it that Zeyda, together with his family, loaded his possessions on a wheelbarrow and crossed the Redheugh Bridge and arrived in Gateshead in the year of 1881. Lying only a five-minute walk away from

Newcastle, this small town did not have a single Jewish inhabitant at the time of Zeyda's arrival. This was of little consequence, the issue was that he, followed by Mr. E. Adler, had taken active steps to remove themselves and their families from a way of life which they regarded as quite unacceptable. They were incensed by the willingness of their German brethren to permit a slackening or adjustment of their religious observance in order to accommodate the society at large's way of life. Devoted **Shomer Shabbos** themselves they eventually found, faced with what they judged to be **trefa** (2) habits among the members of the established Newcastle Jewish community, that it was an environment from which they had to distance themselves both physically and ideologically. Hence they decided to set up their own community. Well satisfied with the Tyneside area in terms, of geographical position and economic possibilities, its trade, industry and coal-mining, they decided that in Gateshead they were removed from daily contact with the **trefnyaks** (2), the "undesirable" elements of the Jewish community in Newcastle, but close enough to benefit from its economic resources.

Though some of the **Shomrei Shabbat** Jews remained in and accepted the "dubious" environment of the Newcastle community, others decided to follow suit and joined their **Frum** friends in Gateshead. Thus there never occurred a definite "break" between the two communities, simply a "manifestation" that degrees of observance and heterogeneous conditions had its consequences. The proximity of Gateshead to Newcastle allowed for the desired symbolic distance, the manifestation of different values, whilst simultaneously enabling the pursuit of economic and in some cases, social interests in Newcastle. Several of the members of the new Gateshead community were involved in business relationships with Jewish wholesalers in Newcastle, from whom they were able to obtain the credit facilities sorely needed in petty trade (Gateshead's main type of income source) with its conspicuous lack of available capital.

Those first members of Gateshead's Jewish community had come from Poland, Lithuania and Galicia and were hard-working people. They were **Shomer Shabbat** whose men engaged in proportioned daily Torah study but in whose lives

intellectualism and advanced Talmudic study was never a part. Realising the need for a strong and talented leader they chose Mr. Adler, a well-educated and talented organiser from a prominent Galician family, to steer the community through its first years of infancy. He was supported and assisted by Mr. A.M. Bell and Mr. Bernstone. Under their supervision and with time the community of Gateshead built their own **shul**, acquired their own **kosher** milkman, a **Schochet**, a **Mikhve** (built in 1939), and a **cheder**, thus establishing themselves as a group which was religiously entirely self-contained and independent and which did not associate itself with any external rabbinical authority. In effect, the community had severed its religious ties with the Newcastle community.

The social activity of judging one another's religious observance, of estimating and recognising those who do, as opposed to those who do not meet the demands, is a recurring theme in Judaism. In an elegant presentation, Heilman (1973) shows how such evaluations effectively separate members of a distinct ethnic group into two sub-groups whose existence and form is based on their members being judged by one another as either "too modern" or "too **frum**". As a result of this very process, the immigrants who arrived on Tyneside after 1881 had the choice of settling in either of two separate communities, based upon differences of halachic interpretations or observance. Of the Jews, who during the last two decades of the nineteenth century continued to scramble out of Eastern Europe, a few docked at Newcastle. Among those who decided to settle in the Tyneside area, some decided to cross the River Tyne from Newcastle and settle down in Gateshead, a community which held the standards of orthodoxy they were accustomed to and which they wished to retain in their new homeland. Leaving behind most of their material possessions, they arrived in the community with a commodity - traditional Judaism - which proved capable of providing them with a strong sense of identity and an a relatively efficient barrier against assimilation.

With the new century came also the onset of the 1920-30 depression which was to badly affect industrial areas all over the Western world. The north-east of England with its coal-mining and shipbuilding industry was badly affected, causing

the area its share of hardship and deprivation. The Gateshead Jewish community was particularly sensitive to the economic fluctuations, since most of its members had to make their livelihood through petty trade as small merchants and peddlers. This, of course, was an existence quite similar to that of the **shetlekh** of the Pale. Their experience and commercial versatility soon became apparent and by the 1920s there were already a few Jewish shops in the area. Their credit system with the Jewish wholesalers in the "old" community in Newcastle enabled the Gateshead Jews to offer goods such as gas mantles, household goods, and clothing on credit to miners' families in the surrounding colliery areas. Those who succeeded in their credit businesses were able to enter into more capital-intensive ventures in the wholesale business themselves. Still, the latter category were in the minority and the greater majority of the community's members maintained a very meagre existence as incomes were very low, housing conditions bad, and the general economic situation one which offered little hope of immediate prosperity.

When, in 1927, Rev. D.Dryan, a Radin (3)-trained **schochet,** arrived and settled in Gateshead, he found the town to have the "correct" atmosphere (4) and the potential which a **Yeshiva** required. Thus it was through his efforts that, together with the financial aid of Sunderland's Jewish community, Gateshead became the place for Britain's third **Yeshiva.** The choice of Rabbi N. Landinsky (5), a man of considerable scholarship, as the leader of the Gateshead Yeshiva quickly gained the town an outstanding reputation among traditional-minded Jews in England.

At this time the majority of the community's members were still involved in more practical types of work and although they led separate religious lives, these early Jewish families of Gateshead lived a life not too dissimilar from that of the non-Jews of the area. Struggling under the same hardships, exposed to the same deprivations and limitations, both parties accepted and recognised their interdependency; the wage-earning non-Jew buying on favourable terms from the self-employed Jew. Representing two different aspects of the economy, customer and source of supply, they needed each other and acknowledged this interdependence by engaging in relative amicable relationships. The activities of

setting up businesses, dealing and trading with non-Jews, sending their children to the local schools, and having them as next-door neighbours soon established various links between the two communities.

As had been the case in the Pale, livelihood for the Jew depended on his ability, within the limitations of his religious requirements, to co-operate with and adjust to the demands of the society at large. Once again a niche was found in the existing economy which ensured their own existence through a process of interdependence with the non-Jews and enabling the "new" community to grow and support itself. Unlike their brethren in Newcastle, they sought to be in, but not of, the general world. Although Yiddish was spoken in the community and life was in strict accordance with halachic laws, the members also acquired knowledge of non-Jewish values and norms as well as the interactive skills required for necessary competence in dealing with, and participation in, the non-Jewish world. Their particular dependency and involvement with the society at large restricted total cultural "encapsulation" and, to a certain degree, drew the community's members into the English cultural, social and economic orbit.

There are very few recorded accounts of life in the community during its first fifty years of existence. One of the most informative sources of that period are the few remaining grandchildren of the first members of the Gateshead community who are still alive today and who have vivid memories of "days gone by." Their accounts of going to the local school, as well as on school outings with non-Jews, visiting non-Jewish friends in their homes and how some even went to concerts and cinemas (7), indicate that changes took place even in this strictly observant Jewish community. These are descriptions which tally with the accounts by Donbrow (1972) of how social life in Gateshead during the first quarter of the twentieth century held various forms of across-ethnic boundary negotiations through trade, formal education and in limited areas of entertainment. Donbrow tells of a life not too dissimilar from that of most children growing up in the Tyneside area between the two world wars and reveals how plural foci of interaction between the two cultures had the effect of reducing the cultural distance between non-Jews and Jews.

In Donbrow's somewhat superficial description of how she and her Jewish friends "enjoyed the richness of their two worlds" we may find numerous occasions and events where the Jews of Gateshead, in spite of their strict halachic observance, participated in and enjoyed parts of a distinctively British way of life (Daiches, 1957) between the two world wars. Social intercourse of the kind and extent which Donbrow and the elders in Gateshead describe did lead to renegotiations of specific values and behaviour. Photographs taken during that period indicate, for instance, that people were negotiating elements in their cultural patterns which permitted selective adaptation to English cultural values. Short-sleeved dresses, uncovered collar bones and married women without **sheitels** (wigs) were not an unusual sight among Jewish women in Gateshead in the 1920s and 1930s; all of which are indicative of an image far removed from the **tznius** (6) behaviour traditionally expected from orthodox females (Koltun 1976; Eisenberg, 1978; Greenberg, 1982,1983). It would seem that though the older original settlers of Gateshead desired a lifestyle devoid of "external" influences, the consequences of their involvement with and acceptance of the society at large caused the younger generation to become increasingly Anglicised in their behaviour and values. This between-generation change in attitudes and behaviour is explicit in Donbrow's reflections on the Jews of Gateshead who grew up between the two world wars:

> **The harsher attitudes of preceding generations had been further tempered and mellowed by the moderating influence of the English social and cultural background. For these, and for many other things we were grateful to England.**(Donbrow, 1972:66)

What, we may ask, was the difference between Gateshead as it had become by the 1940s and the Newcastle Jewish community from which its founders had sought to escape some fifty years earlier? I would suggest that the Gateshead community had, in spite of their seeming involvement with the non-Jewish world, retained a deep concern with halachic issues and remained **Shomer Shabbos** (Liebman 1974). In other words, they had been relatively successful in avoiding mere ritualistic religiosity.

Notes Chapter 2.5

1.
Similarly, the narrative is a useful ethnographic tool.

2.
Tref pertains to an animal not slaughtered according to ritual laws, or by an unauthorised schochet. As a noun (trefenehwoman, trefenyak man) it means someone whose observance of Judaism is literally not "kosher" - unacceptable.

3.
Radin was one of the great and famous centres of Jewish learning in Poland.

4.
The "correct" atmosphere for a Yeshiva is thought to be one which is devoid of external attractions.

5.
Rabbi Nachman Landinsky was the son of the head of the famous Radin (see note 3) Yeshiva.

6.
Tznius means modesty, and modest behaviour is an important requirement of orthodox Judaism (especially in women).

7.
I have been informed that it was mainly the women who participated in these activities, as the boys would be in **Cheder** for hours each evening immediately after school and also Sundays, leaving little time for such social contact.

3.1 A CHANGE OF DIRECTION: A WAY TO A UNIQUE AND INDEPENDENT NICHE

The profound changes which have taken place in Gateshead in the post-war years are due to several historical and social factors which through their amalgamation have provided the community with a distinct position in today's world of Jewry. In what follows, I aim to demonstrate how Gateshead, originally a **Baalei Batim** (laymen) community became, within less than a century of its establishment, a stronghold for dedicated **Talmidei chachomim** (Talmudic scholars) and the effects which this had on the community's socio-economic structure, its position within the world of Jewry as well as its "outward" relationships with the society at large. To do so will entail presenting the reader with five factors whose specific historical, social and philosophical blend, created the basis for a community whose present existence is based upon its ability to revive, affirm or convey to a growing number of ethnic co-members, their religio- cultural knowledge. Although such a structure might be sought out, the ensuing factors are not presented in any order in terms of relevance or importance, but rather as they occurred in time and space. Nonetheless, it will be significant, in order that we might come to understand specific traits and behaviours enacted in today's Gateshead, to analyse the changes which took place in the community from a broad range of perspectives. I have adjudged the following factors as consequential for the changes which occurred:

1) The establishment of a comprehensive Jewish educational system;

2) Establishment of renowned "Litvishe" higher Jewish educational institutions for boys and younger men;

3) Establishment of higher Jewish education institutions for girls;

4) A general Renaissance within the world of Jewish orthodoxy and the consequent Baalei Teshura movement;

5) The capital generating effects of Torah Lishmo.

1) The Establishment of a Comprehensive Jewish Education System:

It was yet another mass persecution of Jews, triggering off large-scale immigration to Britain, which was to radically change the character, structure and position of Gateshead's Jewish community. Utilising much the same tactics as those which instigated the mobilisation of the pogroms of Eastern Europe fifty years earlier, the Nazi movement of Germany and Austria in the 1930s manipulated the hate of the masses as a means towards exterminating the Jews. The ensuing dramatic increase in organised violence against anyone suspected of being of Jewish descent (1) combined with extremely punitive amendments of German law in 1933 (2) caused a surge in the number of Jews wanting to leave Germany. Although their entry into Britain was effectively barred by the Aliens Act of 1920, the British Government, pressurised on humanitarian grounds, agreed to allow a restricted number of Jews to enter Britain. In 1933 every Jewish household in Gateshead signed up as a guarantor for a Jewish family or individual who wished to leave Nazi Germany. Thus, as the news from Germany grew blacker, the Gateshead community grew. Many Jewish children were sent out of Germany to continue their education in the optimistic hope that things would "settle down" again, as had so often been the case in previous Jewish experiences of persecution.

Others, families who were unwilling to take this chance came to Britain with a more permanent move in mind. Though there was much liquidation of assets at the time, some were able to escape with assets and belongings intact, while others were less fortunate. Those who were lucky enough to bring capital with them were able to carry on the businesses which they had been forced to leave behind in Germany. Their arrival in Britain coincided with the economic depression which was badly affecting the Western world, in which the north-east of England also experienced its share of unemployment and social deprivation. It was no wonder that the Team Valley Trading Estate near Gateshead was ready to offer accommodation and grants to the immigrants to set up factories and businesses which could create work for the poor unemployed of the area.

Some of these immigrants settled in Gateshead, others in Newcastle. Like the Eastern European immigrants who had arrived fifty years earlier, this latest influx found that the two communities represented, within walking distance of each other, two different "types" of Jewishness which they might choose to associate themselves with. Those who settled in Gateshead were not only drawn there because it was one of a very few true **shomer Shabbos** communities in England, but it also had its own Yeshiva whose reputation had been considerably enhanced by the stature and intellectual brilliance of its Rosh Yeshiva Rabbi B. Landinsky. These were all signs, to the orthodox Jew, that Gateshead was a community whose members had to be considered standard bearers of orthodoxy.

Unlike the German Jews who had arrived in the north-east a hundred years earlier, and who had opted for a more secularised existence and religious compromises, there were among the later German arrivals people who were inclined to define their ethnic ties in terms of religion and who reacted strongly against any slackening or deviation from religious precepts. In other words, the first group of German Jews who arrived in the north- east in the early part of the nineteenth century had been of the large section of German Jews who were increasingly being drawn to the process of German-Jewish assimilation. The second wave of German Jews arriving in the north-east was different, in that among them were members of the strictly orthodox section of German Jewry. The two strands had coexisted in Germany - not without friction and tension - for more than a century. Though the size and intensity of the assimilated part of German Jewry had grown, a significant minority had remained strictly orthodox in their religious observance and outlook on life (Kranzler 1968).

Although numerically smaller, the orthodox section gained increasing support with the arrival of their Eastern European brethren at the turn of the nineteenth century. In a detailed and comprehensive analysis of the German Jews who arrived in Britain in connection with the Nazi period, Berghahn (1984) briefly notes the influence which the Eastern European Jews - with their "pure Judaism" - had had on the German orthodox community:

Not only did they strengthen the orthodox elements of the community, being strong numerically. They also made their influence felt as teachers and Rabbis, thus in a way resumed traditions of the 18th and 19th centuries.(Berghahn, 1984:55)

The German refugees who arrived in the north-east of England just before and during the second World War, found in Gateshead a halachically sound community with its own Yeshiva. In other words, a community whose members lived strictly by the halachic laws. Those Jewish refugees who decided to settle in Gateshead did not only do so due to the economic advantages which the area offered, but more specifically due to their determination that even in exile their orthodox life style would not be compromised. Many of them were, with their extensive experience in manufacturing back in Germany, able to create economic success for themselves, which they in turn generously used to support the religious activities of the community. With the financial support they offered, the town's Yeshiva was able to expand and thus accommodate hundreds of students during the 1940s.

Still, the relationship between the established community members (the German Jews who had arrived back in the early part of the nineteenth century together with the Eastern European Jews who had arrived in Gateshead at the turn of the twentieth century) and the "new" community (the German refugees who arrived just before and during the second World War) was neither frictionless nor self-evident. Soon it became apparent that the German refugees brought about changes in Gateshead not only in numerical terms, but also in the attitudes and outlook on life. German Jewry had in the second part of the nineteenth and the first part of the twentieth century experienced a degree of assimilation which had provided them with the reputation of successfully setting the Jews on the path to modernity. Katz (1973) argues that the increased proximity between Jews and non-Jews which was forthcoming in Germany from the nineteenth century, was not simply a matter of a Jewish desire for assimilation, rather, he claims, it was the outcome of a general "modernisation" of the area. In other words, the causes for the far-reaching changes in the traditional Jewish social system in Germany must be sought, in the Weberian sense, in religious as well as political and socioeconomic factors. However, the outcome of the process of "modernisation" -the Haskalah

movement or the Enlightenment- caused a considerable rift within German Jewry. To the orthodox section of German Jewry the integration of the Jews into the society at large was quite unthinkable (3).

The orthodox Jews in Germany were convinced that the effect of assimilation would be that Jews would eventually become indistinguishable from non-Jews. They believed that multiple foci points of interaction with the society at large would inevitably lead to assimilation and the consequent destruction of Judaism. Some of Germany's orthodox Jews responded to the Haskalah, the Enlightenment, and the ensuing Reform movement with what may be likened to a "counter-reformation" in which parts of the orthodox section of German Jewry became rigid in their discipline, minute in their observance of the halachic laws and totally devoted to every detail of the Torah. Theirs was a style of demonstrating their demeanour and a tendency to remain apart. The refugees that arrived in Gateshead just before and during the second World War were to a large extent of this latter category.

At the time of the arrival of the German refugees, the Gateshead community had existed for some fifty years. While no less committed to halachic laws, they acknowledged and adapted to a need and usefulness of being able to function within the general culture, since both livelihood and education were intrinsically connected with that environment. The attitude of the newcomers, the German refugees, caused unease and disgruntlement within the community. In the words of one of the elderly community members:

"The German refugees who arrived here were quite different from us. First of all many of them brought with them furniture, rugs, silver and clothes which we, most of us quite poor, had never seen before. But it was more than that. They had a very different mentality. To "them" there was only one way, there could never be any deviation - not to the right - nor to the left. They did not know about compromising or adjusting. To them everything was so harsh and straight. We had many an argument on this score. They seemed to think that the community was nothing before they arrived, And that is just not true. we were all very <u>frum</u> long before "they" arrived."

Another community member who remembers the arrival of the refugees, Donbrow (1972) describes the unease which the German refugees brought about in the community as follows:

> **Among the German Jews who came to Gateshead, there was a certain stiffness of attitude and a rigidity of discipline with which we could never quite feel at home. I detected it even in the Madche (German for girl, referring to one of the children who had been sent out of Germany for safety) group and somehow got the feeling that the German attitude was "we do because we must", whereas our sentiments were "we do because we want to". At first the Anglo-Jewish families of the town did not mix very well with the newcomers.**(Donbrow, 1972:67)

Nonetheless in time the growing number of refugees did become an integral part of, and were involved with, the organisation and running of the community. They had brought with them a Weltanschauung that confronted and ultimately overcame the prevailing trend towards a cultural compromise that had threatened to challenge the orthodox world. Although their uncompromising positions temporarily polarised the community, they succeeded in raising the debate as to the level of acceptable involvement with the society at large. They were concerned with the ease, level and the many points of interaction between the community and the society at large, a trend which they argued could be significantly reduced if the children were offered a "pure" Jewish formal education. They were convinced that if future generations were to be devoted to a "Torah way of life", if destruction of Judaism was to be prevented, Jewish children had to be exposed to a maximum environment of **Yiddishket** (Jewishness) and contact with the society at large be kept to a minimum. In short, this would entail the organisation of a comprehensive system of Jewish educational institutions. The German refugees, with their "roots" firmly embedded in the organisational tradition inherent in German culture, had both the expertise and efficiency which enabled them to set about this rather daunting task with both speed and skill.

This was a venture in which they were able to gain the support of the established community members. As a result a number of pedagogically trained German Jews arrived in the community (e.g. Mr.Kohn, Rabbi Bamberger (1)). Better educated

than the established community, the German refugees were determined to imbue future generations' orthodox Jews with a broad curriculum with which they could survive in an increasingly specialised world. They had a vision, one which was in due course to become a reality, of providing both boys and girls with a continuous education steeped in a Jewish atmosphere, right through their educational period. For many years past the name of Gateshead had, in the world of Anglo-Jewry, been synonymous with strict orthodoxy and now the German refugees were intent on creating institutions aimed at securing this specific lifestyle which had been brought so close to extinction.

In spite of their experiences and fear of assimilation, it is nevertheless interesting that the convictions and reasoning which led to the eventual appearance of a wide spectrum of educational institutions in Gateshead, held striking similarities with the practical-philosophical ideas inherent in German culture. An observation which also is in line with that of Berghahn (1984) who claims that one of the reasons that the Jews in Germany identified so intensely with German culture was the existence of:

> **the striking affinity between certain Jewish and German cultural elements in the 18th and 19th centuries. Enlightenment, Humanism and later the stirrings of Liberalism had created a spiritual and intellectual climate in Germany with which the Jews could easily identify.**(Berghahn, 1984:39)

The reasoning underpinning ideas of education was no exception to this trend which also permeated and influenced the German Jewish orthodox world. For the last two centuries, German social- philosophy had assumed, in accordance with Rousseau's thinking, that Man can only develop into a social member "within" the boundaries of society. The consequent preoccupation with the ways in which society could manipulate the individual's development into a social member, eventually developed in Germany into an interest in how the individual could be made to accept and demonstrate willingness to subscribe to the attitudes and values which society sought to engender. In other words, German pedagogues of the eighteenth, nineteenth and partly the twentieth century have been engaged in the

question of the individual in relation to the "whole", the latter predominantly relating to the German state. The preservation and solidification of society or the state was seen to depend upon society's ability to ensure proper upbringing and formation of the child into a moral and "good" person. Norman (1991) describes how the relationship between the two, individual and state, was (is) played out and accomplished through the active action of Erziehung (upbringing):

> **It is the relation between the individual and the "whole" which is at stake and it is only through education and upbringing, Erziehung, that the essentials of this relationship can be brought about.**(Norman, 1991)

The question then arises as to the locus and responsibility of providing this education and Erziehung. Whether contending, like the German philosopher Fichte (1914) who was much concerned with the "upbringing of the people", that the obligation of educating or bringing up rested firmly with the state, or as Frobel (Reble, 1965) who found the most important locus for upbringing to be the home environment and more specifically so with the mother, theirs were both a concern with the relationship between development of a specific moral order in the child and its potential usefulness and service to the collective.

The relationship between the individual and the collective, so important in German social-philosophy, is also explicitly expressed in Judaism. The well-being of society depends upon the latter's success in moulding the child into a person who will abide by the moral obligations and decrees upon which the collectivity's existence is based.

The overwhelming effect and influence of the individual's actions on society and its form, places great stress and importance on the character and behaviour of the former. As will be shown later, **humanity** in Judaism holds ideas of plasticity, of a unit that is both impressionable and from the outset undiscriminating in terms of selfish and unselfish actions. Unless the child's spirit, its inner growth, is assiduously nurtured and protected, its selfish or evil inclinations will dominate, leaving society as an unprotected and exposed victim. Here, education, the

process of making the child accept and take on the moral responsibility of its own actions and deeds, is the key to a sound society. There is in Judaism a pronounced acceptance of an active and goal-oriented formation of the child for the good of the collective as it is required by G-D.

It was this call for intense attention to be given to education and rearing, fortified and further nourished by German educational theory and combined with their "separatistic" inclination, which provided the German refugees with the direction, drive and experience to agitate for an independent Jewish comprehensive educational system in Gateshead. In the years that followed, the tenacity, innovation and sheer determination of the German refugees, together with the rest of the community, created a number of educational institutions which enabled the children of the community to gain their entire comprehensive education within the boundaries of the orthodox world. Later as it has been shown, there has generally been within the world of Jewry in the post-war years an increasing emphasis on a comprehensive Jewish education. Prior to this, Jewish children in Britain (and elsewhere) had largely been educated within the secular educational institutions and received their "Yiddishkeit" through informal transmission in their homes and communities during out-of-school hours (**cheder** lessons).

In the years following the war and with the establishment of the state of Israel the demand for Jewish education has been greater than ever before, most prominently so within the orthodox communities. To them, a total Jewish education was not only a means of ensuring that the children receive a profound religious education, it was (is) also a way of reducing or diminishing secular influences. In accordance with these convictions the community in Gateshead established, within a ten-year period, a kindergarten (ages 3-5), primary school (age 5-11), girls high school (age 11-14) and boys boarding school (age 11-14), and two secondary schools [Yeshiva Katanah (for boys from age 14-16; a seminary (Sem) for girls (age 16-18) (here it is well worth knowing that the G.C.S.E. (map 5) examination is taken one to two years earlier than is common in Britain)] which all follow(ed) the English curriculum as well as numerous Jewish studies.

GATESHEAD JEWISH PRIMARY SCHOOL.

FORGEL ESTHER SHUL HOUSE

THE YESHIVA COLLEGE IN GATESHEAD.

THE JEWISH KINDERGARDEN IN GATESHEAD.

2) The Establishment of a "Litvishe" Yeshiva and Kolel Committed to Mussar:

The reputation of Gateshead, its level of orthodoxy and the dedication of its members to Halacha also attracted another category of refugees who were to play an important role in the community's future development. Just before, during and after the war, a few of the rabbis and scholars who escaped or survived the holocaust arrived in Britain from Eastern Europe. In Britain they found restricted possibilities for research and study in Jewish learning. Many of them, concerned with the survival of Judaism, were convinced that the crumbling of the Jewish learning centres in Eastern Europe represented a major threat to the very core of Judaism. To a people whose religion and culture finds its locus in the study and researches of the Torah, the destruction of these institutions was a threat which predicted devastation and destruction to all that which represents the very basis of the Jewish identity. The death of thousands upon thousands of Yeshiva leaders and students during the Nazi era, represented a spiritual and intellectual loss to the orthodox community which is incalculable; consequently those who survived carried an enormous responsibility upon their shoulders. It was to Gateshead and its existing Yeshiva that a few of these scholars now turned their attention.

Having arrived in Britain they looked around for a place where they could continue their studies and research. Gateshead with its renowned Yeshiva under the leadership of the esteemed Rabbi Landynsky was regarded by these intellectuals as the only halachically acceptable community in Britain. Among those intellectuals who arrived in Gateshead at the time, were those who had spent years in Yeshivot elsewhere and who had a need for more advanced courses. In response to this demand, Rev Dryan in 1940, invited Rabbi E.E. Dessler (see Fig.4b,5b,6b), who with the help and encouragement of the Rav Rabbi Shakovitsky, set up a **Kolel** (5) in Gateshead. The first of its kind in England, the Gateshead **Kolel**, together with its Yeshiva (6), became the reservoir for higher Jewish studies in Europe, collecting, preserving, and regenerating the knowledge otherwise lost to Judaism. Under the supervision and guidance of Rabbi Dessler, a Russian who had graduated from the Mussar Academy of Kelm and later studied at the famous Slobodka Yeshiva,

RABBI E. DESSLER זצ"ל

by Gerald Gerber, B.Sc., Ph.D.

The 24th of Teveth is the Yahrzeit of Rabbi E. Dessler. Rabbi Dessler exercised a profound influence on religious life in this country and this short article gives details of his life as well as certain excerpts from his teachings and writings. The author, Dr. Gerald Gerber, is a graduate of King's College, London, and now teaches at the Hasmonean Grammar School for Boys. He received his Jewish education at the Yeshivah Eitz Chaim and is one of the group who meet regularly to study the workers of Rabbi Dessler.

THE great vacuum which followed the destruction of European Jewry made itself felt in all aspects of the Spiritual life of our people. Students of Yeshiva were few, great Torah personalities rare, and religious leadership to be found only among the few survivors of the lost generation in Eastern Europe. The rich orchards of Poland and Lithuania were derelict, and the precious fruit which remained were insufficient to sate the hunger of a bereaved Nation.

Unusual Ability

But if the world of Torah was impoverished, the specialised field of Mussar and Hashkofa, that branch of Torah which concentrates on the personal conduct and outlook of the individual, was even more deserted. It was in such a climate that Rav. Dessler, זצ"ל, rose to his full greatness, and made his unique contribution to the theory and practice of present day orthodoxy.

Rav. Dessler was born 70 years ago, in the year 5651, to one of the outstanding Jewish families in Russia. He was descended from Rav. Yisrael Salanter זצ"ל, from his Mother's side; while his father was a spiritual heir to Rav. Yisrael. This was through Rav. Simcha Zissel, זצ"ל, the outstanding pupil of Rav. Yisrael, who was the teacher of Rav. Dessler's father. Rav. Dessler thus had a twofold link with the founder of the Mussar Movement, and in keeping with this tradition he spent his early years as a pupil of the famous 'Kelm Talmud Torah.' In this circle of the elite, Rav. Dessler won for himself a reputation for diligence and unusual ability. It was there that he developed the great self-discipline and ideology, based on the teachings of Rav. Simcha Zissel, which was to be the foundation of his later work.

Gateshead Kollel

In the year 5687 (1926) at the age of 36, Rav. Dessler came to England to become Rav. in a Shool in the East End of London. However, this work did not bring him very much satisfaction; his greatest fulfilment at this time came from the small circles of pupils which he established. The subjects studied were normally Halachic, with only small amounts of Rav. Dessler's unique mussar-philosophy, but his great dedication and love for his pupils left its indelible mark on their personalities.

Throughout this time, and particularly after the outbreak of the Second World War, Rav. Dessler felt a pressing need to spread Torah throughout the Community —and the great opportunity came in the year 5701 (1941) when Dovid Dryan, ל"זצ, the famous 'Shoichet of Gateshead', wrote to Rav. Dessler asking him to join in the establishment of a Kollel in Gateshead.

The Kollel, which is designed essentially to enable outstanding students of Yeshiva to devote a number of years to full-time Torah study after leaving the Yeshiva, was indeed a remote vision for the Anglo Jewish Community. Indeed, part of the greatness of its founders was in their ability to perceive its necessity for the continuation of traditional Judaism in the more distant future. It was to this great task that Rav. Dessler now devoted himself. Without accepting any remuneration, Rav. Dessler bore a very great share of the spiritual and material responsibility for the Kollel; and this without diminishing in any way his innumerable responsibilities all over the country. The pupils who were closest to him at this time still speak in wonderment of the superhuman energy which he drew upon in this task. But in spite of all this, his creative work in Mussar and Aggada continued unabated.

The final chapter in the communal work of Rav. Dessler came in the year 5708 (1948) when the Ponivez Rav. שליט"א, wrote to Rav. Dessler asking him to accept the position of Menahel of the great Ponivez Yeshiva. Because of his advancing years Rav. Dessler had gradually made the affairs of the Kollel less dependant on himself, and now (with special conditions regarding journies to England to preserve contacts with his pupils) Rav. Dessler went to Ponivez.

Outstanding Personality

In Eretz Yisrael his influence spread rapidly, and he won fame for his lectures given outside the Yeshiva, which attracted an audience of exceptional intellectual standing. The Ponivez Rav, by refering to Rav. Dessler as a Rosh Yeshiva in Mussar, was giving an accurate assessment of his method and approach. As with the great Roshei Yeshiva of previous generations, the approach of Rav. Dessler was deep and analytical. During the last years of his life he produced over one thousand original essays, and his work was acclaimed throughout the World of Torah study. This immense creative activity continued right up to his death on the 24th of Teveth 5714, at the age of 63.

It is immensly difficult to assess the greatness of any man in the fields in which Rav. Dessler specialised. Suffice it to say that in Mussar and Hashkofa Rav. Dessler is considered by scholars to have been the outstanding personality of his generation. His method in Aggada is strongly influenced by the work of the Maharal, זצ"ל, and is based on the teaching of Rav. Simcha Zissel. However, the ultimate source is always the Chazal itself, and this is true of all the work of Rav. Dessler (although he draws on all traditional sources, including the great modern teachers of both the Mussar and the Chassidic Schools). The great contribution of Rav. Dessler is found in his ability to analyse and explain data with a remarkable penetration. He combined philosophy with a deep psychological insight, and was thus able to convey the ideas of the Chazal to the modern generation, and to solve therewith many contemporary problems of thought and action.

An Example

But for Rav. Dessler the intellect was the tool and not the master. To him the essence of all his teaching was in its practical value in moulding the life of the individual. In his own life, as in his Torah, Mussar was never an intellectual escapism, nor a theory of the evil inclination—but an intense and revealing spotlight to the pathway of life. To date there are numerous circles all over the world which meet to study the Torah of Rav. Dessler, both from the published sefer (Michtav M'-Eliyahu) and in stencilled drafts, new additions to which are still being published. These pupils, and the work they are doing to spread Yiddishkeit, give eloquent testimony to their Rebbe and his way of life; a way of life which remains an example to all of what one man with burning faith and devotion to Torah may achieve.

● *Continued on page 5*

Fig. 4b.

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XII: RABBI E. L. DESSLER זצ"ל

By Aryeh Carmell

ATESHEAD . . . the name echoes ound the Jewish world. Wherever orah is discussed, be it America or rael, Europe or Australia, the name ateshead is spoken with respect. ven the inert mass of "Anglo-Jewry" as begun of late to sit up and take otice of that dynamic little com-unity and its constellation of high-owered Torah institutions which ave done more than anything else recent years to put England on the orah map.

Many factors have contributed to ateshead's amazing rise to fame, but ere can be no doubt that pre-ominant among them were the work nd vision of one man—Rabbi E. L. essler.

ALONE

It was not until the second world ar that Providence brought Rabbi essler and Gateshead together. Since oming here from Riga in the late 920's Rabbi Dessler had lived in ondon; first in the East End and en in Dalston, where he was rabbi f a Federation synagogue. Separated om his family by the war, he found imself virtually alone except for a nall circle of friends and disciples ho had come under the spell of his nique personality and penetrating ntellect. Such was the situation when, 1 1941, the first horrifying reports of ne systematic destruction of Eastern uropean Jewry began to filter rough to the West. Rabbi Dessler as filled with a longing to do some-ing—anything—to help rebuild what as being so ruthlessly torn down. ut what could he do?

Gateshead at that time was rela-ively unknown. It was, however, dis-inguished by three things: it had a Yeshiva; it had a great Rav, Rabbi Shakovitsky of Kovno; and it had Reb Dovid Dryan as its shochet. The latter was no ordinary person. It had been his enterprise that had founded Gateshead Yeshiva nearly 20 years before; and such was his love for Torah that, it is said, he personally went round with hammer and nails every Friday afternoon repairing the benches and reading desks and seeing to whatever needed attention in the Yeshiva. In that terrible year 1941 his thoughts were turning in the same direction as Rabbi Dessler's; and he had a plan.

WASTED TALENT

Among the refugee community in England there were, scattered here and there, some first-class Torah brains, whose talents were running to waste for lack of guidance and for want of opportunity to continue learning on the high standards they had been accustomed to in Eastern Europe. Many had married and had been compelled to take unsuitable rabbinic positions. Here was great Torah potential being wasted. Why not gather these young men in one place, and provide them with the means to continue their advanced studies in an appropriate atmosphere, so that in five or ten years they could grow into the Torah leaders of an orphaned generation? In other words, why not create a Kolel?

The Kolel had been a recognised institution in Lithuania, of course, where it was usually attached to one of the great Yeshivos; but nothing like it had ever been attempted in Western Europe. In England the concept was wholly unknown. A great war was raging. London and other great centres were being blitzed nightly. The whole system of Jewish education in England—such as it was—was being shaken to its foundations. There could hardly have been a less propitious moment to start a new venture, especially one of such doubtful appeal to the Jewish public. It is no wonder that when Reb Dovid Dryan wrote of his plan to twenty-three religious leaders in Britain he received no reply or negative replies from twenty-two of them. From the twenty-third, however, he received an enthusiastic response. This was just the challenge that Rabbi Dessler had been waiting for. Together with the Rav, Rabbi Shakovitsky, they founded the Gateshead Kolel.

MAGNETIC INFLUENCE

For a number of years Rabbi Dessler undertook, in an entirely honorary capacity, the main responsibility for both the spiritual leadership and material upkeep of the Kolel. The enormous efforts invested have borne fruit in many ways. From the Kolel there has come a small but steady stream of top-calibre men who have taken up important rabbinical and educational positions in the community. The Kolel acted as a magnet to talented youths, and helped in large measure to the rise of Gateshead Yeshiva to its present eminence as the foremost Torah institution in Europe. Similarly owing its foundation to the far-seeing vision of Rabbi Dessler, the Gateshead Teachers' Training College for Girls (known affectionately to its hundreds of graduates the world over as "The Sem"), occupies a unique and unrivalled position in the world of Jewish education, its graduates continuing to exert a marked influence in communities in Great Britain and in many countries overseas.

CUMULATIVE EFFECT

Inspired by Rabbi Dessler's example, other schools and institutions have grown up over the years, dedicated to the ideals he taught: depth of learning combined with the highest standards of integrity and devotion. Wherever one of his disciples is to be found, there is likely to be a radiating centre for those ideals. The influence of a man such as Rabbi Dessler does not diminish with the passage of time. On the contrary, the effects are cumulative. His influence on raising Torah standards in our community, and indeed in communities all over the world—not least in Israel—has been immense and incalculable.

Perhaps we shall be able to assess it fully only from the vantage point of Moshiach.

Fig. 5b.

X. REB DOVID DRYAN ז"ל

By Dayan M. D. Dryan, Glasgow

Every individual, whatever his circumstances, has an opportunity to learn Torah and to encourage other people to study the Torah. Anyone who thinks that having no outstanding ability, or occupying no important position, he is therefore unable to work for Torah — will be shown up by the activities of Reb Dovid Dryan ז"ל the famous Shochet of Gateshead.

Reb Dovid was by nature quiet and bashful; he was neither speaker nor writer; he never held a high position. Yet, by his indestructible will-power he achieved so much in the field of Haromas Kovod Hatorah and left his mark on the religious life of Jewry in this country.

Reb Dovid was born some 82 years ago in Knyshyn, a small town near Bialystok, then belonging to Russia. His father, Reb Yaacov, was a Talmid Chochom but earned his living from business and for many years was the lay leader of his town.

A quiet and extremely good-natured boy, with natural good middos, Reb Dovid was sent, after his Bar-mitzva, to learn in Radin, where his maternal uncle, Rabbi Moishe Landynski was at that time Rosh of the Yeshivah that was later to become famous as the Chofetz Chaim's Yeshiva.

He was a 'masmid' and being naturally quiet and unbecoming, never spoke publicly. He thus remained unnoticed as being outstanding in any

field.

About 1912 he left Radin to marry Zlatte the younger daughter of the Shochet in Naishok, a small town near Vilna. After his marriage, Reb Dovid was taught Shechita by his father-in-law.

In 1921, when the economic position in Poland and Lithuania had seriously deteriorated, Reb Dovid allowed himself to be persuaded to come and settle in Port Talbot, Wales, where he had relations. He was accepted as Reader and Shochet in Port Talbot, but found it very hard to settle down properly. Coming from a town where nearly every one was a Lamdan, and all strict Shomrei Shabbos, it is not difficult to understand why Reb Dovid found it hard to acclimatise himself to a place like Port Talbot.

Two years later, Reb Dovid was invited to Gateshead as Shochet and Baal Tefilloh, a post which he suited and which suited him. Little did the Gateshead Baalei Battim realise that through taking Reb Dovid as Shochet, their town would become the main centre of Torah institutions in this country, and that its fame would spread far and wide throughout the world.

As soon as Reb Dovid arrived in Gateshead he decided to establish a Yeshiva in the town. The task was not an easy one. In 1927, Reb Dovid sought guidance and advice from the Chofetz Chaim in Radin.

The Chofetz Chaim responded promptly and enthusiastically and recommended as Rosh of the Yeshiva Rabbi Nachman Landynski.

During the years of its existence the Gateshead Yeshiva has grown from the humblest beginnings to its present-day position, having a student body numbering approximately 250. Graduates of the Yeshiva now occupy leading positions in the Rabbinical and educational sphere throughout Britain and the Continent, and numerous lay leaders of the Jewish community are former students of Gateshead Yeshiva.

The Gateshead Kolel (Institute of Higher Rabbinical Studies), was also conceived by Reb Dovid who invited Rabbi Eliyahu Eliezer Dessler to initiate the institution. It was Rabbi Dessler's self-sacrificing response to the call of Reb Dovid, which led to the formation of the Kolel. Gateshead's example has been emulated in other English towns. But for the Kolelim there would today be no institutions producing Rabbis of stature and vision, and Jewish spiritual life would slowly decline. Reb Dovid subsequently helped in planning all the major institutions of Gateshead.

It would take up too much space to enumerate all the sacrifices he had to make before these institutions were established. However, they will ever serve as both a shining example and a worthy monument to this pious man who was

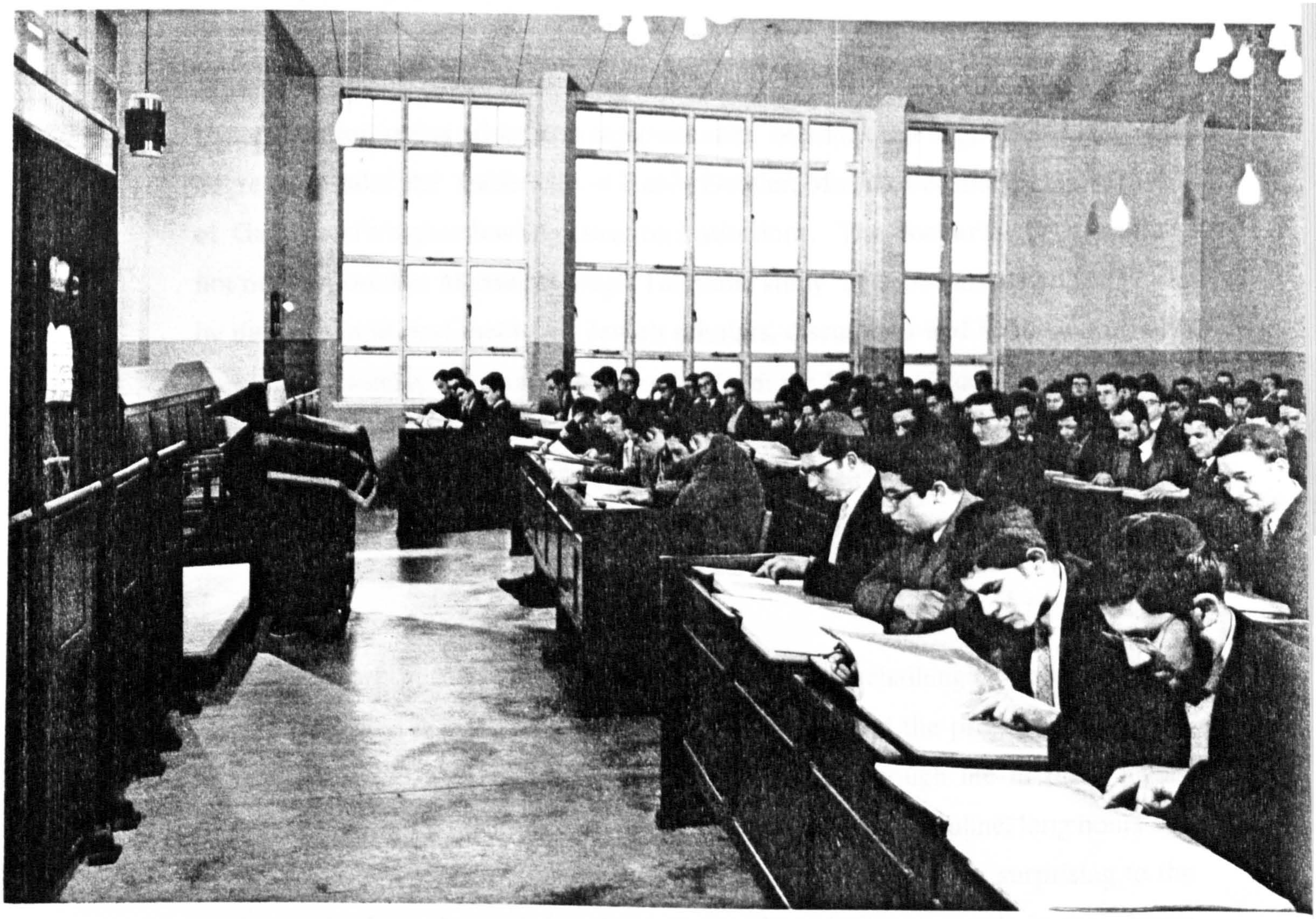
זכה וזכה את הרבים זכות הרבים תלוי בו

Fig.6

the Gateshead **Kolel** would, in time, together with the Yeshiva under the leadership of Rabbi Ladynski, provide the community with world-wide renown as **the** Jewish University town of Europe, and thus partly replace the great learning institutions of Eastern Europe.

Although it has only recently become practically possible for men, on a large scale, to study full-time at the Yeshiva, it has always been a part of the **Litvishe derech** (Lithuanian way) tradition, as opposed to the general Hassidic practice of leaving the Yeshiva to earn a livelihood, to keep studying beyond one's teens. Other features such as emphasis on Talmudic knowledge and Mussar have also traditionally been part of the Litvishe tradition. Both the Yeshiva and Kolel of Gateshead, from the outset, adhered to these very same traditions and consequently attracted(s) students of a clearly identifiable segment of the orthodox world who wished to pursue this custom and approach. Gateshead attracted(s) students who were committed to in-depth analysis of rabbinical commentaries on the Talmud. History, theology, medicine, jurisprudence, mathematics, marriage and divorce, biology, philosophy and geography together and more, constitute the domain of the Talmud. The study of the Talmud or **Gemora** requires in-depth knowledge of the Bible as well as familiarity with the rules of logic and method which are unique to the study of Talmud. A conglomerate of material which comprises sixty-three Tractates and a total of five thousand, eight hundred folio pages, as well as thousands of pages of commentaries, necessitates directives for method of study and use. By way of a unique system of hermeneutic rules, the student systematically acquires knowledge of the various levels of Talmudic understanding, demonstrated in his ability to bring evidence to bear on a particular discussion from a variety of interpretations and sources. Much time is invested in on-going dialogue and debate over these various sources and interpretations. In pairs, the partner system of **"chavrusa"** they engage in endless discussions where the one will challenge the other's statements. This method which had through centuries been associated with the great Talmudic learning centres in Lithuania, was now re-established in Gateshead and slowly, as a result of the intellectual

YESHIVA STUDENTS.



LEARNING INSIDE THE YESHIVA (from: The Gateshead foundation for Torah 1967)

reputation and statute of its rabbis and students, the community acquired a formidable reputation as harbouring one of the most if not the most prestigious Yeshiva and Kolel in Europe.It was not only the method and approach to Talmudic studies which singled out the Yeshiva and Kolel of Gateshead, but the emphasis which the institution placed on **Mussar.** Under the strong influence of Rabbi Desslerb the Kolel sought to combine intellect and soul-searching with the objective of trying to improve human character and relationships between people, in other words a philosophy which was intended to rescue man from "his evil impulses."

Mussar, a dominant mode of many Lithuanian Yeshivot since the time of Rabbi Israel Salanter, treats ethics as a separate area of study and might do so in varying degrees. Under the leadership of Rabbi Dessler, **Mussar** became a major feature of Gateshead's higher Jewish education institutions. The **Bochurim** (7) were (are) not only exposed to **Mussar** through Talmudic study and the various ethical works by medieval and post-medieval Jewish scholars, discussions and lectures, they also receive(ed) weekly **Mussar shmuessen** (8) from the Dean of Students **(Mashgiach)** concerning general issues or specific forms of behaviour. The committed emphasis on ethics imbued(s) the students with a sense of morality and sensitivity, a specific Litvishe way "of looking at things," which in many aspects differed(s) from that of the society at large.

Life and work in these institutions is intellectually challenging andstimulating, but the discipline is rigid, the working hours are long and the programme of study quite exhausting. It deserves to be mentioned that though life in these higher institutions demands high standards in terms of effort, self-discipline, long hours and hard work, it is a routine and set of expectations neither new nor surprising to the students who have, by tradition, been exposed to similar demands in their home environment. It is also a style and goal set by all the Jewish comprehensive education institutions in the community.

Through intensive co-operation aimed at the common goal of enhancing and ensuring the survival of their specific religion- cultural lifestyle, the comprehensive

and higher education institutions succeeded in creating a cohesive chain of Jewish education stretching from nursery school to the top echelon of the **Kolel.** Underpinned by the common aim and dedication of self-improvement, these institutions provided a lifelong continuity in terms of stress and value placed on ethics and interpersonal behaviour which in time generated a specific "Gatesheady" behavioural style. A stricter interpretation of the halachic laws and the special interest in ethics, together with increased intolerance of deviations, fostered a need and desire for the indivdual to rid him/herself and the community of the influence of the society at large, supporting the desire for increased isolationism.

3) The Establishment of a Higher Jewish Education Institution for Girls:

Traditionally, orthodox Jewish women received very little formal education and emphasis had been on educating boys rather than girls (Myerhoff, 1978). This conspicuous void in girls' formal Jewish education meant that their intellectual, as well as spiritual, development was an area of general neglect. Here, however, we come to another major shift in the world of orthodoxy. Sarah Schenirer (Cracow 1883-1935), the self-educated daughter of a Polish Chassidic Jew, was the woman who was to change attitudes towards Jewish female education. Because of her keen intellectual interest, her father encouraged and helped her in Torah studies. She became convinced that although Jewish girls were brought up in **shomer shabbath** homes, their exposure to secular values in the state schools, combined with a restricted knowledge of the Torah, made them both vulnerable and less committed to "the Torah way of life." In her mind. the lack of formal Jewish education meant that Judaism was ignoring the "hazards" involved in neglecting the spiritual needs of girls as they grew up and matured into women who were to carry the responsibility of bringing up the future generations. Hence her powerful message was that girls also needed Yeshivot as a means of making them truly **Bas Torah** (plural B'nos Torah) (9). Her concern was that educating girls in secular school totally devoid of **Da'as Torah** (10), would eventually draw girls away from orthodoxy. She set up a little school in Cracow in Poland in the 1920s, dedicated

to the training of girls. Within two years there was a demand from all over Poland for her to open schools in other Polish Jewish communities, and so "save" their girls. She did though have to overcome the opposition of the **chassidic** rabbis, and convince them that although the teaching of Torah to girls was contrary to tradition, this being of Talmudic origin, the exigency of the situation (i.e. the threat posed by girls having to attend state schools and thus being exposed to secular influences), created a situation of literally "do or die." Eventually opposition melted away and it was accepted that her ideas were advantageous to the Torah communities and in no way went against the grain of Judaism (Kahana, 1966).

Having overcome these initial difficulties, her schools proved to be an answer to a great demand within Polish Jewish orthodoxy, a demand which she alone could not satisfy. Instead she appointed graduates from her first school in Cracow as teachers at several **Beis Yaakov** Seminaries (11) around Poland. These graduates, trained in the knowledge and spirit of the Torah, were given the task of ensuring and realising Sarah's motto: "a true Jew must be a whole Jew," which meant that both the intellectual and spiritual life of a Jewish girl must be moulded in the ways of Torah tradition. Hence at the age of sixteen, girls were to be provided with proper and in-depth knowledge of the many laws and practices, prayers and **Sifrei Kodesh** (12) as well as the ever- recurring theme of **tznius** which might be translated as modesty in dress and personal behaviour. In other words, Sarah Schenirer inspired the forming of a "new" type of orthodox woman. This was a woman who, apart from the traditional domestic and reproductive domains, had acquired the added dimensions of Torah knowledge and spiritual enhancement. Such a woman was to become, as it turned out, the ideal sought in certain sectors of Jewish orthodoxy. Although the idea of educating women in Torah has remained largely an idea alien to most Hassidic communities, the Litvishe Yeshivot communities have come to regard Torah education in women as an added tool against assimilation and an invaluable advantage in the duty of retaining a "Torah way of life" for future generations.

In Gateshead, where by the beginning of the 1940s, there existed not only a fully

comprehensive Jewish education system as well as two differing levels of higher Jewish studies for boys, there was a conspicuous lack of further Jewish education for girls. In other words, girls above secondary school level could only obtain further education within the secular education system. The lack of an alternative Jewish Higher Education facility or a realistic alternative to the secular schools for girls, caused much concern in a community which wished(s) to remain apart from, and avoid the "obstructive" influences of the society at large. Once again the German influx showed their skill and tenacity and managed by 1944, in spite of opposition from the original **Baalei Batim** (laymen) of the community, to establish a Jewish girls' training college, or Seminary known familiarly in Gateshead as **"the Sem"**. Set up in the spirit of Sarah Schenirer, the Sem in Gateshead offered(s) girls aged between 16 and 18 a profound and explicit curriculum of Jewish subjects. Still, the Gateshead Sem was in time to adopt and stress the importance of developing the ethical aspects of the Torah as it is seen to influence all social life. In line with the Litvishe-styled Yeshiva and Kolel of the community with their emphasis on **Mussar**, the latter rapidly became a subject of the institution's general curriculum. A pedagogy which favoured the expansion and concern of the spirit could well accommodate the **Mussar** concept of self-improvement and interpersonal ethics. Regarded as vital to all social life, it could hardly be ignored in women. Hence the Sem accepted the responsibility and need for focussing on the hitherto neglected significance of enhancing female **Middos** (13) through formal education, in addition to the informal training in the home environment. In time, **Mussar** and **shiurim** (14) became a vital part of the Sem's timetable and was later to set it apart from other Seminaries being established around the world, some of which often continued to stress and favour domestic subjects over intellectual and spiritual studies (15).

Apart from providing young orthodox girls with the only career prospect open to them, as competent teachers of most Jewish infant and junior schools, the Sem became an important component in the upkeep of a comprehensive Jewish education system and consequently a way of strengthening the Torah communities.

Finally, the Sem of Gateshead was to gain the added importance of preparing

girls for marriage with the ever-increasing number of learners who, committed to a "Torah life," were (are) increasingly seeking a wife with more formal intellectual religious training than would have been possible in previous generations. In fact, the Gateshead Sem has, through time, acquired a considerable international reputation as a high quality orthodox "finishing school", one which will help to ensure better partners in marriage.

4. The General Renaissance Within the World of Jewish Orthodoxy:

During the four decades after the war an increasing number of members have joined the Gateshead community. The reason for this is not solely the community's reputation for maintaining excellent institutions of comprehensive and higher centres of Jewish education or that its members are all **shomer shabbos.** There are other socioeconomic and religious reasons for this expansion. In the post-war years the world of Jewish orthodoxy has experienced a revolutionary numerical change. Although the devastating effects of the holocaust were a prime cause of the decline in the Jewish population, even more destructive in numerical terms, apart from assimilation, is the increased rate of marriage out of the group. There is today, within the non-orthodox groups, much concern with their ever-diminishing numbers. As Praiise and Schmal (1975) have statistically shown there is in England and Wales a decline in the number of non-orthodox Jews in England and Wales.

Further, Praiise and Schmal indicates that there is a fifteen to twenty per cent decline in ethnic group affiliation. This he has .measured through numbers affiliated to synagogues. He found that synagogue affiliation did not exist for one-third of the Jewish population. Of those who did affiliate, he found a strong tendency to join the Liberal and Reform sections, which both show high tendencies towards assimilation and pronounced selectiveness in terms of adherence to halachic laws. This increased tendency of not choosing religious observance as a means of identification, among certain groups of Jews, is a tendency observed

in Australia (Taft, 1975), America (Goldstein, 1974), and in England (Krausz, 1969). In England, Krausz found that though supportive of Jewish ethnicity, the latter was maintained through kinship ties, sociability patterns, area of residence, and a mutual interest in Israel. It is against this backcloth that we must view the recent numerical increase within the orthodox groups in England. Whereas birth rates and religious affiliation in non-orthodox groups are steadily declining, orthodox groups are experiencing a numerical upsurge as well as a Renaissance of religious identity (Mayer 1973).

In terms of birth rate increase, it is interesting that of my informants in Gateshead, eighty-six per cent had more children than their mothers, and of those, sixty-four per cent had twice as many, or even more, children. Children, many children, are considered a great blessing and infertility a terrible tragedy. But soaring birth rates cannot alone account for the steady numerical increase within these religious right-wing groups. During the last thirty years, some say due to the establishment of the state of Israel, others to the unforeseeable outcome of the "Sixday" and "Yom Kippur" wars, thousands of Jews worldwide have joined religious communities despite their non- religious background.

Though the issue of conversion (Jones 1937, Wilson 1973) is an important one in Gateshead , it lies outside the scope of this thesis and I shall therefore only discuss it very briefly. The **Baalei Tshuva** (people who repent) (Schiller, 1978) as these "returners" are called, often express disillusion or loss of "faith" in the values and state of the secular world or a "lack of purpose" in their former "empty" lives. As Berger (1967) has pointed out, people not only obtain their notions and understandings about their world from people surrounding them, in addition the latter must continue to affirm these notions, if they are to remain plausible. Still, modern society is characterised by a situation whereby most plausibility structures are under constant pressure and do, in effect, reveal that they are both partial and tenuous and that consequently "reality- slipping" might occur. Berger explains that these "reality- slips" can occasionally induce "re-socialisation" whereby the person makes use of an available legitimating apparatus, and is thereby able to justify and

enact a whole sequence of transformation. The legitimating apparatus must, apart from legitimising the "new" reality, also provide the stages by which this "new" reality is maintained (and appropriated), and why other existing alternatives should be rejected. The fact that there are thousands of **Baalei Tshuva** to be found presently in differing sectors of the orthodox Jewish world, is a sign that the latter is, to some extent, capable of providing the "legitimating apparatus" upon which people, suffering from "reality-slips" in their encounters with the society at large, might "re-socialize" and reconstruct their world-reality.

The act of **teshuva** (repentance) is intrinsic to Judaism and the reverence which it demands is described in the Talmud as follows: **"Where the Baal Teshuva stands, even the completely righteous cannot stand."** With very little prior religious knowledge the **Baalei Tshuva** embarks upon a road which is, according to those whose "reality" it has always been, both difficult and hard. Many of them have taken their time in deciding: going to classes, visiting orthodox Jewish summer camps, and establishing "support" families within an orthodox community. In other words, they have had the opportunity of gaining religious affirmations, in itself difficult to obtain through one's own experience, through the social support of others. The preliminary and gradual preparations, instructions and soul-searching eventually, in many cases, result in the person "breaking away" from his/her previous lifestyle and commencing a "new" life in accordance with strict observance of the halachic laws. The degree of observance and style of religious practice will depend upon that of the orthodox group with which the person chooses to affiliate him/herself (16).

Like Southwold's (1978) experience of how his own "inner thought", with time spent among Buddhists, accepted the doctrine of Rebirth, I believe that specific religiocultural doctrines hold "pervasive powers". Southwold, who claims that the doctrine of Rebirth has a quality of empirical indeterminacy, is intrigued to find that:

however much I might allow its plausibility and even desirability, it would always seem to me fanciful and without facticity. After some months of living among the Sinhalese I observed that I virtually was believing the doctrine: that is, not only in my speech but also in my private thoughts, to assume the reality of Rebirth had become natural, extremely attractive, and increasingly axiomatic. (Southwold 1978. P. 373)

The **Baalei Tshuvas** in Gateshead are exposed to a similar process, whereby the individual accepts, discriminately, certain factors as "reality" at the expense of other possible "realities". When the German refugees arrived in the late nineteen thirties there were about thirty families in Gateshead. Today there are about two hundred and fifty families of which approx. seventy are **Baalei Tshuva** families. In other words, a substantial part of the community are of the latter category. The majority of them have left prestigious and economically "sound" life-styles in the secular world, exchanging their jobs as doctors, surgeons, lawyers or accountants, for full time studies in the Yeshiva or even the Kolel. Settling down in Gateshead means that they have not only chosen to become religiously observant, it further indicates that they wish, in the Litvishe tradition, to place Talmudic study before other traditional occupations, a priority for which they in Gateshead receive support, encouragement and opportunities.

5) The Capital generating Side Effect of Torah Lishmo:

The post-war renaissance in Jewish orthodoxy has created, among the students of the Litvishe Yeshiva tradition, an increasing and persistent acceptance of full-time Torah study as the most sought-after and socially acceptable activity. The higher spiritual purpose of study, learning Torah for its own sake, **Limud haTorah Lishmo**, taken on by as many Jews as possible, is deemed to ensure the spiritual survival and future of Judaism. In other words, married men who have ever-growing families to support, are now spending their days in continuous Torah study, not always for rabbinical degrees, but for the sake of study itself. Whereas men prior to the war, regardless of religious, intellectual, or pious levels, had to spend most of their time and effort in earning "a living" (Poll, 1962), men in

Gateshead today rarely have what might be labelled "capital generating" occupations. In fact those who do earn money through trade or professions represent a small minority in today's Gateshead and are to a large extent, involved in supporting and catering for the community's needs.

The question then arises as to how it has been financially possible to intensify the traditional Litvishe philosophy of **Torah lishmo** within a modern western economic system. The question is especially relevant in the face of the ever-growing size of orthodox families. First of all, it is important to realise that though both the Yeshiva and the Sem are fee-paying establishments, only a small minority of the Yeshiva students pay full tuition fees and survive on help from relatives or small grants. The Kolel students, on the other hand, receive salaries which are worked out in accordance with the size and needs of their families. Thus the students themselves generate very little capital to the institutions, but nevertheless the Sem continues to expand and the Yeshiva is presently expanding so that it may accommodate hundreds of more students. Here it is important to realise that orthodox parents as well as parents-in- law world-wide, go to great lengths and trouble to support their sons and sons-in-law in full-time studies. Although the family's support plays a central role in the financing of students, the number of students involved in higher religious studies in Gateshead is due to the value and stress that is placed on the **Mitzva** of charity - **Tzedakah** - in Judaism. Although the role of charity in Judaism is an important issue in terms of social organisation and stratification and worthy of considerable attention, a brief description by Heilman (1973) will have to suffice for the present purpose of indicating how the generosity and attitude of the orthodox communities enables and sustains the running of the education institutions of Gateshead:

The giving of charity is and always has been an integral part of the religious life of Orthodox Jews. To give of one's wealth to another Jew in need is an imperative, commanded by both the laws and the traditions of Jewry, and no man may consider his religious obligations completely fulfilled without his having engaged in some charity-giving.(Heilman, 1973:111)

It is to be remembered that many orthodox Jewish businessmen have strong commitments to specific Yeshivas, due either to their own or their son's time spent there, or a specific reverence for one of the present or past staff of the Yeshiva. The Gateshead Yeshiva and Kolel receive considerable donations from such men who contribute faithfully for various reasons, to the learned section. Secondly, there are the Yeshiva and Kolel students who take turns according to a specific rotation system and who travel from community to community soliciting funds for their institutions. Mass mailings to national lists of Jews who might donate, is a third source of revenue. These three avenues, in addition to certain government funding and the fee- paying tuition (offered to community and non-community members by staff and students) constitute a funding system for the higher education institutions as follows: a) personal solicitations, b) mass mailings, c) student tuition, d) government contributions. One could convincingly argue that the Litvishe philosophy of the **Torah lishmo** has shown itself as self-generating in that the dedication of an increasing number of Jews engaged in full-time Torah study, has given rise to large-scale charity commitments and the consequent future financing systems for continued **Torah lishmo.**

Notes to Chapter 3.1

1.
"Kristall Nacht" was but one such event, when during the night of November 9-10, 1938, more than two hundred synagogues were destroyed. This night the Nazi mobs

looted, plundered and destroyed synagogues, Jewish homes, and property on a grand scale, leaving Jews dead and wounded by the hundred. Not counting the two thousand Jews already killed in the existing concentration camps.

2.
Punitive laws. Jews were forbidden to employ non-Jews and were excluded from citizenship and property was confiscated.

3.
In Germany a movement arose called Torah im Derekh Eretz, which was aimed at combining religious as well as secular studies whilst remaining true to traditional Judaism. This phenomenom has been discussed by G. Kranzler (1968).

4.
Trefa Medina, a non-kosher country.

5.
A Kolel is a post-graduate Talmudical college.

6.
The Yeshiva is the big yeshiva for youths from 16 and upwards, the yeshiva Katanah is for boys from 14-16.

7.
Bochurim, means Yeshiva students.

8.
Mussar Shmuess, talk aimed to achieve spiritual "uplifting".

9.
Bas Torah, lit. means daughter of the Torah (pl.B'nos Torah)

10.
Da'as Torah, means the Torah perspective.

11.
Beis Yaakov (lit. House of Jacob from Exodus 19:3. House of Jacob I.E. women, children or sons of Israel men) seminaries for Jewish girls.

12.
Sifrei Kodesh, means books of sacred literature.

13.
Middos, lit. means "measure", but is here referred to a person's character traits.

14.
Shiurim means lectures.

15.
In England there is also a Sem in Manchester, but unlike the one in Gateshead, the emphasis there is more on practical Jewish household subjects.

16.
In Gateshead is often claimed (by the other members) that the Baalei Teshuvas are too "severe" in their observance since they have not yet got their "balance right."

3.2 GENERATING CULTURAL COMPETENCE

The surge back to orthodoxy that has been experienced within Judaism in the last three decades has created an acute and widespread demand for Jewish education, both formal and informal. The former requirement has been answered through the various Jewish schools, seminaries, Yeshivot and Kolelim which have been established worldwide since the war, whilst the informal education is provided by long-standing established orthodox families living together in communities saturated with the specific religio-cultural environment of **Yiddishkeit** (Jewishness). Having, from the onset, operated as a kind of **shtetl**, a stronghold of **Yiddishkeit**, the establishment of the various Jewish education institutions in Gateshead meant that the community could provide and transfer the presently much sought after Jewish knowledge, both formal and informal. What had started out as a means of securing and preventing the decay of an existing orthodox community, turned out to be the answer to a demand which was to become far larger than anyone had ever imagined at the time of the establishment of the education institutions, and Gateshead has answered this call. The Jewish schools which, at the outset, educated the sons and daughters of peddlers, shopkeepers, businessmen and wholesalers, today mainly have pupils who are children of full-time students or staff of the higher education institutions or young men and women who have come from afar to study and experience "authentic Judaism". What was intended as a necessary component in a "Torah community" is presently partly its **raison d'etre.** Community life today revolves around the Yeshiva, Kolel and Sem, which together attract hundreds of students and families in the common effort and desire to learn in the Litvishe-way and to have **Mussar** play a vital role in their lives.

Students, those who in increasing numbers have families, can undertake their studies in Gateshead in institutions of the highest standards and can rest assured that their children are educated in Jewish schools, all in the midst of a "Torah environment". With the onset of the great **Baal Teshuva** movement and the renewed importance on **Torah lishmo**, communities which can offer the above mentioned facilities and

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qualities have gained increased significance as they are natural centres for the knowledge which these "returners" seek. It needs to be pointed out that there are other communities, in other parts of the world which offer, if not exactly the same, then similar facilities and Gateshead has numerous contacts with these. Deciding to move to Gateshead is a conscious choice in terms of intellectual interest, philosophical direction and specific religio-cultural adherence. The intellectual as well as human qualities of the rabbis and staff of the teaching institutions, the content and emphasis of their lectures, the devotion of the students who learn there combined with the community's specific stress on ethics and **Mussar** (also reflected in the behaviour and attitudes of the community's members), makes for a decisive interactive style and atmosphere in the midst of an area otherwise rife with social problems and deprivation. Rather than causing concern among the community members, the conditions of the surrounding society at large is regarded as beneficial to the community in their quest to remain isolated and apart. It serves as a means of highlighting their own ethical values and decreases, it is believed, the risks of the young being attracted to the "other" world.

Desire and intent alone could not have instigated and supported the sociocultural changes within the community or the extent of segregation from the society at large which occurred after the 1940s in Gateshead. Like Hannerz (1974, 1980) I contend that to fully understand the forces and contents of ethnicity in an urban context, we must also consider how groups advance their interests in the urban opportunity structure. But to take socio-economic factors into consideration is not necessarily to reduce ethnicity indiscriminately to the scramble for scarce resources (Cohen, 1969; Despres, 1975).

Taking a minority group's historical and socio-economic circumstances into account, affords the insight that intentional actions are a necessary condition of ethnicity. People might render it beneficial to adjust or be discriminating in their inter-group actions in accordance with their position in the opportunity structure. The contexts of their involvement with, or their disassociation from the relevant urban opportunity structure has historically, in part, curbed or projected kinds and

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degrees of Gateshead's discriminating factors.

Essential to Hannerz's (1974) argument is the notion that the range of ethnic strategies conceived of as being determined by the constraints and opportunities within the urban economic structure, might be manipulated in ways which are seen, by its members, to be most advantageous to the group. Although he recognises the need for a:

> **wider definition of ethnicity as the phenomenon whereby people are categorized in terms of those most general group identities presumptively revealed in behaviour and background.**(Hannerz, 1974:39)

his concern is foremost with the manner in which the communication of discriminating differences might benefit the given group economically. Here he warns against using the approach uncritically in that such groups might, and often do, appear in many shapes and forms depending on situational socio- economic factors which combined represent constraints and opportunities within the urban structure. Presenting three different opportunity situations in which minority groups have made use of specific ethnic strategies, Hannerz shows that such groups might call upon considerable amounts of in-group solidarity and cooperation. He is however, aware that it is problematic to estimate the relevance and role of ethnic solidarity in creating and taking advantage of these opportunity situations but insists that it is a decisive factor in ethnic groups' quest to avoid or modify the dominance of the general culture. In other words, he claims that ethnicity may be regarded as functionally having the ability to be manipulated by its members in ways which might affect the group's socio-economic position.

Combining socio-economic aspects with intentional strategies provides, I believe, an invaluable approach with which to fully appreciate the sociocultural changes which have taken place in Gateshead in its hundred years of existence. By way of intentionally making use of in-group solidarity and selective projection of its particular discriminating characteristics in inter-group interactions, the community has been able to operate through <u>two</u> differing economic spheres of opportunity.

In effect it may be argued that Gateshead has utilised two of the three opportunity situations which Hannerz discusses as permitting ethnic strategies to be put into operation:

> **One may find an unoccupied niche in the general division of labour and resources, one may raise the barriers around one's own group and make it a special niche for some of its members, or one may use whatever strength it has in particular areas.**(Ibid.,1974:60)

During the community's first fifty years of existence the particular socio-economic conditions relevant to the specific time and space, permitted the community members to operate within the first of the three avenues mentioned by Hannerz - the sphere of Ethnic Hegemony. Ethnic Hegemony is an avenue which often characterises the way in which "new" immigrant groups gain access to resources within the general economy. As there was competition for jobs among the members of the society at large and since Jews were restricted from seeking employment due to their Shabbath laws, there was a need for the **shomer shabbos** of Gateshead to create and to organise an unoccupied niche for themselves.

The general economic depression and high level of unemployment and consequent poverty of the area at the turn of the century was to provide the East European Jews who settled in Gateshead with the basis for a niche within the general economic structure which they were eventually to occupy. The entrepreneurs from Gateshead, relying upon and mobilising ethnic solidarity, were able to provide the society at large with the highly valued and much sought after commodity of credit facilities. This is not to say that they were the only peddlers involved in supplying this particular type of commodity, but that they were also able to provide the added dimension of a flexible and "adjusted" credit service. Unlike the non-Jewish peddlers whose involvement with their own suppliers was, in general, strictly commercial in kind, the Gateshead peddlers could, in addition to the latter, rely upon and to a certain degree manipulate, powerful strings of ethnic solidarity in dealings with their suppliers.

Ethnic solidarity thus provided the basis for an individualised relationship between the Gateshead peddler and his customer in which the former could adjust to the latter's needs and particular circumstances. The housewife whose husband was out of work, or whose last pennies had been spent on a child's medicine, might be granted "extra time" from the Gateshead peddler who, based upon ethnic solidarity, could rely upon a certain measure of tolerance from his own supplier in Newcastle. It could be argued that ethnic solidarity allowed the entrepreneurs from Gateshead a greater degree of discretion in his business practices than the non-Jewish peddler enjoyed. The particular conditions under which these entrepreneurs were able to provide and supply the society at large with a specific facility of which there was restricted availability, enabled the group to create for themselves a niche within the constraints of the general economic structure (Gmelch, 1986). This was a niche where competition was restricted, demand high and where the Jew's religious practices created few obstacles. Here one might add though, that in some cases the fact that the Jewish peddler could not always (especially so during the winter months) collect his money on Friday afternoons (due to the Shabbath) which was pay- day, increased the demand for Jewish peddlers since they effectively, unlike their non-Jewish competitors, also offered a possibility for delay of payments.

The strategy of operating through entrepreneurships which produce and supply services and goods which members of the general culture value and seek, is an avenue adopted not only by Jews but also one which is sought by numerous other ethnic groups, consider for example the role of Chinese restaurants, "Black" music, gypsy fortune·tellers, or Indian garment market stalls in Britain today (Wallman 1979).

The strategy of Ethnic Hegemony rendered it necessary for the ethnic group to adapt to, and widen its areas of interaction with members of the society at large. An increased familiarity and certain intimacy with the society at large and its particular sociocultural meaning-codes, norms and values became a means of sustaining the ethnic group's particular niche or structural position. This caused, to a certain extent, the ethnic boundaries in Gateshead to become less rigid and in

turn jeopardised selective pre-existing cultural communalities. The latter was conspicuous in the increased inter-group interactions, in their levels of involvement in secular activities and in the change of dress style that occured during this period.

In spite of remaining strictly **shomer shabbos**, the members of Gateshead community did during its first fifty years of existence, as a consequence of their particular niche position within the general economic structure, reappraise the appropriateness and functions of numerous sociocultural traits which had hitherto constituted part of the basis for their ethnic identity. In other words, they selectively reduced their discriminating characteristics in a strategy aimed partly at maintaining a particular economic niche. These adjustments were acceptable as long as they did not interfere with religious precepts, and most importantly, that people could remain **shomer shabbos**. In so far as community members wished to retain specific components of their sociocultural communalities, their **Yiddishkeit**, they also recognised a need to provide scope for cultural adaptations in areas of interaction with the society at large. It was a social reality which they could neither avoid nor ignore while occupying the niche of Ethnic Hegemony.

The latter tendency, that of decreasing the sociocultural difference between themselves and the society at large, came to a halt with the increasing influence of the refugees and that of the intellectuals in Gateshead. Although isolationism eventually became attractive to dominant sections of the community it was not a trend which could succeed overnight, and certainly not without rearranging specific aspects of their socio-economic position. Events which took place within the world of Jewry in the post-war years were to provide Gateshead with the opportunity to do just that. The revival of, or rather the greatly increased interest in **Torah lishmo** combined with the **Baal Teshuva** movement and the Renaissance of Jewish orthodoxy in the post-war years, have enabled the community to shift its niche position from one within the general economic structure to a position outside the latter, whereby it has achieved a position relatively independent of the constraints of that structure. This is an avenue which fits in snugly with the situation which Hannerz refers to as entrepreneurship within ethnic boundaries, and is characterised

by the group's efforts to provide a protected niche for entrepreneurs within the ethnic group, in which non- members are more or less disadvantaged in competition for the same customers. Hannerz discusses how the outsider's lack of know-how constitutes a "handicap" in the opportunity competition. One example of this is Italian or Jewish food stores, where cultural "competence" is a necessary and valuable asset. Furthermore, there might be situations where ethnic entrepreneurship within the group is the only outlet, as in the case of black doctors in certain areas of America who will only be sought out by black patients. Here the niche might not be voluntary but circumstantial.

In the case of Gateshead, they have devised a commodity which is neither useful to, nor recognised by the society at large, but one which is highly valued and sought after by an increasing number within their own larger ethnic group. Theirs is a commodity and resource which is highly specialised, reasonably scarce (in its pure form) and increasingly requested by the wider group's members. This increased demand by the world of Jewry for Jewish knowledge (both formal and informal) means that Gateshead is today actively engaged as suppliers of the commodity of **cultural expertise.** With its many higher Jewish teaching institutions, density of Jewish intellectuals and comprehensive "back-up" services fulfilling all the requirements of an orthodox lifestyle and last but not least, a particular philosophical approach to life - **Mussar,** Gateshead is able to occupy a niche based on the activity of what I see as **specialised culture transmission.** The constraints and possibilities of this niche lie within the Jewish world itself, rendering the community relatively independent of the society at large's economic structure. In many ways it has also allowed the community to become less involved with, and independent of, those members of the wider group who are becoming increasingly de-ethnicised, in that the Gateshead of today might rely on its own technical competence -cultural expertise- rather than on ethnic solidarity. What Hannerz claims has to be recognised is that:

entrepreneurship directed towards the entrepreneur's own ethnic group need not be wholly based on the moral imperative of solidarity but may also be based on technical competence.(ibid., 1974:56)

Rather than relying upon ethnic solidarity from their brethren in Newcastle for support and assistance, Gateshead today supplies the former with a knowledge and competence which has relentlessly become eroded within that community. On a much larger scale and more important, is Gateshead's involvement with the Jewish international scene in that its reputation as a centre for culture transmission attracts Jews from all over the world. This is where, amidst the unsuspecting "Geordies" who also live in this small northern English town, people from many parts of Western Europe, the Middle East, Northern and Southern Africa, Australia and America gather to receive and engage in both formal transmission of culture, as well as an informal daily practice of its contents.

The process of formalising culture transmission by means of high- levelled internationally recognised teaching institutions, in effect means that the community has created a Jewish **International culture capital** which is produced, operated and transmitted within the limits of the community. Today, Gateshead holds a position within the world of Jewry as a centre where one can, in combination; gain, refine, expand and practise the increasingly valued "capital" of religio-cultural knowledge. Independent of the society at large, operating within its own ethnic boundaries, it is a niche which not only permits independence from the society at large, but one in which community members have succeeded in generating strong separatist aspirations and increasing sociocultural isolation.

4.1 GATESHEAD OF TODAY: A SUB-GROUP WITHIN ANGLO JEWRY, ISOLATED FROM THE SOCIETY AT LARGE

When considering the changes that have taken place in Gateshead in the last fifty years it is not suprising to find that the community today represents a sub-group within Anglo Jewry. The renewed interest and deep concern with **Torah lishmo** and the specific interest in **Mussar** has created a community whose main concern is that of living lives which are in meticulous compliance with Torah precepts and with particular attention given to inter-personal ethics. Although there are other strictly orthodox communities in Britain, Gateshead's particular role within the world of Jewry and its relative independence from the society at large's economic structure provides the community with a specific sub-group position. It is an acquired position which is based upon a combination of their reputation as one of the world's most important centres of formal Jewish culture transmission and the homogeneity and level which the community demonstrates in terms of their deep felt religiosity and devotion to Jewish ethics. Over a period of fifty years these changes have restyled inter-personal interactions and brought about a re-negotiation of particular sociocultural constructs. The tangible outcome of these changes is that the community has not only distinguished itself within Anglo Jewry, but has also become increasingly isolated from the society at large.

In post-war years the community's members have firmly rejected and opposed any degree of assimilation. The latter, the process whereby differences between one group and another are reduced (Epstein, 1978; Banton, 1981; Bjorklund, 1983), has held no attraction for the community whatsoever during this period. During this period members of the community have rejected the process of making use of a selective number of discriminating sociocultural characteristics and have in

contrast found it beneficial to their new niche position to re-affirm an increasing number discriminating characteristics.

People in the community today conduct their lives with a minimum of involvement with the society at large. This is a strategy which has been possible to accomplish due to the community's economic independence from the society at large and its occupation of a specific economic niche within the larger ethnic group but it has also become **desirable** due to a particular sociocultural response to internal forces which has crystallized indigenous beliefs concerning human nature. As will be shown later in the thesis, their particular interest in ethics has instigated the re-negotiation of the particular religiocultural construct of human nature which has, among other aspects, had decisive implications for the quality and the degree of inter-ethnic relations.

The orthodox sub-group of the nearby Newcastle Jewish community retains, on the other hand, close as well as numerous areas of contact with the society at large. Its members, who have "normal" jobs or professions and to whom **Torah "lishmo"** holds little attraction, are far less preoccupied with inter-personal ethics and halachic Laws than their bretheren in Gateshead. Despite the difference and tension which exists between the two communities (1) many of the members of the Newcastle community are involved in study groups or receive tuition in Gateshead. There are also special classes where members from Gateshead come to Newcastle to teach. It is today generally recognized that Gateshead provides Newcastle with much of its religiocultural competence as well as an opportunity for members to appraise their own proficiency in this area. Here there is obvious scope for differences both in terms of knowledge and devotion, thus creating demarcations and the basis for inter-ethnic group heterogeneity.

Similarly, Talai (1986) in her study of Armenians in London reveals the importance of paying attention to the potential heterogeneous disposition of ethnic groups. Not surprisingly, she sees the ethnic group of Armenians in London as consisting of a number of rival sub-groups, all claiming that "theirs" is the true Armenian way.

These sub-groups reaffirm and justify their own identity by way of doubting the eligibility of other sub-groups' members behaviour. In this sense, ethnicity to the Armenians only seems important inasmuch as it directs and regulates people's actions towards other group members who are perceived as different in terms of ethnic identity. Essential to Talai's argument is that ethnic identity is neither static nor homogeneous and that although members of an ethnic group do indeed:

hold a variety of involvements even when they maintain their participation in a shared framework of ethnic organisation, it would not be surprising if they also held different interpretations of and attached different values to their ascribed ethnic identity.(Talai, 1986:287)

Gateshead sub-group position is founded on the community's particular response to external and internal forces and whose present ethnic communalities are expressed in ways which differ from other Jewish sub-groups. It provides a sub-group position which is both recognised and pronounced by members as well as non-members of the community. The following comment by a Gateshead woman who was about to leave for another community due to her husband taking on a Rabbinical position elsewhere, demonstrates this point:

"I'm very sad to leave. Although we are moving to another Torah community, it does not have the standing of Gateshead. Gateshead is so different from any other Torah community. Not only because of our clothes or how we look. These things are not important, but because we all keep the same standards. Really, you don't know how wonderful it feels. I would let my children eat in any home in my street. I don't know of anywhere else where that could be possible. You see, here we all know each others' standards already. Sure, other communities have Torah life too but Gateshead is somehow different in that everybody here is above a certain level."

Gateshead's somewhat elevated position and level of orthodoxy did also at times provided myself with a somewhat unexpected status. As the apologetic comments of this next woman reveals, the standards of Gateshead was for instance among Jews in Newcastle, considered to have "rubbed off" on my behaviours:

"I hope you don't expect Gateshead standards here! I would unfortunately not know where to begin! So you'll be able to teach me a thing or two now that you've

been among and have been taught by the Gateshead lot. Soon you'll be a lot frummer than we are here in Newcastle and a lot of people might worry about letting you in to their homes."

It would seem that Gateshead has in some ways become a yardstick with which members of other Jewish communities might evaluate their own levels of adherence to, as well as choice of socio- cultural communalities upon which they base their ethnic identity. The following comment from a woman in the Newcastle community demonstrates this usage:

"As you have seen already, we are an orthodox family and we do things our way. But I'm sure they would not accept it in Gateshead. They are much stricter than us. Even I who have been brought up in, and keep an orthodox home, would never dare to have anything to eat in Gateshead. I know I'd be unable to conceal my own lack of knowledge. Not that I'm worried about their standards you understand, it's that I'm sure that I would do something wrong without even being aware of it. They really have a way of making you nervous, you know. And they make you feel that you are not as good as they are. My husband says that I should ignore them. But how can I? After all they are the ones who've got it right and who behave as Jews should."

This last comment reveals the heterogeneous conditions existing within the ethnic group and how varying sub-groups might differ in their sociocultural preferences and interpretations. This further underscores the need in ethnic studies to pay careful attention to a wide spectrum of underlying historic, socioeconomic and religiocultural conditions whose particular local composition might give rise to varying ethnic sub-groups (responses). Essential to this argument which claims that Gateshead today holds a specific ethnic sub-group position as well as retaining desired sociocultural isolation from the society at large, is that ethnicity cannot, in the Barthian sense, merely focus upon:

the ethnic boundary that defines the group (Barth, 1969:15)
and simply ignore, as Barth further suggests:
the cultural stuff that it encloses. (ibid;15)

Although Barth's approach (1966, 1969) is useful in accounting for ethnicity as a

type of social organisational phenomenon, it fails to recognize that ethnicity is partly a property of relationships (Eriksen 1991). Dealing with ethnicity must include the recognition that there are variations in the degree of shared meaning in a given context and that there is justifiable reason to negotiate, in ethnic studies, the existence of incommensuarble language-games between groups of people. I see such language-games as a shared cultural idiom which allows people to share common meaning in interactions. Although Barth's approach to ethnicity is highly plausible I do object to his consistent neglect of the analytically difficult aspect of culture. The latter, in spite of its complex definition, is a social reality which together with historical and economical factors cannot be disregarded in ethnic studies.

The sociocultural communalities which underpin peoples' relationships and around which people in Gateshead have chosen to unite, have historically demonstrated a high level of plasticity and ability to generate local responses to change. Change in the use and importance of specific sociocultural communalities is an indication of the potential creative capacity inherent in ethnicity. This is a view in which the dynamic impact of external and internal influences deserve consideration and where attention should be given to how members of a given group may re-interpret and re-organize particular sociocultural communalities as a means of accommodating or adjusting to requirements of current local conditions and changes. In other words, the cultural communalities of any given group at any given time may be viewed as a temporary threshold in that it represents a given group's present responses to changes in the external and internal environment. The inherent potential of flexibility in ethnicity is also recognised by Keyes (1981) who claims that studies of ethnic change must consider both its social and cultural dimensions. Keyes understands a shift in the social situation in which people act as being a:

> **dialectical one. In radically changed circumstances, pre- existing patterns of social action often prove to be no longer viable. New patterns are then evolved and these, in turn,. stimulate, either consciously or unconsciously, a reassessment of the appropriateness of the functions of the ethnic group identities upon which these**

affiliations are predicted. Concomitant with the necessary changes in social patterns, those living in new circumstances may also have to adopt new cultural meanings and practices.(Keyes, 1981:15)

As it turns out, Keyes's interests in ethnic changes are limited to adaptations or alterations in what he refers to as "social patterns" and "cultural characteristics", leaving us not only to decipher the context and content of these ambiguous concepts, but also with the notion of having been presented with an account which deals with ethnicity mainly on an impersonal level and of having ignored or disregarded the process of change as it takes place on the individual level. What is lacking is a demonstration and concern with how external and internal forces cause people to re-negotiate specific ideas and beliefs and how this effects the individual's conduct and actions in ethnic encounters.

Keyes's concern lies with changes as they occur in the aspect of a group's particular social or cultural formation (such as the changes which occurred among Malay--speaking people on the Malay Peninsula with the influx of Islamic migrants) but he ignores, or fails to throw light on the effects which these changed circumstances have on the individual agent or particular member of the involved groups. Without an understanding of the content and form of peoples' re-negotiated ideas, beliefs and emotions, caused by various external /internal factors, we are no closer to understanding the cultural differences which, selected and enacted, distinguish members of one group from those of another.

The most conspicuous and salient sign of the ethnic changes which have taken place in Gateshead in the last fifty years is the community's present desire for high levels of isolationism . In order that later discussions concerning the importance and role of the sociocultural communalities which have instigated this change may prove convincing, it is necessary to briefly indicate that signs of change are not ethnographic fantasies but that they are indeed recognized, negotiated and evaluated both within and outside the community. For obvious reasons these changes are primarily recognised by older members of the two communities who have memories of ethnic conditions which encompasses the group's first and second

period. As one of the older members of the Jewish community recalls:

"At one time we had a lot to do with the Goyim. We dealt with them regularly, after all we went to school with them and my father did most of his business with them. We knew who they were, but we knew to recognise the good ones from the bad ones. It is an unfortunate thing that many of our children today think of them as all bad, they are often not told at home that there are decent and respectable Goyim as well. Here some of our "new" ones, the Baalei Tshuva, really go too far.."

What this person expresses is a concern that some of the group's members, in collective efforts to achieve isolationism, have lost their ability to discriminate "objectively", a sentiment which is also expressed by another group member:

"Our parents, and we try to do the same with our children today but many here in Gateshead don't, always told us that we must respect the Gentiles and that there are good as well as bad ones among them. Anyhow we soon enough saw this for ourselves since we had plenty of opportunities to be around them in school and so forth. Today children, and even many of the adults here, have hardly any contact with them, and people have become shy and resentful (of them) and avoid them as much as possible."

The intent of diminished contact with out-group members is specifically expressed by the woman who says that:

"We really don't want our children to see what's going on out there. It is totally destructive to our people. It is our duty as parents to protect our children from the influences, the disruptive and destructive powers which are operating just outside our homes. If that means isolating the children, if it means keeping them away from the Goyim's world, then that is what we must do. People here didn't think like that before, but I believe, no I am convinced, that now we are better able to live like Yidden were intended to live."

That "things have changed" between the two groups and that members of the society at large recognise the group's segregational intent is also clear from conversations with older non-Jews in the area. Their accounts of present between-group relations frequently pertain to a notion that the "new ones" are "strange" and withdrawn. People's narrative representations of their relationship

with the Jewish community in times gone by, when compared with the present conditions, are invariably presented as a dichotomy. The choice of dichotomous adjectives such as; distant-near, friendly-unfriendly, cold-warm, ordinary-strange or same-different, reveal the notion that members of Gateshead's present Jewish community are regarded as "different" from its previous inhabitants and that a deterioration in inter-ethnic relationships is felt to have occurred. The following comment made by a woman, well over seventy, who has lived all her life in one of the streets just next to the Jewish community, demonstrates this point:

"We all knew that they was different. I mean like lots of things they couldn't do or things they had to do. But it never bothered us none. They were just like the rest of us. We used to have lovely chats in the street, our kids, especially my youngest girl, was forever playing with one of their kids, a little girl called Ruth. She came to our house or they went over there to the other girl's house, no problem there. You won't see that today! They keep to themselves now. "Our" children never play with their kids, mind you, nowadays they sometimes have fights with them. It's a different lot over there now. Not as friendly and down-to-earth as they used to be, Now they live in a world of their own, they don't even notice the rest of us!".

Similarly, the next woman also confirms the notion that changes have occurred within the Jewish community which has drastically changed a previously rewarding or at least amicable relationship between the two communities:

"The "old" lot were not much different from the rest of us. Of course we all knew that they had their religion and their own strict laws, but they kept that pretty much to themselves. They did their own things at home, but otherwise, among the rest of us, they were no different really. Like the rest of us they had to make do with little, no difference there. There was a Mrs..... among them, a lovely lady, she always took time to ask me about my husband John, the time he was poorly for months with his lungs. Today all that's changed. Not that they're any bother, we hardly notice them apart from the way they look, it's just that they're so offish. Not that they're not polite, they are! But nowadays they never stop for a chat and I'm sure that nobody around here has anything to do with them now. And to think that this was once a close neighbourhood! I mean close like! We used to know them all! Now we're oceans apart! Mind you, they're a quiet lot, never make any problems and you're quite safe as long as they are around but they're just not chatty like they used to be. I've heard that today they are all foreigners, the old ones were at least like us British, now it's hard to know what they are."

The old man who explained his relationship and understanding with the "old" community in an enthusiastic fashion, is equally aware of changes:

"You know I used to come and go in one of their homes, I went in on Friday and Saturdays to light their fires, their religion, for some reason, forbids them to do that themselves then. For years me and my family did that for this family, first myself as a young lad and later my sons took over. They'd pay us a few pennies and they got warm, so we were all well pleased. Treated us real nice they did. It was lovely here then, although life wasn't a laugh for any of us . Today all that's changed. I couldn't even tell you their names, not a single one, not even if you paid me for it. We see them around all the time. At one time we used to have a lot to do with them , now they're all strangers. Of course the place is a lot bigger now a days, still, you'd think we'd know the ones just around the corner from us, but we don't. They're total strangers. Me, I've never minded Jews, they used to be like most any English person around here. It's not like that anymore. Now they keep to themselves and they've become really weird. Not rough or rude or anything like that, in fact they're ever so mannerly, its just that they don't want nothing to do with us anymore. That's O.K with me, I just don't understand them anymore. What kind of life is that anyway? I mean, what do they do all day, and how can they afford all those kids?"

Albeit tainted with nostalgic memories of "times gone by", these comments all describe the common notion that the Jewish community in Gateshead has changed due to the arrival of a "different kind" of Jew. With further questioning it turns out that although people are aware that most of these "new" members are English Jews, the group as a whole is seen to behave in a manner quite inconsistent with that of the "old" community. It is this transformation which this woman refers to when she states that:

"You often see them around and they're always well-behaved. Even the kids, pale as they are, show impeccable manners. They never bother us, it's just that they're not really part of our town anymore. That goes for all of them. They might as well be living on the moon, that's how strange and secluded they have become. Now that those new black-ones have arrived, you know how they dress, we seem to have completely lost touch with them !"

Indicating that the community today demonstrates **declining attractiveness to the receiving society** (Banton, 1981:37), these comments have in common that they reveal the notion prevailing among non-Jews in the area that both quantitatively and

qualitatively their relationship with the Jewish community has undergone considerable change. The community's members are, it seems, regarded as having chosen to collectively isolate themselves from the surrounding society at large and the cause of this withdrawal is thought to be the arrival of a "different" type of Jews who are, although polite and well-mannered, regarded as quite "un-British" in their ways.

Accepting that they are "un-British", people in the community are at all times concerned that their conduct when among non-Jews should be impeccable and that non-Jews should find them polite and well-mannered. This concern is reflected in the frequent reminders given to children to show exceptionally good manners whenever they come in contact with non-Jews.

"Whenever I take my child outside the community I tell them to behave well in the presence of the Goyim. That he must make sure that he is polite and show good manners. Say nicely "good morning", "good bye" and "thank you". That he always shows kindness and treats people with decency."

Many of the adults in Gateshead have considerable knowledge and experience of life in the society at large. They have attended non-Jewish schools , many have a secular education and have lived parts of their lives in comparatively close proximity to the society at large. It is only with recent years renewed interest in **Torah lishmo** and the building of a complete Jewish education system that Jews may live lives extensively isolated from the society at large. Consequently most adults (2) from the community when interacting with members of the society at large are fully aware of behavioural and linguistic expectations. As the next comments reveal they not only comply with these expectations, they also demonstrate a minute adherence and strive for very high standards of such expected conduct.

"When I am talking to a Goy I make quite sure I am polite in the way in which they understand politeness as well. I mean that I am conscious of the way in which I converse and that I hold myself up to a good standard of behaviour".

or:

"Talking to a Goy means thinking about what you say and how you say it! Then I am even more particular than usual of how I behave and speak. I make sure that I am very correct and I am conscious of this all the time."

When carrying out an ethnographic investigation in a Norwegian community where people speak both a local dialect and one of the two accepted forms of standard Norwegian, Blom and Gumperz (1972) discovered that speakers differed with respect to where and for what communicative goals they chose among the two codes. They concluded that these Norwegians choose and use language as a means of conveying information about their values, attitudes and beliefs. In much the same fashion people in the community refrain from using their normal Yiddish and Hebrew expressions and intonation when they are among non-Jews and adopt in this context a slower, well-pronounced and clearly middle-class English pronunciation. The use of "good" English combined with extensive input of polite language conventions is an interactive style which is deliberately chosen when among non-Jews and is regarded as all-important in ethnic encounters (chap 4.2). In a predominately working-class area where people have little formal education and where the local dialect is both strong and dominant the behaviour of the community's members further emphasizes between group differences. As one shop assistant remarked:

"you know some of them are foreigners but those who are from England speak real good English, I mean its "proper" English. No shortcuts or poor grammar like we have like. You'd think they're talking to the queen! This is one of the reasons why they stick out like a sore thumb around here. They speak too good like, and they're too correct and even too polite, if you know what I mean? Its no good man, it makes them real foreign!"

It would seem that not in spite but because of knowledge of and efforts in behaving in ways which are recognized as "correct" among non-Jews, they are regarded as diverting from behavioural conventions. They are regarded as "over-doing" it and thought even to neglect components which are regarded as vital if people are to be considered to be showing "good" behaviours. The next comment indicates this understanding:

"They're ever so correct like, but what's the use of posh English when people have nothing to say to you and nothing in common with you like? "Please" and "thank you" is all very well, but how about a smile, or a remark about the weather, or even a joke once in a while? That's how you know when people are really friendly like, when they show an interest in what's going on around them. And that takes more than good manners!".

These remaraks suggest that "good" manners combined with "proper" English serves to further remove and isolate the community from the society at large. Whereas the "old" community interacted with the society at large in a manner more like theirs, the "new" community has chosen to adopt a different style of interaction. It is an interactive style which members of the society at large find to be excessive and out of context as well as lacking in the vital ingredient of showing a sincere interest in the lives of non-group members. These comments express the common notion that it is not enough to share formal linguistic and behavioural understandings, their communicative content also relies upon sensitivity to contextually determined apropriateness, style, humour and degree of emotional involvement. Inherent and vital to communication such **contextualization cues** (Gumperz 1982b) are not shared between the two groups, causing the community's further estrangement from the society at large and instigating resentment on behalf of the latter.

The contradiction between the impression that people in the community seek to convey and the ways in which this is interpreted among members of the society at large is vital to the particular ethnic situation in Gateshead. Members of the community seek to behave, in accordance with high standards of ethics, in a manner which cannot be faulted (polite and correct) whilst members of the society at large take this behaviour to reveal disinterest and rejection. This is a situation where members of an ethnic group comply by values that are inherent to, and shared by themselves as well as the society at large but whose understandings of context and degree of emphasis of these values are incommensurable and thus instigating within- (sub-)group cohesion and increased ethnic segregation. My argument is, as will be shown, that the levels of formal religiocultural knowledge

combined with a particular interest in introspection and Mussar that have occurred in the community in its "second period" have caused a re-negotiation of the concept of human nature or self, whose particular content and form has individual as well as collective implications. The latter is the outcome of a sociocentric self--dimension whose role and significance is activated in an ethnic context. This sociocentric dimension instigates behaviours which the society at large perceive as segregational and which constitutes an important element of peoples' ethnic identity in Gateshead.

NOTES TO CHAPTER 4.1

1.
S. Heilman (1972) provides an excellent example of this situation and describes much the same tension which exists between Gateshead and Newcastle when he writes that while: **those who are "too modern" are critized for the insufficient frumkeit, the "too frum" are faulted for the opposite excess.** (ibid; 15)

2.
This is not so for the many children growing up in Gateshead today. They attend all their schooling in the community and have very limited contact with the non-Jewish world. Only what they see in the streets around them. Apart from contact with a few non-Jewish "cleaning ladies" who work for some of the families and the odd non-Jewish teacher who teaches secular subjects in the Jewish schools, these children live their lives predominantly in contact with Jews.

4.2 A TWO-DIMENSIONAL SELF: CONTEXTUALIZATION OF SELF-EXPRESSION

The following chapters' concern with concepts of human nature in Gateshead will be based upon the assumption that to understand how human beings understand and perceive themselves, is to see their actions and behaviours as being in some ways the creation of these understandings. This is a conviction which is in accord with a theoretical approach in which **meaning** is public and available to all social members and thus involves them in constant interpretations. As social members we must not only play a continuous part in this process, it also shapes our personal lives. In other words culture is not only the world in which we live, it is also the "tool" with which we are able to organize our thoughts, responses, evaluations and actions into specific meaning-making constructs.

In Gateshead the sociocultural construct of human nature, its possibilities and limitations, is one which presents an image of the individual's "inner" as giving rise to actions which are distinct from those of other individuals. It is a construct that support the understanding that the self exists as an "inner" core within the individual. There is here a clear notion of boundaries between the individual and others since the self is perceived as a distinct and intrinsically private sphere residing within and only controllable and accessible to the individual. There is in Gateshead an assumed "gap" between the individual's private self and others, such that it treats the "private sphere" as a non-social entity perceived as poised in opposition to other individuals.

In a similar fashion people in Gateshead regard the individual, distinctive and autonomous, as existing free from, yet simultaneously living in society. As such the individual's "inner" becomes an object of interest and concern since it gives rise to the notion that the individual creates society and that it is the mutual consent

between individuals which instigates societal activities. Society, clearly separable from the individual, is not only the outcome of individual consent, it is dependant on the individual (Schweder 1984). In Western culture, this specific understanding of the individual in relation to society has developed a particular sense of individualism whose causes are to be sought in specific historical circumstances and events (Morris 1972, Johnson 1985, Dumont 1986).

At first glance it might be conceived that the concept of human nature prevailing in Gateshead is one which fits quite snugly into the model which defines the question of self in terms of individual versus group orientation. Yet dealing with Gateshead's understanding and use of human nature would be incomplete without paying attention to the dualism inherent in this indigenous construct. Although not the prime interest of this thesis it deserves some elaboration in that it deals with an important reality in peoples' lives, namely that of their collective identity or, as one could also think of it, their sociocentric self-conception. Despite the strong image of actions as being the outcome of the potentials and the processes operating within the individual's autonomous and private self, there is in Gateshead the unambiguous conviction that these actions are, in an ethnic situation, converted to represent the ethnic group's and not the individuals' "characteristics". Hence peoples' actions in ethnic situations are, partly, the outcome of the conviction that the individual carrys the responsibility for the reputation and image of the ethnic group as a whole, rather than his/her own renown. In Gateshead the image of Jews which they portray is foremost in people's mind when they deal with members of the society at large.

In illustration of this I quote an incident were I had offered to drive a mother and her son to the hospital where the boy was to see a specialist. The appointment was for eleven fifteen and I arrived early and played with the younger children while the mother and son were getting ready. Although always neat in her appearance, she had obviously taken extra care with how she looked this morning. Now she was busy twisting the boys peyos (earlocks) around her index finger in an attempt to make them curly and not, as was natural for this boy's hair, straight and wispy.

Smiling she looked at the result and said:

"Well that's the best we can do , now go and wash your face and put on a clean shirt while I say good-bye to the little ones".

Turning to me she simply said:

"The doctor is a Goy!"

and went on to explain to her three year old daughter that she would not be away for very long and that her big sister would be looking after her. Since the boy was already wearing what, to me, looked like a perfectly clean shirt and thinking of the piles of white shirts I had seen her ironing every week, I asked the mother:

"But don't you think the shirt he is wearing is alright ?"

"No"

she said and continued:

""alright" is not the issue here. What's important is that we make a Kiddush Hashem".

The concept of **Kiddush Hashem,** which literally means sanctifying the name of G-D, is heavily loaded with various sociocultural meanings. Amongst them are 'martyrdom' (one dies for Kiddush Hashem), but the way in which the mother made use of this concept indicates that an ethnic encounter provides both an opportunity and obligation to infuse G-D's sanctity. This was the underlying meaning or message which I had failed to recognize when the mother informed me of the doctor's ethnic background.

In Gateshead there is the understanding that whenever a Jew is faced with a non-Jew it is not the **individual** Jew's reputation or honour which is at stake, but that

of the entire ethnic group. As one woman expressed it:

"It makes no difference wherever or whenever, the Goyim primarily see a Jew as a Jew and not as individual. This is specially the case if the Jew does something bad. Then all Jews are condemned in one go! I always tell my children, and I keep reminding them of this, that each time they are observed by the Goyim they are given the opportunity to make a Kiddush Hashem."

There is in Gateshead no ambiguity towards behavioural transgressions in the presence of non-Jews. Such an act, which is labelled a **Chilul Hashem** (profaning the name of G-D), is highly stigmatized and brings forth social sanctions. Any instance where the individual Jew behave in a manner which is considered immoral, impolite or disgraceful, is regarded as a degradation to the Jewish people as a whole. With its locus on the boundary between Jews and non-Jews the act of commiting a **Chilul Hashem** is a behaviour which evokes indignation and much in-group concern. Hence children are often encouraged to make a **Kiddush Hashem** as well as severely scolded and criticized if they "misbehave" in the presence of non-Jews. The social reactions brought forth by **Chilul Hashem** are reflections of a particular Torah precept (Leviticus 32, among many others) and makes, as expressed in the Tosefta, Babba Kamma (chapter 10:8):

Robbing a non-Jew (is) worse than robbing a Jew because of Chilul Hashem.

As the remarks of the mother who took her son to the hospital reveal, members of the community engage in a kind of deliberation before and during their dealings with members of the society at large. In the presence of non-Jews it is essential to take extra care with the way in which one conducts and presents one self. Ethnic encounters does not permit any 'short cuts', only the highest standards will suffice. In the car and again in the hospital's waiting room the mother told the boy:

"Now remember your manners and make a Kiddush Hashem".

As I watched this otherwize quite lively little boy sit perfectly still and hearing the polite and serious manner in which he answered the doctor's many questions, it was apparent that he knew full well the importance and content of the kind of behaviours which the situation called for. If at all unsure though, he needed only to watch and listen to his mother. Sitting straight and composed opposite the doctor she did not speake in her usual fashion of injecting the English language with Yiddish and Hebrew words, expressions and tonation. Indeed, she now spoke in a distinctively middle-class English manner which was void of any "foreign" influences. Her mannerism was reserved but very polite and affable and she was careful to use numerous and proper courtesy conventions. Afterwards, as we discussed the individual Jew's responsibility for the image and reputation of the Jewish people, the mother explained:

"As Hashem meant us to live as an example to other nations, He has also provided those other nations with the inclination to judge us all as one. The Jew's responsibility and the Goy's judgment are two sides of the same coin. The Goy does not see me or my son as the kind of individuals that we are, he sees us only as being Jews and is not interested in us as persons. Hashem meant for all Jews to live according to the Torah and for the Goyim to scrutinize our conduct. This is why we must never miss an opportunity to make a Kiddush Hashem. Being a Jew means that every single one of us must take on the responsibility for what all other Jews do. All that everyone of us do is a reflection of Him!"

It is no exaggeration to claim that people in Gateshead experience themselves at all times as being minutely and critically judged by the non-Jewish world. They are accutely aware of their behaviours in any contact with non-Jews, no matter how trivial, and see themselves as being caught up in the dual process of carrying both the collective responsibility and blame of their entire group. Consequently they strive to preserve a praiseworthy group reputation and to avoid the accustomed stigmatizations and negative generalizations which they feel subjected to. The sense of constantly being appraised is always in their mind as people in Gateshead mingle or interact with members of the society at large. The woman who told me that:

"The Goyim might not like us, but they expect high standards of us. The Yidden, or Jewish people are all, every single one of us, the representatives of Hashem in this world. All we do are reflections of Him. If you are "outside" in the streets or shops or public places where the Goyim see you and in all our dealings with the Goyim it is extremely important to remember this."

voices the prevailing notion strongly felt in the community, of being scrutinized and judged collectively rather than as individuals. This notion also lies behind the next remarks:

"Whenever a Jew misbehaves, it's all over the national newspapers that Mr. so and so, a Jew, did this or that. They always underline his Jewish background. This is how we're all judged in one go!"

and:

"The eyes of the world are upon the Jew. So we must remain refined so that we protect our reputation. Whenever there is something happening in Israel which is shown on T.V. -our kids here in Gateshead "get it". There will always follow problems then. So if we carry a collective responsibility we certainly also carry collective blame. For instance there are some Jews who behave very bad in business, so the Goyim say: "Look at those money grabbing Jews". We get the effects of those things even here in Gateshead. Goyim kids will throw a penny on the pavement as our children pass by and say: "Pick it up you money grabbing Jew". I have told my children that such hurtful remarks are not directed at them personally. They are for all Jews and that we are always judged as <u>one</u> and must therefore act as <u>one</u>. I am very clear about this. Our children must at all times remember that their behaviour affects all Jews and that this is why it is so important that they behave in a refined manner. That that is partly what being Jewish means and requires from them".

This deep concern with the collective responsibility for the group's reputation has caused a crystallization of the type of behaviour and image that the non-Jew is to be presented with. In Gateshead, proficiency in how to behave in the presence of non-Jews is part of that which is required of a competent sociocultural member. This is how one woman described what is expected of a Jew in an ethnic encounter:

"A Yid has to be refined and specially so when he is in the presence of the Goyim. This was put into the forefathers of our children and it is the duty of every Yid to present such a behaviour. A Yid must not talk loud, not laugh loudly, not gesture or make a spectacle of himself, and a Yid must always have control of himself. He must show dignity and refinement. In a way these are inbuilt traits in a Yid. But they don't just appear out of the blue. Parents must work on them and demonstrate a behaviour of refinement. After all that is how Yidden must be recognized by others."

It is not hard to detect members of the community as they mingle in the streets and shops of the area. Apart from the striking differences in dress and head-gear, it is the composure and certain "aloofness" which makes them recognizable. Their dignified, collected and serious manner, their purposeful steps and careful avoidance of eye contact with people around them (non-Jews) and the children's controlled and serious faces, provide the observant specatator with the notion that these people not only dress differently but do indeed often behave in ways which differ from his/her own - if not in content then in degree. Composed, controlled and unpresumptuous behaviour is of course part of being **tzniusdik** (modest) and as such constituent of women's (and partly men's) specific gender behaviour, but I believe however that in an ethnic context there is "more to the story" than mere gender specific actions and that people from Gateshead assume and present a conscious "ethnic performance" in encounters with non-Jews.

This involves a particular kinetic element in Jewish idiom where exposure to non-Jews instigates a composed body posture, controlled and intentional body movements as well as a particular form of language behaviour (Gumperz 1982a, 1982b) only practised when interacting with non-Jews. The negotiation of kinetics and speech codes in in-group as well as between-group interactions has been described in detail by Kochman (1972) who presents a salient ethnography of the ways in which black Americans hold a wide repertoire of kinetic and speech codes in confrontations with white people. Also Jews apply the use of kinetics, body language and various speech strategies in instances of between group interactions. Although the goals and circumstances of people in Gateshead are different from those described by Kochman, boundary negotiations are approached along similar

avenues. Apart from dress and body language the degree of respect, honesty, politeness and courteous language behaviour which people use when they are among or encounter non-Jews, also provide powerful ethnic signals. These behaviours are not different in kind to those practised among themselves, but in an ethnic context, people in Gateshead tend to amplify them and to provide their public demonstration with increased importance.

I have on numerous occasions observed how members of the community, when interacting with members of the society at large, show a degree of seemliness and decorum which is uncommon in the society at large. Whether in the bank, post-office, shops or in waiting-rooms, talking to the health visitor or the postman, asking the price of the tomatoes in the greengrocers or accidentally bumping into someone in the street, members of the community demonstrate the highest level of courtesy and social grace. In contact with non-Jews the focus is on the collective responsibility of guarding the reputation of the Jewish "nation" and thus sanctifying His name.

To a group of people whose entire life is dedicated to living a life in accordance with the laws of Torah and who all "know" that their ethnic identity is based upon their ancestors historic acceptance of the Covenant, the notion of a collective responsibility is strong and pervasive. It is this notion which a woman attempts to describe when she claimes that:

"When I am among them (non-Jews) I don't only think of myself as just me, Ruth (not her real name). I mean, I am also very much aware that I am a Yid, a representative of the people who accepted to represent Him and His will to all other nations. That is why I am not just me, a person, when I am amongst the Goyim, I am suddenly all Jews wrapped in one. It's hard to explain but I am always aware of it. Everyone here is."

What seems to be implied here is a kind of dualism in Jewish human nature which is based upon a religious prerequisite. In other words, the self-concept among members of the community entails the recognition of being a distinctive and

autonomous individual but whose actions carry collective implications. The Torah-based understanding of morality is essentially individual. As in the Kierkegaardian sense the individual is, in making the choice between a life of pleasure-seeking and a life of duty, the source of moral behaviours and principles. Further the relationship between G-D and man is a direct and individualistic one which does not call for intermediaries, rather he/she has:

the primary responsibility for his own spiritual destiny, (that) he has the right and the duty to come to his own relationship with his G-D in his own way and by his own effort." (S.Lukes 1973, p. 94)

Judaism regards the individual as an independent autonomous moral being and as such he/she serves G-D by way of obedience to His Religious Laws, as well as by adherence to the Moral Laws of unselfish behaviour towards all other individuals. The inter- connection between the religious and moral Laws and their affect on the collective have been discussed elegantly by Epstein (1959) who claims that:

the religious Laws are charged with a moral dynamism capable of transforming the individual and through the individual, the society of which he forms a unit. The disregard of a religious Law is no longer a private affair: is so far as it lowers man's moral fibre and his power of resitance to evil, every religious offence is in a sense a social offence. Likewise the observance of religious law is no longer a mere isolated act: in so far as it contributes to the individual's moral stability, with effects upon his general conduct, it is a social act. (Ibid;24)

Yet, equally central to Judaism is the notion that Jews are separate and distinct from large sections of society, from non-Jews (Leviticus 20:26). This is a point which has been, and still is, frequently used by non-Jews to present a view of the Jews as seeing themselves as the "chosen people" (1). This is a point in question which Jews, not only in Gateshead, feel quite strongly about and wish to "set right". As one woman expressed it:

"The Goyim have always been angered by Hashem's special relationship with Jews. They don't understand that it is not a special reward, it is an obligation. An obligation to live in a special way, to set an example, and that is not altogether an easy task."

The way people in the community explain this issue corresponds largely with the elegant clarification offered by Epstein:

True, G-D has chosen Israel, but that does not limit or damage His love for the human race. Israel has but the distinction of being the peculiar people through whom has been revealed G-D's love for all. (Ibid; 29)

Frequently people, when this topic is discussed, refer to the Midrash which is a collection of ancient commentaries on the Torah. It contains allegory homiletics and legend and complements halachic material. The Midrashic story tells of how G-D's "offer" of the Torah, with its numerous restrictions and demands, was turned down by all other nations except for the Jews who accepted the Torah without any reservations or conditions and hence established their particular bond with G-D. What people in Gateshead present as central to this issue is that due to this Covenant Jews have taken it upon themselves to be the people through whom the world may come to see G-D's love for all people. It also requires that Jews, collectively, must take on the responsibility:

to raise human life to higher levels of existence (Ibid; 31).

The obligation does not end there. Whilst living among non-Jews and duty-bound to "set an example" as well as conveying His love of all man-kind, the Jew must maintain a:

"separation from all contaminating contacts with the idolatrous civilizations and cultures of the surrounding nations" (ibid. p30)

Epstein also recognizes the dualism which is involved in the life of being an observant Jew:

"Israel had thus to be apart <u>from</u> the world and yet remain <u>of</u> the world. Whilst keeping distinct <u>from</u> the surrounding nations, they had to throw the whole of their effort into the midst of current civilizations, seeking to raise human life to higher levels of existence. This was no easy task; yet they were to perform it because the

Holy G-D who had chosen them was to be observed in Holiness, and because their life could achieve its meaning only in the universal service to which they were summoned." (ibid p.30-1)

Jews are, due to their particular Covenant with G-D, obliged to conduct themselves in a manner intended to provide non-Jews with a behavioural ideal. Time and time again the women in Gateshead would return to this issue when we discussed child rearing. In these discussions it became quite clear that they look upon Jews as having feelings and internal structures which are particularly Jewish in kind. I shall return to this point in chapter five and six, here it is sufficient to underline the notion prevailent in Gateshead that being Jewish is the matrilineally inherited obligation of setting a collective behavioural example. Jews as a (ethnic) category exist or find their idenity in their opposition to all those other categories (nations) who did not accept the Covenant. It is this dichotomy - the one's who 'accepted to do' as opposed to those who 'refused to do' - which is the foundation of peoples' ethnic identity in Gateshead. Their ethnic identity is thus based upon a notion of 'contrast' or 'opposition', where Jews represent one of two reciprocal but inter-dependant segments. It is a social categorization where the one exist as a contrast to the other. Of being that which the other is not. One segment or category is meaningless without the other, binding the two together in a bounded "whole". This is what the next woman is refering to when she claims that:

Really, one could say that the world consists of two type of people: those who accepted and those who rejected the Torah. Being of the ones who accepted the Torah makes us not only different in kind but it also requires that we live in a different way. We must always set an example and make sure that we behave as G-D wishes all mankind to behave. You see, a Jew can never allow himself to be careless in his behaviour or attitudes since he has, together with all other Jews, an obligation to fullfill. Every Jew's life is a serious undertaking. This is what we must teach our children and that's how we should be recognized. This is why making a Kiddush Hashem is so important in the presence of the Goyim! "

What seems to be implied here is the notion that a Jew is simultanously an autonomous individual as well as a **member** of a distinct ethnic group (2) whose collective responsibily he /she shares not by individual choice, but by creed. It is

a self image and understanding of human nature which opposes Western attempts of forcing cultural self conceptions into either of two categories -individualism or sociocentrism- rather than searching for alternatives or even combinations.

One anthropologist who has challenged the traditional polarization stance is Rosenberger (1989) who after working among the Japanese argues the point that self concepts are indeed social context specific. She explains how it is that the Japanese are able to move between egocentrism (individualism) and sociocentrism. She suggests that the Japanese self is poised in movement between opposites such that it cannot be confined to the constraints of one category but requires participation in both egocentric and sociocentric poles. Dumont (1972) on the other hand, made use of the "polar" notion of self in his work on India. There are, Dumont claims, historical situations where the concept of self is inseparable from context and occasion and where the two are indivisible. He claims that Indian society, as a representative of traditional societies, is **holistic** in that a set of ideas and values that are common in the society emphasise the "social whole" and thus, neglect the individual. He further claims that an **holistic** society is characterized by a social hierarchy which depends on an interdependent network of statuses. In India the latter is based on the caste system in which Dumont perceives the religious dimension of purity/impurity as the underlying explanation for Indian social actions. In contrast individualistic societies, Dumont argues, rely on **power** relationships between independent persons or groups.

Not suprisingly, the relationship between hierarchy and power is an issue which has interested scholars of anthropology and religious studies. I shall not here enter into this discussion except to note that one area of concern expressed by critics (Khare 1984. Appadurai 1986) has been that Dumont's perspective is that of the elite male Brahmin priesthood and that he neglects that of the "untouchables" and women (among others). Consequently it is claimed that Dumont, in effect, only takes a particular part of the Indian social structure, namely that of the elevated Brahmin caste, into account and thus leaves his stance vulnerable to criticism for its lack of relevance in terms of the entire caste system.

Though this criticism is well justified, I suggest that Dumont's approach is both useful and relevant if applied to the ethnic situation prevailent in Gateshead. As the criticism indicates, Dumont's approach provides us with, if nothing else, a considerable amount of information regarding the Brahmanic perspective. It explains the Brahman caste's position; a holistic position where the self is regulated by strict rules of interdependence that are context-specific. Might not the very same principle apply to ethnic self-constructs? More specifically, might the **holistic** perspective of self in context-specific ethnic situations, be founded upon a **hierarchical** concept similar to Dumont's? A model in which a group's members' self-perception is intrinsically tied to the group's perceived position in a value--compliance hierarchy, and thus its relative position in relation to non-group members.

Although not intending to reflect a **de facto** hierarchical difference between Jews and non-Jews in terms of objects of G-D's love and kindness, the relationship between Him and Jews means that the latter are, guided by the Torah, surmised to obtain and demonstrate the highest possible levels of ethics and moral conduct. The concept of **levels** of conduct relies on a basis for comparison, providing a reference frame for evaluation. The reference frame, encompassing both parties involved, Jews and non-Jews, generates a notions of hierarchical order. Due to the Covenant Jews are obliged to strive to occupy an elevated position in the ensuing value- compliance hierarchy. The value-compliance hierarchy encompasses two segments of an organizational "whole" in which Jews are seen to constitute but one segment or part of this 'whole'. Their membership in one of two segment (those who accepted the Covenant) will in relation to the other segment instigate a notion of both within group commonness and separateness (from non-group members) based upon their relative success in reaching a high level of value-compliance and thus setting them apart from the other 'half' of the 'whole'.

It needs to be emphasized that although not all Jews conduct their lives 'as Jews should', religious Jews commonly claim that they share a **common obligation** to do so to the very best of their abilities. In Gateshead this is a task which people take

appreciated without taking due account of the **character** he/she is seeking to sustain. In other words Goffman recognized the "conventionalizing influence" (McCall 1977) of the other's evaluation.

Based upon specific religious precepts, non-Jew's assessment of Jewish conduct is essential to ethnic identity in Gateshead and causes, in an ethnic context, a sociocentric self-dimension to override the egocentric self-dimension. In ethnic encounters it is the collective and not the individual's value-compliance and integrity which is under pressure. The social context causes a 're-positioning' of the previously existing boundary between the individual and his/her co-members which creates a demarcation between the ethnic group members and non-members. This movement causes the sense of self to be re-defined in terms of group membership, as in the performance of the role or character (Goffman 1959) of being a member of a group in which membership is assigned by a matrilineal obligation handed down through the generations. It is a notion of self which is directed towards the immediate social purpose of ensuring cohesion and conformity **within** the group and justifying a demarcation **from** non-group members. This dialectic model envisages the self as neither locked nor fixed in any permanent position, rather it is coded to participate in both poles depending on sociocultural context. In other words people in Gateshead negotiate a self concept which is a context-bound negotiation of dualism.

The reader might easily be led to believe that the self-concept prevailing in Gateshead is a polar notion of self in which the 'shifts' from egocentrism to sociocentrism, represent radical predetermined psychological 'leaps' whereby the individual consciously 're-arranges' his/herself concept. Rosenberger's concept of the Japanese self as a:

balanced movement between oppositions, (Rosenberger 1989. p.108)

depicts self as a pendulum swinging from one 'pole' to the other. The two poles are 'joined' by way of transforming the social context into a 'bridging' device, thus

enabling a 'shift' of the self's position. In Gateshead the picture is somewhat different. Rather than stressing the polarization as between egocentrism and sociocentrism the two are interwoven, or more accurately, they are differing dimensions of the same self construct, in which neither 'bridging' nor 'shifts' are required. It is a notion which encompasses a dualism whereby the self is composed of two interlinked aspects or rather dimensions, of which one, in context specific circumstances, is more emphasized than the other. Thus, there is no 'motion' or 'shift' since the duality of self in Gateshead resides within a common domain where the two components are inseparable and indivisible.

The importance of peoples' **collective identity** and the way in which such a collective identity can operate and co-exist with notions of individualism, has been discussed by Dumont (1986) in a recent study of German ideology. Seeking the cause of the rise of the variable and complex ideas and values particular to 'German ideology' in historical events, Dumont claims that the:

> **idiosyncratic formula of German ideology ("Community holism + self-cultivating individualism") enables us to understand the German reaction to Western development of the eighteenth century.** (ibid p.590)

The duality which surfaces with Dumont's representation, is one in which notions of being a part of a whole, of living in and identifying oneself with a community or a Gemeinschaft, are combined with the understanding of being an individual and devoted to the development of this autonomous entity. These are two inter-connected aspects of German identity. The collective aspect of a German's identity, Dumont claims, exists essentially in relation to others, to non-Germans.

Ideas concerning human nature in Gateshead pertain to a structure which enables the individual to both act and see her/himself as an autonomous moral agent. Although the structures of moral conduct are inherent in all individuals there are specific traits and a substance which are common and specific to all Jews. Joined together in a common obligation people in the community, as will be discussed in chapter five, see themselves as sharing a specific spectrum of emotions as well as

the substance of a Jewish soul, the **Neshomo.** Combined these elements provide them with a mutual affinity which gives rise to a powerful notion of commonness and Gemeinschaft which includes themselves (matrilineally) and excludes all others. Notions of **who** the Jew is, finds in an ethnic context its strength and source in sentiments of 'sameness' and 'belonging' (Gemeinschaft) charging a sociocentric self-dimension. In encounters with non-Jews, people in Gateshead see their conduct as a reflection of the Jewish 'nation' as a whole. It is a conviction which calls for a presentation of self which is socioculturally cultivated/adapted to public scrutiny. To the people in Gateshead this is a reality of life which regulates all his/her interactions with or activities in the presence of non- Jews. It is a reality which requires a self-presentation adjusted to social context. In the presence of non-Jews people in Gateshead become acutely aware of their manners, behavioural style and the impressions they might provide. The emphasis in such encounters is one of providing non-Jews with an image of refined behaviour. By way of exposing behavioural discrepancy and variance, notions of homogeneity and separation are charged, thus reaffirming and solidifying ethnic identity (Brewer 1976).

Central to traditional Judaism is the concern with the well-being and respect for one's fellow men, blended with disregard for one's own selfish desires (Leviticus 19:18). These are also values which are fundamental to and well adjusted to traditional Christian ethics and are thus, by and large, accepted and latent in the society at large. Further, these are ethics and values which are regarded by people in Gateshead to have been if not abandoned, then increasingly marginalized among members of the society at large in their strife to gain materialistic satisfaction. It is the community's relativly high level of value-compliance in efforts of sustaining conformity to values of inter-personal ethics which members of the community wish to convey to non-Jews and which also creates within-group notions of Gemeinschaft. Presenting non-Jews with a concrete critique of their own life style, people in Gateshead sustain their notions of identity based partly on their perceived hierarchical status, thus provoking functional notions of sociocentrism. This-woman's comment serves to demonstrate this point:

"A few weeks ago I took my son on the bus, we were going into town. As usual people stared at us. The bus was packet and when an elderly lay entered my son got up and gave her his seat. I hadn't told him to do so but he recognized that this was an opportunity to make a Kiddush Hashem. It is unfortunately quite uncommon these days that Goyim children show the elderly respect and kindness and this is all the more reason for us to set an example. Later, when we were about to get of the bus the old lady said to my son: "You don't see our lot getting up these days. Your mother should be very proud of you!" And I was very proud. Not only because he was my son, but because she had recognized him as a Jew".

The use of a value-compliance hierarchy or even an ethnocentric value-hierarchy to charge notions of ethnic identity is not an uncommon ethnic practice. Although not religiously based the Gypsies for example profess beliefs of innate differences as well as value-superiority. Combined these provide notions of human superiority and the means for maintaining their ethnic identity. Arntsberg (1984) explains how the Gypsies regard themselves as an 'aristocracy' whose blood or culture should not be polluted by the **Gaje** (non-Gypsy). By way of keeping interactions with the Gaje to a very minimum Gypsies construct an 'internal' view of what it is to be a Gypsy. Gaining strength and confidence from each other it is possible to reject the society at large's judgements of the group and to elevate themselves to a position of superiority. Collectivity is an important issue here since the Gypsy might find himself, psychologically and individually, in any of a wide range of relationships with the Gaje. He or she might as an individual see him/herself as superior, inferior or he/she might have indifferent or ambivalent attitudes towards the Gaje. But in terms of a collective culture, it is quite a different story. Collectively, as a segment of a 'whole' and in comparison with out-group members they regard themselves as superior. The point Arnsberg is making is that the very existence of a minority group might be based upon its ability to construct and sustain a collective apprehension of superiority, where others are held to represent life styles which are regarded as undesirable (Brewer1976).

I have in this chapter attempted to show that despite a pronounced individualistic self-perception the individual ceases, in an ethnic context, to be of prime interest and that a shift takes place which demands attention to be directed at those ideas

and values which deal with holistic notions. Rephrased, ethnic encounters call for, in part, peoples' ability to recognize and deal with holism and its sociocentric ideals and to reject situationally improper notions of individualism. Competence in social context discrimination does not diminish or exclude the importance of individualism , rather it expects people to know and recognize the situational appropriateness of either sociocentrism or individualism. As I have attempted to show, contextualization of self-expression is in Gateshead a cultural imperative which requires the group's members to accommodate a two-dimensional self-image whose various expressions are directed and activated through changing contexts.

NOTES CHAPTER 4.2.

1.
References to this is found in the Torah; vide Exodus 19:5; Deute. 7:6, 14:2; Isaiah 14:1, 44:1,2; and elsewhere.

2.
The notion of constituting a particular ethnic group has its origin in the Torah based concept of seperatism; Leviticus 20:26.

5.1 INDIGENOUS THEORIES: TOO REVEALING TO BE IGNORED

Dealing with the sociocultural ideas concerning **human nature** entails an understanding of a particular historical and collective "reality" of what it means to be a human being, its qualities, associated functions and values. I regard the term **human nature** as one which includes the collective ideas and notions concerning the human being's physiological, spiritual, and mental components and are, in short, what may be labelled indigenous theories. Regarded as "functional realities" (Heelas, 1981), these ideas and beliefs help members of the collectivity to encompass and grasp the socioculturally determined ideal of human nature. In seeking the substance and social consequences of such ideas, anthropologists must avoid a number of snares. Firstly, I find Howell's (1988,1989,1990) approach to this topic most compelling and support her claim that in the quest to gain increased insight into indigenous theories concerning human nature, anthropology should seek its own theoretical orientations, and:

> **avoid becoming embroiled in psychological or philosophical debates concerning selfhood, most of which are individually oriented as well as universalistic in their conclusions, I prefer to use alternative expressions; either concept of personhood, or concept of human nature.** (Howell, 1989:45)

Clearly the concepts we choose to use in such investigations have theoretical consequences in that they at times obscure the anthropological perspective which, at best, might be granted second place to philosophical or psychological orientations. Anthropology has, however, the potential of a specific approach to this subject which is distinct from that of western oriented psychology and philosophy. In recent years a number of presentations, based upon ethnographic material, have shown us that concepts of human nature are not universal and that there is a justifiable need to recognize that these are ideas whose content, form, and representation are highly sensitive to sociocultural particularities (Blacking, 1983;

Howell, 1989). Similarly it has recently been argued (Carrithers 1985; Sanderson 1985; Lienhardt 1985; La Fontaine 1985) that notions of personhood and self must be regarded as having content, blend, form and representations that are not self-evident and that they are highly sensitive to sociocultural particularities as they change in time and space. Secondly it is important to realize that our own concepts which are themselves sociocultural perceptions will , as Lukes (1985) argues, inevitably:

colour our every attempt to interpret the worlds of others (ibid p. 300)

This is a concern which has also been voiced by the psychologist Lock (1981) who claims that empirical psychology should not concern itself with:

establishing what human nature <u>is</u>, but the ways in which it operates under particular historical circumstances. (ibid. p. 203)

As these latter statements articulate, investigating peoples' ideas and beliefs concerning human nature is an approach in which the social scientist must be acutely aware of the pitfalls and difficulties in distinguishing his/her own sociocultural heritage from the analytical process (Taylor, 1985; Hollis, 1985; Howell, 1990). This is a task which, I believe, is neither reduced nor pre-empted by change of academic vocabulary. No matter how this problem is approached, our analysis will in some way or another be connected, often by means of oppositions, to our own conception which, in the western fashion (Johnson, 1985), is intrinsically individualistic. The concept of individualism which Western anthropologists bring with them into the "field" has a bearing, directly and indirectly, on their presentation of (public) self and the ways in which they analyse those of others, as well as their experience of their own (and imagine that of others) private and "inner" awareness. The latter deals with the self as a locus of personal and individual responsibility for ethical or moral conduct. It is, for instance, a self understanding which is in contrast to traditional Maori (Smith, 1981) beliefs which used to regard the **ngakau**

or the "mind" as an organ for whose actions the person could not be held responsible. In other words, the "mind" might instigate actions which could not be controlled by the person. The consequence of this view was that:

> **experience was to a large extent impersonal; (it) was the organs rather than the "self" which were in control.** (Smith, 1981:154)

In my own work among orthodox Jews it has not been too problematic to comprehend and follow the logic underpinning indigenous ideas concerning human nature, in that my own sociocultural background in modern Western/Christian society has embedded in me, concepts whose religious, philosophical, and historical basis and origin are shared with Judaism.

A third, and too often neglected consideration in presentations dealing with human nature is the issue of gender. In the emerging interest in indigenous concepts of what different societies hold to be human nature, few have considered the effects of gender. It is, as Howell and Melhus (1991) note, remarkable that some of the hitherto most important edited volumes devoted to anthropological study of personhood and self (Heelas, 1981; Carrithers, 1985; Jacobsen-Widding, 1983) are totally void of any aspects of gender. There is reason to believe that some of these presentations only provide us with an insight into ideas concerning the nature of males in these societies, rendering a large section, the females, as "invisible" or at best unimportant. In other words, it should not be assumed that there is within each sociocultural unit only one definition as to what human nature entails. The most obvious distinction here is one of gender (caste, age, and class are others) since it seems highly unlikely that, as a rule, men and women are perceived as having identical "inner" capacities, elements, or emotions (Mageo, 1991). As someone with a personal interest in deconstructionism andanthropological feminism (Ortner 1974; Ardener 1975; Strathern1980;Bloch 1980; Moore, 1988), I gave much thought and concern to the importance or role of gender in the concepts of human nature in Gateshead (1). From the very outset in my fieldwork it was apparent to me that people in Gateshead live lives and behave in ways which

are particularly gender specific. There is everywhere evidence of the numerous diverse expectations, requirements, rules and associated values implicit in gender roles in Gateshead. Indeed gender is quite explicit in Judaism (2).

In spite of this, people in Gateshead insist that there are, and my own findings support this, within the male and female body matrix, particular fundamental components and functions that are identical. It makes no difference whether you are a man or a woman in Gateshead, you still have to share the same moral order and develop the same high level of sensitivity to this order. Moral behaviour is, in other words, the outcome of particular activities of specific components in human nature. It is believed that these components, whose existence and relationship enable people to live "moral lives", are identical in raison d'etre, shape, and capacity in both males and females. In short, there are specific and basic precepts which "cut across" the gender boundary, rendering as it were, parts of the "internal" or mental components of human nature and their functions, what we might call "gender neutral" or genderless.

Whether you are male or female in Gateshead you still have to learn the role of, and be able to articulate the concepts of being an agent, of being an active manipulator of a complex internal world. You have to know there are links between these "inner" mental states, their processes and your behaviours, that which Parish (1991) refers to as "moral knowledge". You also have to know, irrespective of gender, that in order to be a "moral person" you have to control particular "parts" of your "inner" self and be able to take an intentional and conscious stand regarding the mental states that organize and instigate behaviours. Being a moral person in Gateshead means, in part, regulating the self by way of sensitivity to these mental states and their structures. In Gateshead, the ideas which underpin the concepts of an "inner" self, help the members of the community, men and women alike, to adhere to a specific moral system in which they, as individuals, must acknowledge themselves as moral agents. The concepts of human nature hold general precepts which are equal and identical in terms of content and function in both the male and the female body matrix. Insofar as

these concepts are "gender neutral", I shallapproach the understanding of them as a knowledge which boys and girls must acquire equally and identically.

There is in Gateshead a somewhat acticulated notion of "what goes on inside" the body matrix not only in a physical sense, but also as the locus of the emotional and mental life of the human being. It is where specific "parts" act within a self-contained and bounded whole. The existence of a high level of explicit, and topic-specific terminology as well as the widespread social acknowledgement of these structures as being a viable and public topic, not only deserving but also requiring concern, is today in itself a part of Gateshead's particular sociocultural style. It is this understanding of human nature, their concept of an "inner" life, of a mental existence which helps people in the community to create themselves as moral beings (Parish 1991). Based upon indigenous theories concerning their "inner" life, they produce states of moral consciousness and are, in effect, "shaping" moral agents. By way of their specific concepts and beliefs concerning their "inner" lives, they are able to see themselves as, and take up the religio-cultural obligation of being moral agents.

An essential part of the sociocultural construct of human nature in Gateshead is the existence of a soul - **Neshomo** - which is the link between G-d and the human being that differentiates man from animals. G-d has created man with a physical part - **Guf** - and a spiritual part - **Neshomo.** The **Neshomo**, soul of every Jew is believed to have been present when Moses received the **Aseres haDibros** (Ten Commandments) at **Har Sinai** (Mount Sinai). This religiously most significant event in Jewish history was witnessed by 600,000 men aged between twenty and sixty, and many more women and children. The importance which this incident is given in Gateshead is reflected in this woman's remark:

"We were all there, I mean all Jews for all times and for all places were there at Har Sinai. Not in person you understand but every Jew carries a soul, every single one of us, that was there and present at the time. So that is where and how we Jews came to be!"

HUMAN NATURE AS IT IS PERCEIVED IN GATESHEAD.

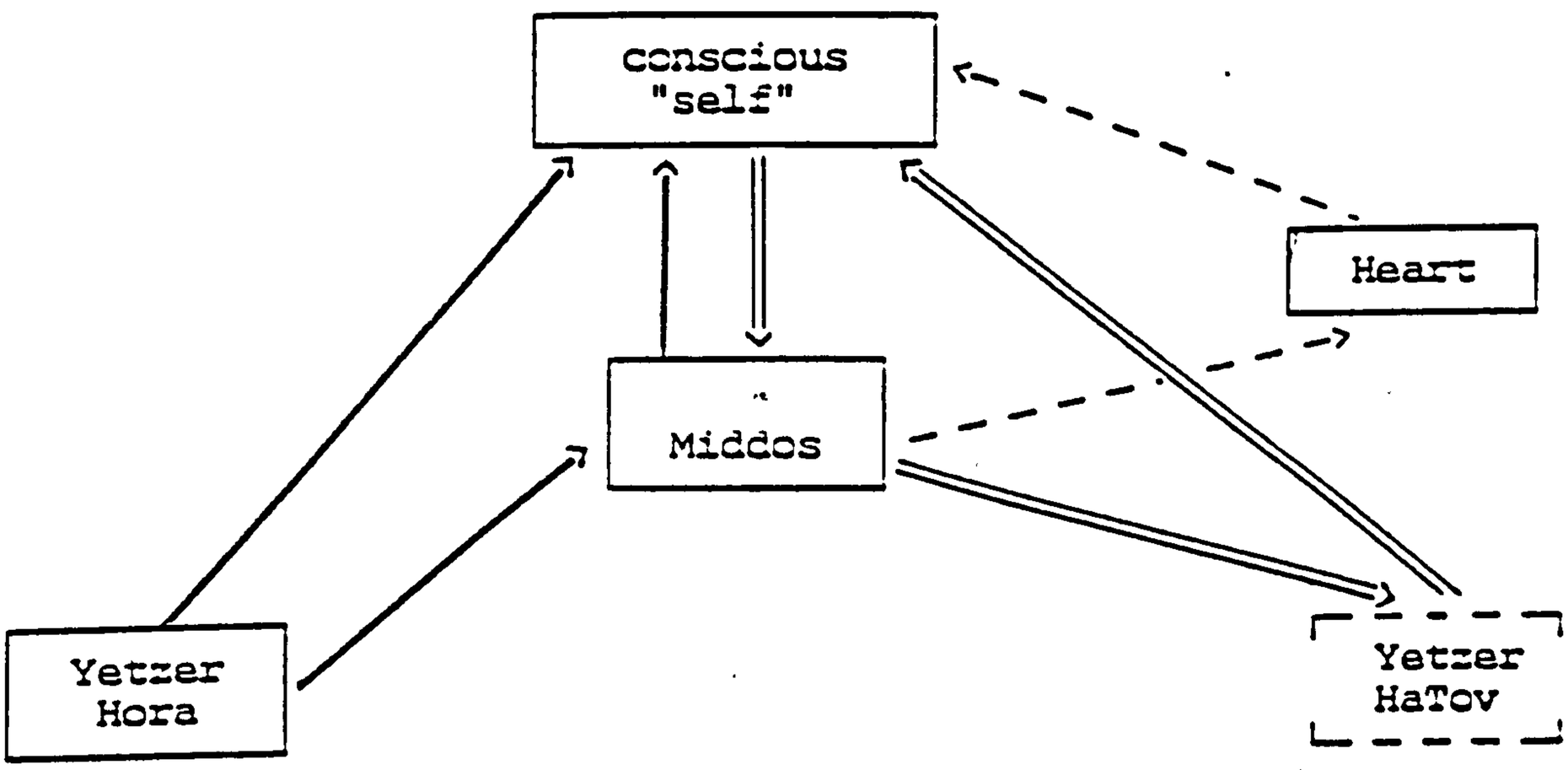


FIG.5.

The "reoccurrence" of these same souls in every living Jew thereafter is seen as ensuring that their way of life is natural and innate in every Jewish child. Since all Jewish souls, without exception, were present at Mount Sinai they are believed to be endowed with a particular Jewish "quality" which ensures that the individual which "carries" this soul, is not only blessed with particular Jewish characteristics, the individual has also been provided with a natural disposition towards life in accordance with Torah precepts. In other words there is thought to exist a "natural disposition" or "innate quality" in every Jew which will present itself in behaviours and emotions regarded as distinctively and recognizably Jewish. These beliefs are what the following quote by a woman in Gateshead pertains to:

"It is nothing new to us when we arrive in this world. It is just reaffirmation of that which we already are accustomed to".

According to indigenous beliefs, if one has a Jewish **Neshomo** nothing can destroy it, nor can one hide it. The theory of the soul is central to the thinking of Judaism (Ibn Daud, 1990), but it is a part of human nature with which I shall only deal briefly (3). In short the **Neshomo** is perceived in Gateshead as a "substance" which has been placed, by God, inside the human body. The **Neshomo** wishes to return to its origin but it can only do so by way of the human's self-improvement. The soul's "destiny" is intrinsically bound up with the moral standards of the individual.

My interpretation of indigenous ideas concerning the "internal" process which organizes moral conduct in Gateshead, reveals a complex web of a number of inter-connected components which in various ways influence the emotions, perceptions and conduct of the individual. I shall now attempt to unravel this complex structure to the reader.

Whilst the soul's location within the body matrix is somewhat undetermined (4) there is general agreement as to the locus of other "inner" processes. The "brain" is the locus of the conscious part of self, it is the site of cognition, memory,

decisions, perception and also evaluation. Regarded as the "filter" whose task it is to decipher, negotiate, and adjudge "external" and "internal" stimuli, it is actually the cultural image of the ways in which people experience the mental processes of self-monitoring. The conscious self has the capacity to monitor specific other "parts" of the "inner" self, but there are also those "parts" which it cannot reach, which are inaccessible. The latter are part of what we might call "emotional experiences" and are located in the heart. Some emotions do arise in the conscious "part" of self, but most emotional states or moods arise in the heart. Emotions that emerge in the heart are independent of the conscious "part" of the self (Fig.5).

One such emotion arises when the heart finds the actions of the conscious self to be improper or objectionable, what we might recognize as a "bad conscience". The conscious self experiences a faint self-reproach which it does not have the means to fully regulate. In other words the "independent" heart evaluates what the conscious self thinks, experiences, and does. The feeling of guilt might occur without the conscious self "willing" it to do so, in fact the heart and the conscious self might present the person with conflicting notions. This paradox occurs when the conscious "part" of self sanctions a particular action which the heart insists is the wrong course of action. The heart-emotions have the power to "disrupt", if not always prevent, the preferences of the conscious "part" of self. The latter is, in fact, the object of the former.

It is the heart which evaluates the outcome of the never-ending process whereby the **Yetzorim** (inclinations) attempt to gain control of and govern the person's behaviour. These evaluations take place spontaneously despite the person's will, desire, and wishes, and are independent of the conscious self.

In other words, the sentiment of feeling "guilt", an emotion allocated to the heart, might occur regardless of consent from the conscious "part" of the person's self. No matter how much the latter advocates the justification of an act, the independent heart might still make itself and its evaluations "felt", if at times only

faintly. One could claim that the existence of a conscious and a separate part of the self with its access and ability to intervene and monitor other "parts" of the self, - the conscious selfis what makes moral life possible. When analysing the ways in which the Newar of Nepal are able to construct states of moral consciousness by reference to the "heart god" and its actions,Parish (1991) also discusses how it is that people come to feel their "conscience".

Moral judgment is possible because some part of the mind or self knows what is going on within a person and can separate lies from truth. The fact that "the mouth" told a lie while "the heart" knows the truth indicates that intentional acts are observed and evaluated. (Parish, 1991:322-323)

Whilst not in the heart, the chest area is also where people point to when they talk of the two **Yetzorim** or inclinations. The chest is the area from which the **Yetzer Hora** (evil inclination) and the **Yetzer HaTov** (good inclination) attempt to gain dominance and control of the person's conscious self residing in the brain. The chest provides a location for the **Yetzer Hora's** (evil inclination) ceaseless quest to govern or monopolize the individual's moral judgment. Existing as a free agent but whose singular objective it is to entice the conscious self to fulfil and satisfy the **Yetzer Hora's** limitless selfish requisitions, it is a part of the person's "inner" whose resilience and influence is ever-persistent. The aim of the **Yetzer Hora** is to lure the conscious "part" of self into ignoring the **Yetzer HaTov**, and to abide by its requirements which the person experiences as a temptation, to satisfy his/her own selfish desires and needs.

The **Yetzer Hora** (the evil inclination) comes into the world as an innate and fixed "part" of the infant's "inner" body matrix at birth, in fact it is the child's only inclination and remains so until the child reaches adolescence. Its opponent, the **Yetzer HaTov** (good inclination), on the other hand requires time and purposeful input to mature. The **Yetzer Hora** is a distinct, fully matured, persuasive and ever-present force, whilst the **Yetzer HaTov** is neither a fixed nor a static "part" of the person's inner self, but one whose substance is in need of constant encouragement and support. It is a substance whose functions, unlike the **Yetzer**

Hora, must be ceaselessly acknowledged, nourished and persuaded into supporting the conscious self to "conquer" the formidable **Yetzer Hora.** Moral behaviour in Gateshead is to be ensured by way of the conscious self's manipulation and monitoring of the **Yetzer HaTov**, whilst the emotion of guilt, instigated in the heart and independent of the conscious self, evaluates the planned course or outcome of the effort. Indeed the sociocultural understanding of the "struggle" between the two self components - the **Yetzer Hora** and the **Yetzer HaTov** - to gain control of the conscious self, is, in many ways, perceived as an unequal "match" in which the **Yetzer HaTov** requires ceaseless assistance from the conscious self. This is where introspection presently plays a vital role in the community, whose members work intensively to develop themselves (and their children) into persons who are morally sensitive. Through Mussar the individual is preoccupied according to specific methods, with the constant evaluating, boosting, and supporting of the **Yetzer HaTov** in an attempt to create a more "equal" opponent to the **Yetzer Hora.** In effect the **Yetzer HaTov** is the person's buffer against the influence of the **Yetzer Hora.**

A vital component of human nature in Gateshead is the source of the person's personality. This is the outcome of a particular and complex composition of **Middos**, or character traits (5). They are the combination of the person's good and bad character predispositions or potentials such as: suspicion, patience, generosity, anger, humour, trust, compassion, envy, kindness, deceit, etc.(6) that underpin and direct human behaviours. From the outset a person has both good and bad **Middos.** It is the quest of the **Yetzer Hora** to gain the support from the bad **Middos** whose dominance and "victory" of the good Middos, ensures satisfaction of the former's selfish inclinations and desires. The conscious self's and **Yetzer Hora's** direct access to the **Middos** means that the process of promoting or restraining each **Middah (singl. of Middos)** is particularly vulnerable to pressure from internal (the Yetzer Hora) or external (the social and physical environment) agencies. The internal agency is difficult to keep in check, but the external can be manipulated and restrained (7). In other words the type and quality of the input which the conscious self receives is decisive to the shaping of the **Middos.** By way of suppressing the bad whilst actively favouring and enhancing the good potentials -

Middos - the conscious self might diminish the influence of the **Yetzer Hora** and substantiate that of the **Yetzer HaTov.**

The structure of human nature in Gateshead is one in which the responsibility and obligation of moral judgement relies on the person's own discretion, in that moral behaviours are regarded as intrinsically dependent upon the conscious self's preferences. The choice between following the temptations of the **Yetzer Hora** or opting for the more problematic stance of promoting and relying on the "good" **Middos's** activation of the **Yetzer HaTov,** rests entirely with the conscious self. Although the **Middos** are not active in themselves, their existence and composition activate and influence, via the conscious self, the **Yetzorim.**

It is inherent in the structures which result in moral behaviour that the conscious self is, directly as well as indirectly, the object of the functions of the **Yetzer Hora** (as well as the Yetzer HaTov). The conscious self has limited ability to stop or divert this ascendancy on its own, it has to count on the assistance and back-up of the **Yetzer HaTov** whose stamina and resilience is intimately tied to the quality and balance of the **Middos.** In other words there is here an "internal dilemma" in that the conscious self must play the role of "giver" and "receiver" within the same processual chain (Fig.5).

The term **Middah** (singl. Middos, translated it means, "measure") indicates that each person's **Middos** are differently composed both in terms of quantity and quality. This in turn means that people hold differing and highly individual **Middos** compositions providing them with unequal, or at least different, "battles" against the powers of the **Yetzer Hora.** When one of the woman with whom I worked explained the structure and role of the **Middos,** she phrased it as follows:

"Some people have Middos which are better than others'. This means that they have less battle. For instance if someone gets too angry in situations - this is part of his Middah. His measure of anger is large. So for him to control his anger it takes a lot of self-control and much more effort than for the person who is laid-back and easy-going. Remember, none is born a Tzadik (righteous) nor a Rasha (wicked)".

Also in the following quote the "unequal distribution" is expressed:

"One of my sons has got great difficulty in sharing with others whenever he's got something nice, whilst my younger son will give all he's got away. The older one has a restricted Middah in this aspect so it is harder for him to share. He has to work on this constantly. Now we are helping him but one day, hopefully, he will be able to control it by himself. You see the correct state of the Middos is when a person accepts and responds to the instructions of the Torah via the Neshomo and so allowing the Yetzer HaTov to dominate their choices in a life which Hakodosh Boruch Hu (The Holy One blessed be He) has purposefully filled with ever recurring Nisyonos (trials) and through which we may gain a place in Olam Habo (world to come)".

In Gateshead, moral orientation calls for and depends upon the conscious self's manipulation and interference. The conscious part of the person's Self does experience the **Yetzer HaTov** as incapable of being self-monitoring, placing it directly under its control and thus stressing the need to ensure that the conscious self makes the correct "choice" and consequently instigates moral behaviour. In contrast the **Yetzer Hora** is largely an independent agency, to whom the conscious self, in the Freudian sense, is the object of actions (8). The image of the **Yetzer Hora** reflects the way in which some mental processes are not directly controlled by the conscious part of one's self. On the other hand the conscious self does hold the potential of monitoring resistance, via active projection and promotion of the "good" potentials - **Middos Tovos** - thus strengthening the **Yetzer HaTov** and enhancing its consequent ability to help the conscious self resist the **Yetzer Hora.**

It is a venture made plausible due to specific sociocultural beliefs which present the **Yetzer HaTov** as being highly susceptible to socialization, whilst the **Yetzer Hora,** on the other hand, is perceived as somewhat resistant to socialization, and as a reservoir of unsocialized force within the self. The problems of socializing the **Yetzer Hora** and the consequent necessity of "training" or rearing the child was presented to me, by a young mother, in this analogy:

"A man insisted that he could train a cat to serve at the table just like a waiter. The other man said that there was no way that this could be done. So in the end the other man said; "All right you show me." Soon after the man came back with

a cat which was carrying a tray and it served drinks beautifully. The other man looked, said nothing, but produced a paper bag. Then out of the bag he pulled a rat. The cat, when he saw the rat, threw away the tray and glasses in chase of the rat. So you see, you can train, but the instincts are still there. This is why parents must use childhood to progressively train their children to control their animal instincts".

Although the heart is largely an autonomous component of human nature, the composition of the person's **Middos** affects the heart's emotional spectrum (Fig.5). The person's specific character traits, the **Middos**, direct and stimulate the heart-emotions and subsequently have a bearing on the conduct of the conscious self. In spite of the latter's inability to monitor the heart's preferences and evaluations it can, to a certain extent, "censor" the overt and public demonstration of these emotions. This "censorship", the way in which emotions are publicly presented, the emotional style, bears the stamp of time and space (Briggs, 1970; Levy, 1973; Lutz, 1986,1988; Rosaldo, 1980; Just, 1991). Put another way, sociocultural norms and ideas regulate and organize emotional style and preferences (Middleton 1989). It is the conscious self which interprets and enacts according to a particular socioculturally determined emotional style and which must lastly take social responsibility for its actions. Similarly, people in Gateshead agree that the conscious self has the means to regulate "overt" or public demonstration of emotions, indeed self-control plays an important role in the community, but they still insist that there are specific emotions or "traits" found in every Jew, which the conscious self has limited possibilities of controlling, regardless of time and space.

It is important to remember that these indigenous beliefs do not insinuate that such emotions do not occur in non-Jews, but that they are a particular guaranteed constituent of Jewish human nature. Significant to this indigenous belief, is the conviction that regardless of qualitative or quantitative encouragement, there are potential characteristics - **Middos**- which affect the heart, and in turn have the capacity to make themselves - as emotions - not only "felt" but are also difficult for the conscious self to ignore and suppress. These emotions are detectable. They are emotions by which a Jew can recognize a fellow Jew, even in instances where the latter might attempt to conceal, or is even unaware of his/her Jewish heritage.

In the words of a woman:

"Once you have a Jewish Neshomo (soul) you can't hide it! Some attempt to do so but it is in vain. And especially so in situations concerning Halachic law, that is when the Jewish Neshomo reveals itself".

Also the woman who explained the following suggests that this is the case:

"In Russia, long ago, where life was never easy for the Yidden, some of us converted, changed their names and became even officers in the Russian army. You see Jewish boys at the time had to serve twenty-five years of military service. These Jewish officers were often brutal and hard people. But still, when they met Jewish soldiers who asked permission to celebrate Shabbath or a particular Jewish holiday or festival, these same officers would often admit to being Jewish and grant the soldier the permission. They showed compassion and were unable to run away from their undeniable Jewish Neshomo".

No matter where and when a Jew is born, regardless of environment or upbringing, there are qualities which due to his/her **Neshomo** lie latent within the Jew and which will eventually affect his/her emotional spectrum. The existence of these, to a Jew, "recognizable" and innate emotions and the way in which they "overrule" the conscious self were often depicted and presented to me in numerous comments, of which I shall share a couple with the reader in order that I might attempt to convey these indigenous psychological theories. As one woman recalled:

"Once I went to the osteopath for some treatments. And there was something about the therapist which made me say to my husband afterwards:"I am sure she has got Jewish blood in her. She has a sensitivity which is not Goyish. I could feel it! It shows in the sensitive way she talks to, and treats people. It seems so natural to her." As it turned out, I learned this later, her mother was Jewish. So you see "it" is "in" all Yidden. Even if he or she attempts to suppress it".

Another woman commented:

"I have met people, secularised Jews, living a life void of the Torah, in fact they have had no contact with Yiddishkeit at all, but I can usually feel that it is a Yid. I can sense it, it is so obvious at times".

Common to these remarks is that they deal with people's "inner" self in relation to the social world and that this relationship carries social importance. The comments imply that there exists an appropriate emotional style whose display affirms people's religio-cultural identity. This style is particularly salient since it deals with emotions that are revealed in dealings with others. They are emotions which operate as moral principles, and are regarded as the outcome of an "inner" world and its particular obligation of instigating moral order. Being a good Jew places numerous demands on a person, one such important demand, which in Gateshead also monitors his/her emotional life, is the tireless concern with the well-being of others and the neglect or sacrifice of one's own personal needs and desires. Inherent in ideas concerning human nature in Gateshead is that the distinct **Middos** of a Jew have the makings of an individual who cannot help, in certain contexts, revealing a tender regard for other people's feelings.

Thus all the above comments pertain to the notion that Jews are able to sense and take into consideration the needs and feelings of their fellow men, that they have a natural and innate disposition for feeling compassion and being benevolent. They indicate that Jews have a sensitivity which renders them capable of recognizing the situational appropriateness of feeling pity, and with the wish to relieve or help the troubled person. Actually, there are three characteristics which are recognized as being inherent in Jews: namely that of being a) **Rachamonim** (compassionate), of being b) **Bayeshonim** (bashful), and of being c) **Gomlei Chasodim** (benevolent) (Talmud Babli,Yevamoth 79a). Compassion, the ability to feel empathy and mercy combined with benevolence, the desire to help and do good, are latent potentials with which every Jew has been endowed. Bashfulness implies one who is shy or modest, one who does not thrust himself/herself "forward" and demand attention. A **Bayeshon** is one who is shy and bashful and who has qualities of being considerate and respectful towards his/her fellow man. He/she has a quality or characteristic which helps him/her to curb and control the disagreeable behaviours of forwardness, brashness, and boldness derived from the influence of the **Yetzer Hora.** Quite clearly it is also recognized that not all Jews everywhere pay heed to, nor do they always allow these emotions to direct

interpersonal relationships. It might be that the **Yetzer Hora** is allowed to dominate the conscious self permitting these innate dispositions restricted influence. Still, there will inevitably be times when the conscious self will "slip-up" and when the heart-emotions will reveal themselves.

I believe that what people in Gateshead (or anywhere else for that matter) know or believe about themselves generates and shapes their emotional behaviour. The knowledge of what they are, based on the belief in the existence of specific innate constructs and traits, organizes and regulates the ways in which people in the community act and behave. This is a stance which takes into account the influence of culture in ordering people's emotional experiences and therefore considers the way in which people understand themselves, based upon specific ideas concerning human nature, to be relevant to the way they organize and characterize their emotions. They way people in Gateshead interact, the way in which they express particular emotions, their intensity, context of expression and indigenous classifications, are all underpinned by their specific ideas of human nature.

Rosaldo (1980) has shown us that young Ilongot men always have anger in their hearts, unmarried men have hearts that are filled with anger, whilst middle-aged men have learned to control this anger and to balance it with wisdom, and lastly old men have hearts that are empty of anger but filled with wisdom. The expression of anger among the Ilongot is closely connected to the male sex role, expressed through stages of the life cycle as well as their social activities. In short, their emotional lives are related to their identity. In a similar way people's ideas concerning their emotional spectrum, of having compassion, bashfulness, and benevolence, serve in Gateshead as constant points of reference as people act and interpret the acts of others. The belief in the existence of, and the moral importance of, these particular emotions, generates a specific behaviour towards others.

Fundamental indigenous beliefs concerning human nature constitute the basis for this particular cultural emotional style, whose enactment - that of showing "loving

care" - is closely connected to Jewish identity. That which people in Gateshead know to be innate in them also generates their emotional conduct. It is a conduct in which compassion and benevolence are daily and continuously communicated and presented, through acts of showing tender concern with the well-being of others and a tireless neglect or sacrifice of one's own personal needs and desires. They are all acts which reveal the appropriate emotional style of giving priority to the needs of one's fellow men over individual selfishness, and therefore demonstrate Rosaldo's (1980,1983) point that sociocultural ideas and beliefs bear upon the process of generating interaction.

It is through the intensity, density, and marked earnestness in their dealings with others, that people express their cultural characteristics or normative rules. Concepts of emotions are a kind of language of the "inner" self, an expression of the actor's understanding of his/her relation to a social world. In Gateshead, emotions are a primary idiom for defining and mediating social relations of the "inner" self in a moral order.

In Gateshead, the knowledge and constant reaffirmation of an "inner" self-image, the locus of internal processes whereby "inner" mental sub-divisions and their varied capacities, goals and allegiances interact and operate, helps people to construct themselves and behave as moral persons. The latter, it is believed, can only be achieved through increased sensitivity to the emotion of feeling bashfulness. Being a **Bayeshon** means that the conscious self is sensitive to the feeling of "shyness". A person who is a **Bayeshon** possesses an emotion which in English pertains to, and embraces the feeling of, "shyness", "bashfulness", and "reticence". Having such emotions means that one is able to behave in a morally appropriate manner, in that these emotions partly monitor the conscious self. Being a **Bayeshon** means that one has the capacity of self-control. Put differently, moral behaviours are, in part, the outcome of the conscious self's sensitivity to "shyness". Being a **Bayeshon** is both an emotion and a moral state.

The trend towards increased concern with introspection and one's "inner life", and

thus the individual's own awareness and knowledge of how to alter, influence, and manipulate this "inner" self, enables people in the community to act as moral agents. They know that their "inner" self allows or constitutes the basis for moral lives and that to live that kind of life requires their active participation, the intentional monitoring of this entity.

The importance given to ethics and morals in Gateshead is reflected in the stress upon the transmission of these values to "new" generations. It is not enough that adults have this knowledge and competence, children must also acquire sensitivity to the "inner" structures and develop states of moral consciousness. They have to acquire knowledge of their "inner" moral self, thus enabling them to participate in social life. The question of how children acquire an understanding of their "inner" self, its limitations and possibilities and the numerous behavioural and emotional consequences of this knowledge, are questions which are relevant but which have been largely ignored in ethnographic studies. In a community like Gateshead where members' ability to operate as moral agents has been provided with a sociocultural imperative and where this competence is decisive to the members' ethnic identity, an understanding of human nature reproduction represents an ethnographic challenge.

Before dealing with this topic, an explanation concerning the effects of ideas concerning human nature on inter-ethnic relations, is called for. I will therefore first attempt to briefly indicate how it is that ideas and beliefs concerning specific qualities and functions inherent in human nature causes members of the community to avoid excessive contact with the surrounding society at large. Inherent in this behaviour is the understanding that a person's "inner" is particularly sensitive to surrounding external influences, causing an increased awareness of how to avoid the influences which might contaminate part(s) of his/her "inner" structure. Consequently, any sociological explanation of inter-ethnic conditions as they exist in the area today today, would be inadequate without taking indigenous psychological explanations into account.

Notes to Chapter 5.1

1.
When I first arrived in Gateshead my intention was to study gender relations and the ways in which these constructs were inculcated in socialization processes. As it turned out this was a quest which met with considerable resistance in the community. After some time I decided to shift my focus and thus redirected my focus to the highly rewarding issue of human nature and its reproduction.

2.
For instance of the 613 Commandments or mitzvot (248 are positive and 365 are negative) only three of the positive mitzvot pertain to women whilst all the negative mitzvot must be observed by both men and women.

3.
The concept of the soul - Neshomo - is a complex topic in Judaism. When it became known in the community that I had shown an interest in this topic some members expressed discomfort with my questions. The subject is regarded in Gateshead as Kabalistic (mystical) and being a highly specialized one, is of little interest in this particular community. Members of the community have suggested and expressed the wish that I should not discuss this matter at any length in my thesis. I have decided that I will only discuss the topic in a minimal and restricted fashion. I have chosen to do so not only due to ethical considerations in fieldwork but also out of respect and high regard for the people of Gateshead.

4.
The question of location is not one that causes discomfort, rather surprise and did not produce conforming answers. This I believe to be in line with a socioculturally agreed understanding that: "we are not expected to know about these things. They are not for us to understand."

5.
The word middos (sing.Middah) means "measures" (of predispositions, character traits). There are other nuances, depending on context.

6.
I am fully aware that these "traits" or "emotions" are socioculturally determined as shown by Rosaldo (1980), Lutz (1988) and Middleton (1989).

7.
As in the Freudian concept, the person's Yetzer Hora can be partly influenced due to its single-minded object of satisfying its own needs. By way of gaining reward and/or avoiding punishment (also this is regarded as self-satisfaction) the Yetzer Hora can be, in a limited fashion, governed by the conscious self.

8.
An interesting question here would be as to what extent Freud's own Jewish heritage influenced his conviction that the conscious self is manipulated or "driven" by an internal force, the unconscious self. There are obvious paralles between his theory of the human mind and a Jewish understanding of human nature.

6.1 AVOIDANCE OF "INNER"-DEFILEMENT.

The assumption that external sources influence various components of the "inner" self and that this in turn affects the ways in which the conscious self interprets stimuli and consequently organizes its actions, not only governs indigenous educational theory, it also has decisive ethnic consequences. As described in chapter 5.1 the structures of the "inner" process which instigate moral conduct are susceptible to and unable to discriminate stimuli external to the conscious self. It is an assumption which to some extent explains recent tendencies towards isolationism among the members of Gateshead Jewish community.

With an increased interest in and "knowledge" of the sociocultural construction of human nature, people in the community have progressively tended to avoid contact with the society at large, in the belief that such encounters might instigate undesirable outcomes of specific "inner" processes. The consequences, it is claimed, might be that peoples' continuous quest to lead moral lives is jeopardized or even obstructed.

The specific understanding of human nature in Gateshead is one which depicts specific "parts" of the individual's "inner" as particularly susceptible to external stimuli. Here, the conscious self is regarded as the link between the person's environment and numerous other "inner" components. Essential to the role of the conscious self is its function as a passive receiver as well an active organizer of stimuli. Further, it directly and actively organizes **thoughts**, has direct contact with the individual's **Middos** and is indirectly able to influence emotions.

In all these activities the conscious self has to fend off the formidable and highly persuasive **Yetzer Hora** (evil inclination) whose aim it is to lure the individual into self-gratifying actions. The **Yetzer Hora** thrives on and is further encouraged with support from "bad" external stimuli. In other words, "wrong" or "bad" external stimuli increase the pressure on the **Yetzer HaTov** (good inclination). The

EXTERNAL INFLUENCES ON SELF

The Iranian Case

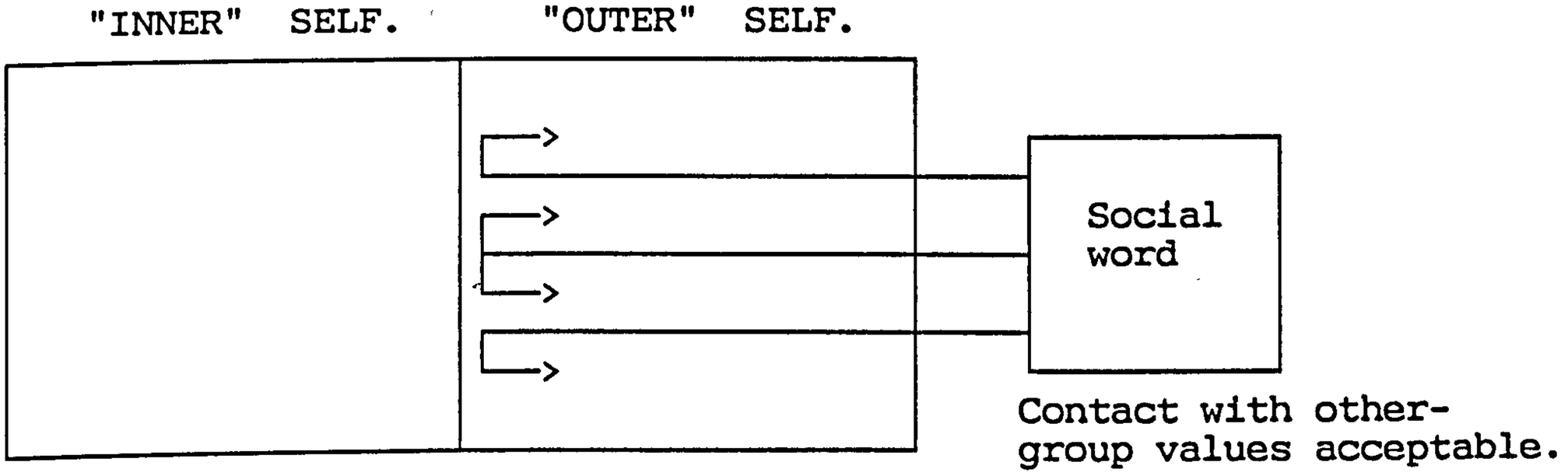


Fig. 11a.

The Jewish Case

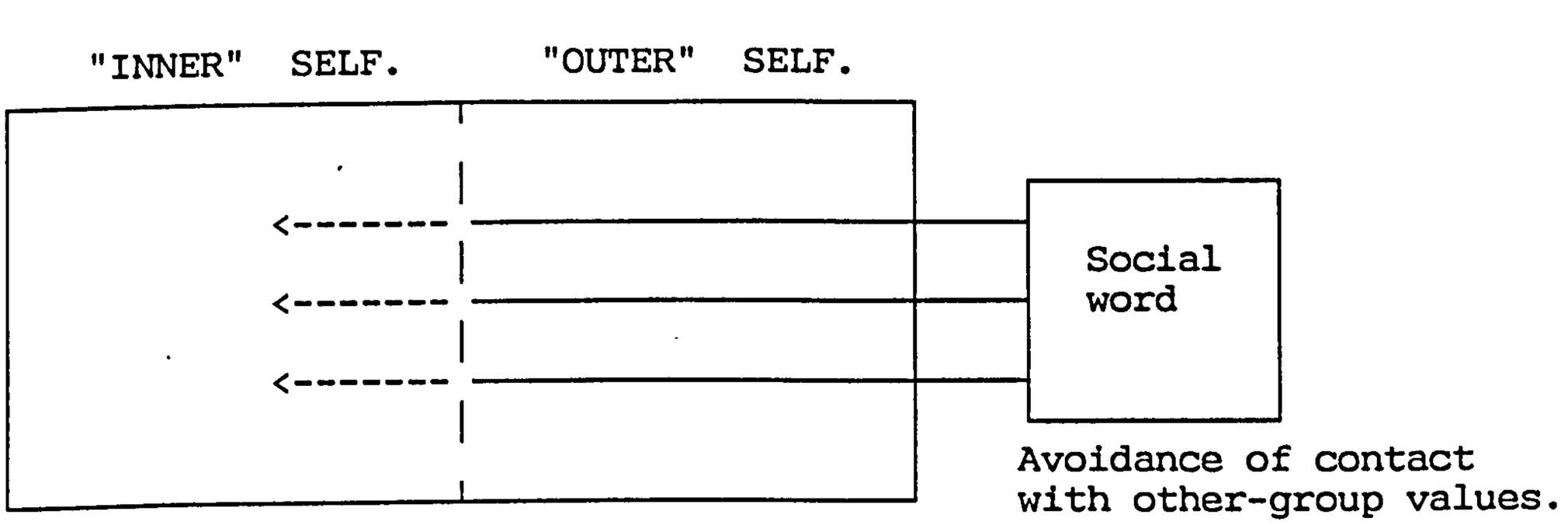


Fig. 11b.

conscious self, which must carry the responsibility for moral judgement, is faced with an increasing number of difficult choices. Hence the vulnerable and unprotected character of some "inner" self-components, provokes greater battles between the **Yetzorim** and thus problematizes moral conduct.

The core of the problem lies in the direct connection between the conscious self and the **Middos** . Exposure to "bad" external stimuli will directly encourage bad **Middos** and increase the risk of weakening the **Yetzer HaTov,** thereby jeopardising moral conduct. This is a risk which people in the community are unwilling to take. They "know" that since the conscious self is in itself unable to discriminate or ignore external stimuli, "bad" influx must be avoided or at least kept to a bare minimum. In short, the active avoidance of negative external influences is believed to help reduce inner-pollution, calling for removal of or at least avoidance of all contaminating influences. Without the existence of an effective "internal barrier" between the conscious self and all external influences, it is the latter which must be modified. The individual's environment must be manipulated to make up for the inadequacy of the conscious self.

Viewing the society at large as lacking in or failing to comply with ethics and moral values, it is thought to provide highly undesirable and contaminating stimuli which are believed to be disruptive to their own quest to live ethically "purer" lives. This has further supported the tendency towards isolationism and avoidance of excessive between-group contact.

The influence of indigenous ideas and beliefs concerning the construct of human nature on ethnic relations, is a much neglected topic among researchers of ethnicity. An exception though, is Hoffman's (1989) work among Iranians in America. Although she provides a rather limited understanding of their beliefs concerning human nature, she does explain how the concept of self among members of this group reveals a dichotomy between the "inner" and "outer" self (fig. 11a), where the "inner" core of self is regarded as separate and independent from the

"outer" self.

The "inner" core of the self is seen to be the person's feelings and personality, whilst the "outer" pertains to the public self. It is this duality which, she claims, accounts for the willingness of Iranians in America to adopt local values and life-styles. The "inner" core, the centre of the person's pure emotions and personality is regarded, among the Iranians, as being separate and unaffected by external events, which merely have an impact upon the "outer" self. This latter is highly susceptible to the evils of social life, but has in its turn no such influence on the person's "inner" core, which remains a detached entity.

This dichotomy between the two aspects of **human nature**, the "inner" and the "outer", is alien to the way of thinking about selfhood in Gateshead. The most striking difference between Iranian ideas and those prevalent in Gateshead, is the Iranian concept that there exists a "core", or a part of self which is:

immune to external transformation. (Hoffman 1989. p.43)

To people in Gateshead this is an anomaly. For them no barriers exist to render the "inner" self protection or immunity. Consequently there are in the society at large many provocations which must be avoided in order to avoid "inner" defilement. In Gateshead there exists no recognized dichotomy between a person's internal and external self (fig, 11b). In fact, the two are seen as inseparable and intervowen components of the same structure where a close proximity exists between the person's "inner" self and his/her public behaviour, the "outer" self (11b). The conscious self not only inter-connects, but also engages the two in an interdependent relationship. In other words the conscious self, the link between the "inner" and "outer" self, creates a reciprocal relationship in which the organizational processes of the one are related to those of the other. It is a symbiosis where it is impossible to prevent the one from influencing the operations of the other. Thus, the Iranian belief that the "outer" self:

can undergo radical "adaptive" transformation at the level of behaviour, expression and knowledge, while the inner self remains "pure", (ibid p.39)

would be inconceivable in Gateshead. In the Iranian case it is possible in ethnic encounters, to be involved in a kind of selective cultural "shopping" whereby the individual may pick and choose among the traits of the society at large, without risking "inner" transformation. Contact with the "evils" of American society can in itself neither contaminate nor alter the purity of the "inner" self. The understanding among Iranians in America that there exists a detachment of the "inner" from the "outer" self, permits indiscriminate contact with the society at large since it:

allows the purity of the inner self to remain unsullied by the demands of social interactions and survival within an often hostile world. (ibid. p.42)

Hoffman argues that due to the dualism inherent in the Iranian self concept there is, among members of this group, a high degree of and willingnes to engage in cultural adaptation. This is a far cry from the isolationism found in Gateshead, where ethnic confrontations are regarded as posing severe threats to the "inner" self. There is but one way to safeguard one's "inner" self and to avoid contamination from the abundance of "wrong" or "bad" influences of the society at large, and that is to turn one's back on the latter. The following comment underscores this point:

"Whenever I have been away from the community for a while, I can feel that I have undergone a lowering of my standards, a Yerida. Somehow what I have seen, heard and felt has influenced me even though I have tried to avoid it. Whatever is around us will have an impact. When I go back to the community it is hard to get back to Gateshead's standards. And this is precisely why we say that the environment that we live in is so important and which also makes it a must to keep ourselves separate from the Goyim."

That the activities and values of the society at large have the power to threaten and undermine the individual's "inner" self and consequently the group's particular out-look on life is a concern which I often encountered. One woman expressed this concern as follows:

"I try to keep the children away from the Goyim and their world as much as possible. For instance I never take them into the paper shop down the road. There are so many things in the newspapers and magazines, often on the front pages, which could corrupt their minds. Even I, an adult, should not see it since it affects us adults as well. I am constantly aware and thinking of these things. There is so much out there which could be a mashpiah (influence) and in some way ruin or disrupt our hashkofoh (outlook on life)."

The next woman was even more specific when she argued:

Nobody can convince me that all that filth out there is not bad for you! It is bound to affect us in some way. And I for one firmly believe that it brings fuel to the Yetzer Hora. And why should we make it any harder on ourselves. There is no need to encourage bad Middos. You know, there are times when I have been into town when I wonder what harm such a visit might have caused, not just to the childrens', but also my own Middos. On such occasions I am so grateful that the community is here, providing a Torah environment for ourselves and our children. That's what we all need."

The next woman also expressed concern with the potential polluting influences of the society at large:

"When my children walk to the park they have to pass by this video shop. There are so many bad things to be seen there. I tell my children not to look in the windows. You don't realize when you are looking at something how it will affect you. But it does. You see, if you are in mud, you don't realize what it is like to be clean. It is like that for the Goyim who live in all that filth. So don't look at bad things, don't pollute your mind and soul. It is hard to stay clean surrounded by so much filth, but we must avoid looking at or hearing it, that's the only answer."

There is no specific age when the process of polluting the "inner" self begins, no age when the individual is too young, neither is old age a guarantee or shield which offers immunity against the influences of evil. The following two comments demonstrate the belief that the individual is vulnerable at any time of his/her life:

"When I was in hospital having my last baby, there was a T.V. on in the room where we stayed with the babies. The other mothers, I was the only Jewish woman there, were all watching it. Something awful was being shown. So I took my baby and left the room. No need to pollute her, or myself for that matter!"

The new born baby in the previous incident may have been as much at risk as the old Manchester Rosh Yeshiva. This man, Rabbi Segal, is regarded by many as a "leader" in the orthodox world. All such "leaders" choose their specific topic and the Manchester Rosh Yeshiva's emphasis is on the evils of **Loshn Hora** (Lit. evil tongue = idle gossip). The striking feature about the personal appearance of this highly respected man, are his bushy eyebrows which seem to have grown down over his eyes. One woman explained this to me in a way which adds a functional quality to the old rabbi's appearance:

"The rabbi is very careful with what he sees. He does not want to pollute his mind with evil things. Therefore he always looks down when he walks. He does not want bad things to affect his Neshomo. When you see a picture of him you'll be struck by the way his eyebrows seem to blurr his view of the world. I believe that in his case it is Hashem who has done this. Whatever a person wants to do, Hashem will lead him, good or bad. The Rosh Yeshiva does not want to see evil and Hashem is helping him."

These and many other remarks indicate that the extent of withdrawal and self-isolation from the society at large demonstrated in Gateshead in post-war years, cannot solely be explained in terms of differing values or religious practices, but must also consider underlying beliefs and ideas concerning the cultural construct of human nature.

In attempting a comprehensive understanding of the changes which have occured in inter-ethnic relations in post-war years one can ill afford to ignore or under-estimate the effects of the re-negotiation of the concept of human nature which have taken place during that period.

What is called for is an articulated interest in the ways in which the renegotiated importance of ethics in Gateshead, instigated by an interest in **Mussar,** have caused increased introspection and a renewed awareness and "knowledge" of the various components involved in the "inner" processes which organize and stimulate moral conduct. Only then can we begin to realise that the quality of present inter-ethnic interactions and the community's striving for isolationism, are the unavoidable

outcomes of their specific constructs of human nature, and not merely religious, economic or political strategies.

6.2 INDIGENOUS EDUCATIONAL THEORY: A REFLECTION OF INDIGENOUS PSYCHOLOGY

..the whole purpose of your creation is just this, to eradicate (negative) middoth and evil dispositions and to change them for good ones.
You are capable of doing so, and no excuses will avail you. Granted it is not easy to go against one's nature, yet you certainly possess the power to prevail and fulfill your mission viliantly, since G-D does not act a tyrant towards His creatures.
(Lev Eliayahu p.213.)

The ideas and beliefs people hold concerning **human nature** greatly influence the ways in which children are perceived and dealt with. Consequently, indigenous educational theory might be regarded as a valuable tool in revealing indigenous psychologies. In this chapter it is my intention to present this reciprocal relationship and to show that in Gateshead the ideas which guide people in their rearing practices, are based firmly upon their ideas concerning human nature and the ways in which this condition might be manipulated and monitored. It is this understanding that underpins the community members' efforts and approach to the conscious and goal-oriented process of reproducing sociocultural members who are willing and capable of operating as competent moral agents (Hess, 1970; Hoffman, 1971; Levin, 1977). In Gateshead this process, a particular part of child rearing, is given considerable attention and endless consideration.

Although human beings in general invest a considerable amount of time and energy in caring for their offspring, there is much cross-cultural variation in terms of socialization style and content (Lambert 1979). Regardless of cultural variations, parents (or other care-givers) seek to control and influence the behaviour of their children in ways that impose sociocultural preferences upon the child (Goodman 1970). This implies that there are ideals to be adhered to and that children can

neither detect nor internalize these without "expert" guidance or training. This is an understanding which perceives children as the **learners** and adults as the **transmitters** of social knowledge and thus regulates between-generation relationships in many cultures. It is a relationship which makes for a "provider" and a "receiver", and where the former is active whilst the latter, the child, remains the passive recipient of the expert's guidance.

In Western thought, these are ideas which can be traced back to Rousseau's preoccupation with Man as an entity that can only be "moulded" into a social member within society (chap. 3.1). The idea of Man in relation to society stems from the modern period of the Western world when the individual became an increasingly central issue. The individual, devoid from birth of "social competence", had to be carefully formed and moulded into an adequate and functioning social member and to accept and demonstrate willingness and ability to subscribe to those attitudes, actions, and rules which society sought to engender. It was a stance which was to call for intense attention to be given to child rearing, the process through which the **unsocialized** child was to be elevated to the **socialized** adult (Aries, 1962). The bridging of the gap between the individual and society was to be achieved by way of socialization or child rearing and as such this process attracted the attention not only of philosophers but also of both psychologists and pedagogues.

Concern with· the ways in which the child becomes a competent and adjusted sociocultural actor has until the last decade, in the main been founded upon two contrasting metaphors. The first is an image of the child who, with increasing age, passes though stages of development. The child possesses a specific structure of qualitatively distinct intellectual abilities with which it scrutinizes and investigates the surrounding world in order to infer the latter's underlying structures (Piaget 1954; Sears 1957; Kohlberg 1969; Maccoby 1968; Odom 1971; Talbot 1976; Trevarthen 1989), that which we today recognize as **cognition.** Providing a rather more ambiguous representation of the actual acquisition process, Bourdieu (1977)

also makes use of the notion of cognition, and seems to be adopting the Piagetian concept of **schemas** when he describes the **habitus** as:

> **systems of durable transposable dispositions, structured structures predisposed to function as structures, that is, as principles of the generation and structuring of practices and representations which can be objectively "regulated" and "regular" without in any way being product of obedience to rules,** (ibid. p.72)

The cognitive stance described above, invokes the image of **growth,** whilst the second traditional development research, that of social learning, is based upon the metaphor of **moulding.** The school of social learning regards the child as being born into a particular setting, a world saturated with cultural particularities and cultural experts, which in unison influence and mould the child into a competent social actor (holding unlimited possibilities of cultural relativism).

American anthropologists showed as early as in the 1920's an interest, in the Weberian sence, in the individual and its actions in society (Freund 1968). Based upon the "social learning/empty vessel" approach, their interest in the stereotyped modes of peoples' behaviours, regarded as the characteristics of a particular people and their socialization, led to the concept of **national character.** Instigated by Boas and continued by his student M.Mead, theirs was an interest in the relationship between culture and personality which lead them to the conclusion that causes of cultural variation in adult behaviours could be put down to varying methods of child rearing. The interest in the cultural "method" or "style" of socialization, as postulated by Mead (1928,32, 55) and Benedict (1946) resulted in what we today know as the **Culture and personality school** (1).

Notions of moulding, underpinning theories of social learning, includes notions of **imitation**, assuming that the individual is infinitely malleable and that it learns by way of external pressures. According to those who adhere to the theory of social learning (Skinner, 1938; Whitting, 1963,1975; Bandura, 1963; Inkeles, 1968; Clausen, 1968; Mayer 1968; Anandalakshmy, 1975) the child is thought to adopt behaviours which are determined by conditioning or modelling practices. Largely rejecting the

Freudian concept of humans as acting or being driven by their internal "drives" to satisfy their own selfish ends, social learning theories perceive learning as the outcome of imitation and conditioning (in other words, reward and punishment). It is a stance which allows for a social dimension in the process of child rearing, a relationship which Freud neglected somewhat. Let us now see how these child rearing theories relate to the way in which parents treat their children in Gateshead.

In Gateshead, the social dimension is perceived and acknowledged as crucial to the socialization process. There is a strong conviction in Gateshead that demonstrating to and surrounding the child with correct and "good" behaviour will eventually and effectively induce such behaviour in the child. Since the child is equally receptive to "bad" or "wrong" influence, the latter must at all costs be avoided. The idea of imitation inherent in such a conviction presents a picture of the child as being unwilling or even unable to distinguish between "right" and "wrong" or "good" and "bad". It is an image of socialization as the casting of the child, shaping it into something different from that which its natural "instincts" would generate if left uncurbed. More precisely children, in spite of their "innate" and ever-present **Yetzer Hora** (evil inclination) can be socialized in ways which are beneficial to social requirements, if provided with correct models and appropriate rewards and punishments. Thus, it is up to the parents to make such discriminations and to display sanctioned social behaviour.

In Gateshead, the model-presentation is frequently accompanied by relevant information provision, corrections and guided encouragements in a manner which reveals and underscores a particular moral order. It is thought that only by way of excluding "bad influences", particularly those of the surrounding non-Jewish world, and by careful monitoring of their own behaviour, can they successfully raise their children to become competent moral agents, that which is recognized as making "good Jews". Mothers in the community are certain that here they carry considerable responsibility and make strenuous efforts at complying with and demonstrating what being a "good Jew" entails (Wolfstein, 1955; Blau, 1974; Greenberg, 1981; Adahan, 1988; Radcliff, 1989). It is a role, based upon a

specific moral code, which the individual can only obtain within society. To be a "good Jew" means to live according to idealized interpersonal relationships and to consider, at all times, the feelings and needs of others, those of the "whole" or the collective of which the child must be made a part. The child will acquire this competence through its constant exposure to people who behave in acceptable and "good" ways. It is emphatically claimed that parents themselves must constantly work on their own **Middos** since it cannot be expected that the "incomplete" child will do better than its parents. It is widely acknowledged that enhancement of their children's **Middos** is intrinsically connected to the example set by the parents' behaviour. One woman emphasised the importance of setting an example like this:

"We must always as parents be aware of how we conduct ourselves in life. Never forget that children are watching us. They pick up things so quickly, also, no especially so, bad habits. Of course tochocha (rebuke) is one way to direct them in the right direction, but the better way is to do things, even the slightest of things, correctly yourself. By seing how we should behave and not being exposed to the wrong ways, I believe makes much more of an impact in the long run."

Consequently, imitation, though it seems to contradict notions of learning (as an active cognition process), appears in Gateshead to be regarded as another aspect of the learning process. This is also the case, Norman (1991) argues, in German society (as in most Western societies) where social context is regarded as pedagogically significant. The local importance given to the child's behavioural environment is discussed at length by Norman (1991) who claims that:

what this aspect of learning implies is, in extension, that adults function as models of behaviour, as Vorbild, and that adults - parents, teachers - must act correctly. They must also explain to the children why things turn out as they do, .why a certain punishment is administered or reward given. Children are rarely thought of in these contexts as being able to discriminate between the meaning of the same act performed in different situations or to be able to grapple with inconsistency and contradiction. There also seems to be a view that a certain behaviour will generate exactly the same behaviour in the child, a kind of one-to-one correlation.
(Norman 1991. p.42)

In the light of this type of reasoning, adults' actions are children's behavioural

"blueprint" which the child is unable to evaluate and which it will indiscriminatingly imitate. Children are unselectively influenced and biased by their social environment, thus rendering it necessary for adults to control and censor the quality and content of this milieu. In the presence of children, adults in Gateshead seem to underline or exaggerate behavioural preferences. In other words, they emphasize the behaviour which they wish the child to acquire, making use of every possible opportunity to demonstrate behavioural ideals. Like the woman who told me how she, when the police came to investigate a burglary in her home, realized that this was a "perfect chance to show the children the correct attitude towards life", and therefore made quite sure that she expressed herself and the underlying values explicitly:

"I was very aware that this was a good chance to implore upon them the importance of realizing that material goods are not important but that human lives are. I was acutely aware that six pair of eyes were upon me and that how I reacted was very important. I specifically pointed out that the burglar had not taken all our silver, a plate was left on the couch, and that we had most of all to be grateful to Hashem (G-D) that we were all unhurt. In fact we should be gratful that my tapestries were untouched and that there was no mess anywhere. I wanted them to realize and learn from this incident that Gam zu letovah" (also this is for the best).

In Gateshead, the process of rearing the child starts very early and in fact early childhood, until the age of three, is regarded as the time when children are extraordinarily receptive of influences from their surroundings. The fretting of a baby, for instance, does not generally result in the mother immediately picking up the crying child. Though concerned about the baby's crying, the mother will frequently restrain herself for a few minutes to see if it will "settle down on its own". If on the other hand, the crying does not show signs of stopping, the mother will of course attend to and seek to find out what is ailing the baby. This does not in any way reflect lack of concern for the baby, on the contrary, it is a way of ensuring that the child will not "get spoiled" or become used to getting too much attention. It reflects the understanding of the child as being innately "selfish", a disposition which it is the responsibility of the parents to curb. If the mother immediately picks up the baby as soon as it starts to cry, the mother is believed to

A JEWISH MOTHER AND CHILDREN ON THEIR WAY HOME FROM KINDERGARDEN.

MOTHERS ON THEIR WAY TO PICK UP THEIR

CHILDREN FROM THE KINDERGARDEN.

be reinforcing, or she is conditioning, the baby to the behaviour of crying when it seeks to satisfy its selfish desire for attention. This it will do increasingly if the mother yields to its signals, since its natural disposition, its "inner" structures, crave for unlimited attention.

Based upon the same type of reasoning toddlers when demonstrating the urge to "have things their own way", are often quite abruptly told to stop that behaviour. The mother will either firmly restrain the child or attempt to divert its attention. **Distracting routines** (Vogel, 1963; Kulick, 1990) are the most common strategies adopted to restrain or redirect toddlers' behaviour. They involve attempts at making the child "forget" or find a new attention focus. Mothers in Gateshead demonstrate considerable skills in these distraction routines and hence are able to redirect the child's intent both efficiently and quickly. The idea behind this type of behaviour is that the child must under no circumstances be conditioned to see its own desires as being of any great importance or relevance. It must learn that life is a serious undertaking granted for the special purpose of serving G-D. This involves being able to control and restrain its own selfish desires since these bring forth behaviour and attitudes which are contrary to those which a "good Jew" is intended and expected to exhibit or to hold. Hence, it has to learn early and thoroughly that selfish requests are neither condoned nor rewarded.

People in Gateshead hold ideas which regard the child as wanting only to satisfyits own selfish needs but also as amenable to control, being impressionable when provided with proper rewards and punishments. Although there is in the community little talk and limited knowledge of secular theories of child rearing, theirs' are ideas which in some aspects correspond with the Freudian notion of the child as being possessed of unlimited egoism which it will seek to satisfy at all costs but also being, as in social learning approaches, infinitely susceptible to conditioning. Two major processes are regarded in the community as accountable for children's acquisition of sociocultural behaviour; learning by conditioning and imitation through observation. A human being must, as perceived in Gateshead, be socialized - as in social learning theory - by means of external pressures, especially

so in the light of his/her "inner" structures or drives - **Yetzer Hora** - which ceaselessly seeks to satisfy its own ambitions. Thus it is these "inner" structures which must be pressurized and governed.

Basic to this stance is the rejection of the child as being "naturally good" but also as being impressionable and sensitive to its environment, thus rendering the content and quality of the environmental stimuli a crucial component of child rearing. People in Gateshead organize their rearing strategies according to this contention which combines a notion of the child as geared to satisfying its own selfish ends with its vulnerability and receptiveness to conditioning. The only way of curbing and moderating the child's selfish inclination - **Yetzer Hora** - is active and constant provision of idealized model behaviour backed up by punishments for deviations and rewards for compliance.

It is firmly held that developing this potential for moral and ethical behaviour and learning how to reject one's selfish inclinations, can only be instilled into a co-operative or disciplined child. From an early age the child is made to respect and obey its parents. "How else than with total submission can the adult guide the child and channel its **Middos** correctly?" is a question I have often been asked in Gateshead. Strict discipline is a sociocultural response or strategy to the idea that external stimuli control is essential to personality development (Whiting, 1971; Saksene, 1975; Damon, 1983). Somehow the child must be "prepared" to accept parental guidance and this involves disciplining the child from an early age. Discipline, it is claimed, is the first step towards **Derech HaTorah** (the way of the Torah) since it is the tool with which the child's **Middos** can be guided. In the words of a mother:

"If the child is taught discipline, that is to respect and obey its parents, this will help it to gain and exercise "internal" discipline and so restrain its Yetzer Hora. Only through discipline and respect will the child benefit from that which we, their parents, bring them."

From an early age, children are made to understand that whatever their parents

wish them to do or not to do, these are instructions not to be taken lightly, and that deviations or rejections bring about immediate and at times serious consequences. Discipline, like most social behaviour, is taught to the child by way of punishment and reward. Reward is provided through praise, love, special allowances or favours (money, biscuits, or sweets). Likewise, punishment might vary from withdrawal of special treats, holding back signs of endearment or affection, withholding allowances, rebuke, slaps or a good hiding (Stayton, 1971; Baldwin, 1972; Kriger, 1972; Conroy, 1979; Sinha, 1985). This is in line with the advice of the Gemara (second division of the Talmud See note 10, chapter 2.2) (Sotah 47a) where it states:

The left hand pushes away and the right hand draws close (2).

This was explained to me in the following way:

"When it says; "The left hand pushes away", this means that we as parents must discipline our child and teach them to obey us. How else if they do not learn to obey us will they learn to obey Him? But the child must also be rewarded when it is good, and that is what is meant by; "The right hand draws closer", that means that we must show children warmth and love when they behave correctly".

Respecting the will of their parents, and demonstrating this by way of obeying them, in other words being disciplined, is seen as being essential to the child's development into a competent social member (and moral agent) since the child itself does not, possess the means with which to evaluate and discriminate external or internal influences. Consider the following comments:

"To help us parents and to ensure that children will respect our wishes, Hashem (G-D) has placed in the child a natural awe of its parents which if it is encouraged, allows the child to be more influenced by these people than by anyone else. So from the outset He intended children to be disciplined and respect their parents."

and:

"How else than with Derech Eretz (respectfulness) can we succeed in teaching them Torah values? Hashem's wishes are not to be questioned by us their parents, and our's are not to be questioned by our children. By teaching them respect for us their parents, we are planting Torah and Middos Tovos (good standards of behaviour) in our children. You can't just educate your children without Derech Eretz. If the child does not respect and obey you, you will get nowhere and child will become impossible and lost to Torah".

One mother explained this at length:

"In our family, like most here in Gateshead, we are really particular about things like respect and discipline. If we see or hear any Chutspa (cheek) we stamp it out immediately. It is just part of the life and atmosphere in our family, and my husband is very strict in these matters. There is no nonsense, we just don't tolerate it! So the first time a child is the slightest bit cheeky we make a "marking". Like last week my son who is eight, said for the first time, and I hope last time; "I don't care!". I said nothing, I just gave him a hard slap across his face. Even if I said nothing the child understood. And I am quite convinced that I will never hear that expression again. Much depends on how you demonstrate how much it means to you. If you really show them, they can see, and they are left in no doubt that that is really "out". That it will not be tolerated! Had I not made this "marking" this boy would not only grow up with a totally wrong attitude, it would also have seemed as if I condoned such a behaviour. Because he respects his parents he will not repeat it <u>and</u> he will know that it is unacceptable. I'm convinced that there would not exist, generation after generation, Jews who live this way if we did not insist on discipline. It is the foundation upon which we raise our children, it is the first thing we must teach them. With that you can make the child into what is required".

The word for "making" or rearing a child in Hebrew is **Chinuch** (= training). It is an activity which in Judaism has a religious significance, it is not a voluntary undertaking, it is a **Mitzva** (Commandment). Implicit in **Chinuch** in Gateshead is that it holds the added implication of **Aliyah** which encompasses a spiritual striving or moving "upwards", with the intention of achieving **schleymous** (perfection in every way, through good Middos and observance of Mitzvot). The term **Chinuch** in effect reflects indigenous ideas and beliefs concerning human nature, indicating that the latter is a non-static structure which is biased towards modifications.

The ways in which rearing terms and methods reveal indigenous perceptions of humanity is also pointed out by Hendry (1986) who explains how the Japanese

word of child rearing **shitsuke** pertains to character moulding. Referring to Chinese characters, Japanese literature, symbolism, philosophy and folklore, Hendry constructs an image of **shitsuke** as a process involved in both the "internal" and "external" moulding of the individual. The "internal" is the part of the rearing process which concerns the shaping of the individual's ethics and morals, whilst the "external" pertains more to the training and management of manners and etiquette. Ho (1975) makes a similar observation in Chinese patterns of child rearing. He shows how Mandarin has two separate words for the process of child rearing and that while **yang** indicates nurturing, it is **chiao**, the development of character, which is given most concern and attention.

Closer to the European scene Norman (1991) discloses that **Erziehung** (upbringing) in Germany reveals the child as being weak and easily influenced by that which is bad and is therefore in need of goal-oriented guidance if it is to become a "good person". Accordingly **Erziehung** does not only direct its attention to the "external" perfection of the individual, rather it works on the "internal" structures that influence the child's behavioural choices. Norman argues that due to indigenous ideas concerning the child's "biological disposition":

> **Erziehung (upbringing() is also necessary to ward off bad influences from within the child, not just from without.** (Norman, 1991:29)

It would seem that cross-culturally children are regarded as being in need of proper guidance in order that they might become moral agents and that this is a process which has to deal with the child's "inner" structures. In other words, child rearing strategies are sociocultural responses to indigenous psychology, determining how one must act in order to influence and prompt the entity which regulates the child's intentions, desires, and emotions in ways which are socially beneficial and individually rewarding. In Gateshead there exists a well-defined agenda for socialization in which both goal and means are explicit. The goal is to create an individual who will conduct him/herself according to the specific religious and moral order of the Torah and the means are model-presentations backed up

by rewards and punishments. Concerns and ideas regarding socialization are given religious importance (3) , in that it is regarded as forming the foundation for the continuation of a specific lifestyle, and the obligations which were accepted by the Jews at Mount Sinai. There is little concern that their approach might "harm" the child or prove to be false. How could it be, as long as it follows guidelines which are perfectly synchronized and in accord with their particular and Torah based ideas of humanity? Such a statement requires, of course, a more precise discussion of the connection between beliefs of human nature and indigenous educational theory which is what I shall attempt in the following part of the chapter.

Notes to Chapter 6.2

1.

This was a stance which ignored the wider social dimension and influence of sanctions nor did it account for reciprocal pressures of interaction. In spite of severe criticism, especially so from British anthropology and their interest in the Durkheimian collective rather than the individual, the American anthropological interest in the understanding of the individual in a sociocultural setting has not been abandoned, rather it has caused a redirection and is today known as Psychological Anthropology (Levy 1973; LeVine 1980; Hsu 1985).

2.
Although not mentioned specifically in connection with child rearing, it is one of the areas in which the principle should apply, but there are also others.

3.
There is in Judaism a whole corpus of law dealing with the relationship existing between parents and child. This has been condensed in Section 143 of the Kitzur Shulchan Aruch, the abridged version, to no less than 22 paragraphs.

6.3 THE CONDUCTING OF AN "INTERNAL" ORCHESTRA

Indigenous pedagogical ideas and theories involve beliefs about child development and about the emergence of particular capacities in infancy and childhood. In the last twenty years research has appeared which indicates a great deal of cultural variation in terms of how people perceive the development of children's cognition (Tulkin, 1973; Whiting, 1974; Ninio, 1979; Sameroff, 1985; Sigel, 1985) or human nature (Hamilton, 1981; Lutz, 1983; Hendry, 1986; Nicholaisen, 1988; Howell, 1988), and thus the idea that children must pass through various stages on their path to adulthood and "complete" humanity. In terms of the latter, there are only two stages in life in Gateshead; (as is general to Judaism) those of before and after "complete" humanity. The baby, when it is born, possesses a **Neshomo**, its **Middos** as well as a **Yetzer Hora.** Unlike the adult - the fully developed and "complete" human - the child does not possess a **Yetzer HaTov** (Fig.6). Inherent here is the concern that because: **Yetzer leiv HoOdom ra minurov** (= the imagination of the heart of man is bad from youth: Genesis 8:21) the **Yetzer Hora** will, if left unopposed, predominate and allow the child's bad **Middos** to govern the conscious self.

At the age of twelve for girls and thirteen for boys (1), the **Yetzer HaTov** enters the body. In practice, this means that the child is now equipped with all the "inner" structures required to operate fully and independently as a moral agent. Hitherto, it was its parents' guidance which had provided the vital component needed to accomplish appropriate behavioural choices, but now, equipped with proper training and a **Yetzer HaTov**, the child must and can do so for itself. For boys this "transformation" is marked by an important and much celebrated rite de passage, his **Bar Mitzva** (son of Commandment) (2). For girls, on the other hand, the transfer from one stage to another, her **Bas Mitzva** (daughter of Commandment), receives little or no attention in Gateshead. Common to boys and girls though, is

THE STRUCTURE OF THE CHILD'S HUMAN NATURE IN GATESHEAD.

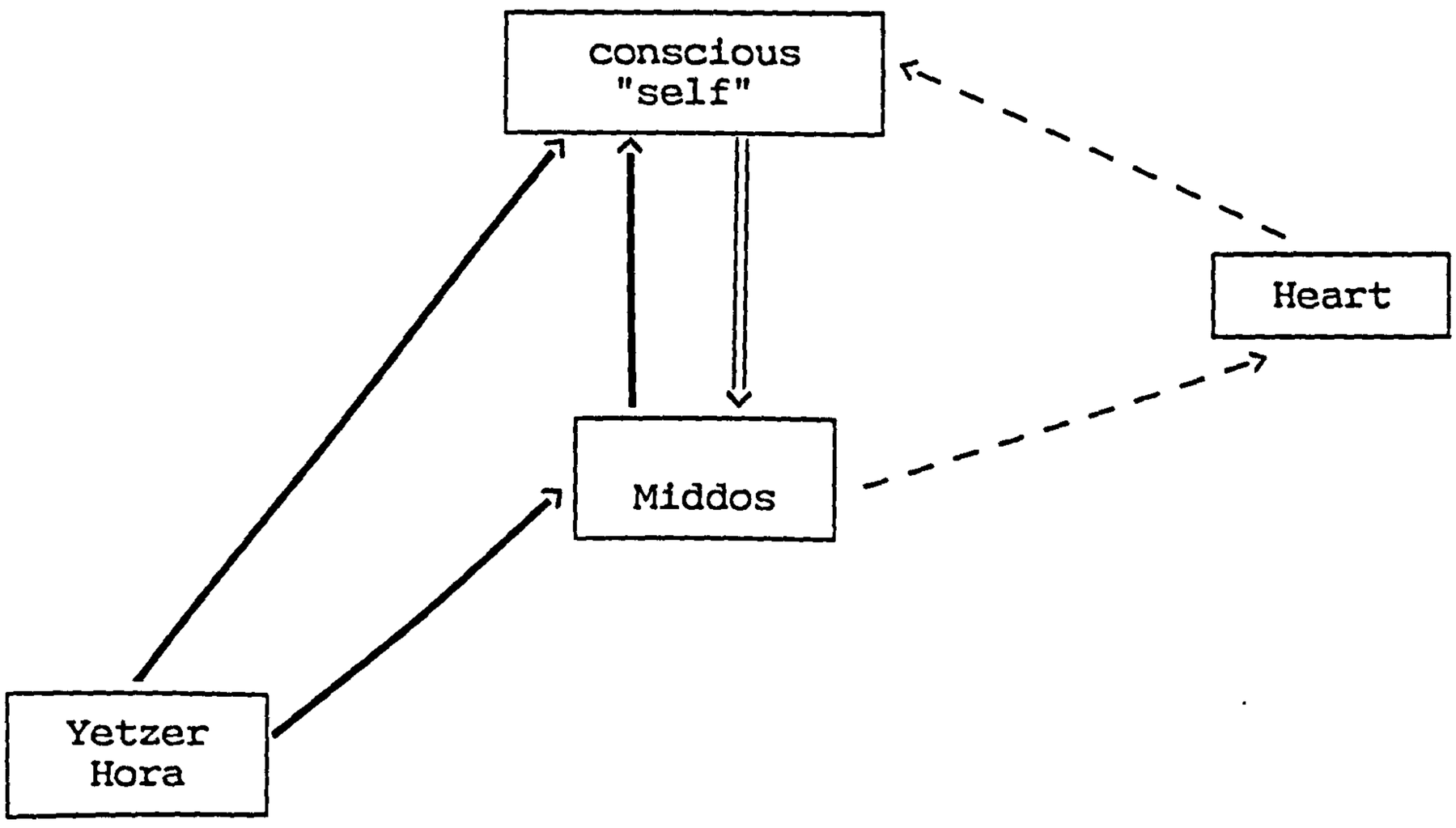


FIG.6.

the conviction that their human nature is now "complete" and they are therefore able and expected to abide by the 613 Halachic Laws. In other words, acquisition of a "complete" human nature also marks the child's entry into adulthood. It is an "inner" "transformation" which is expected to present itself in outward manners and behaviour. That it is a transformation which is considered to be real and even "detectable", is evident from the ways in which mothers describe the behaviour of their sons on the day of, and after, their Bar Mitzva. One mother explains:

"Just watching my son that day it was quite clear that he has changed. He suddenly looked so mature and so aware of his responsibility. It is hard to describe it, but I can really say that he somehow grew up that day. You could really see that, and feel that he was aware of it. He is no longer a little boy mindless of what he says and does. He knows that it is up to him now and he shows that he is aware of this in so many ways".

Another woman agreed with this "transformation" and held that the Bar Mitzva:

"...really hits our boys. They seem to feel different and suddenly start to behave differently. It is wonderful to see how they come to realize and accept this new responsibility. If not before, then it certainly comes through to them, in shul (synagogue), when they hear their father recite on the morning of their Bar Mitzva, the Brocha (blessing) which says: "Blessed are You who has freed me from the responsibility of this child's wrong-doings."

One mother who has had three Bar Mitzva boys stated:

"I have seen it often, they change on that day. You no longer have a child in the house. That is how Hashem (G-D) intended it. They become more serious and aware of themselves".

In Gateshead, the stage before "completion" of their human nature, might be regarded as a kind of "apprenticeship" period during which the child has to be acquainted with sociocultural knowledge and expectations. In spite of being regarded as socioculturally incompetent, the child is thought to be both highly receptive to instructions and capable of absorbing environmental impressions. In

fact early childhood is thought to be a period when the individual is uniquely responsive to his/her environment. The inexhaustible interest in child rearing prevailing in Gateshead is by no means a general, cross-cultural trend. In contrast, Chinese children (Wolf, 1972; Ho, 1975) are considered as being "without nature" (wu hsing) and therefore insensitive to rearing since they are unable to understand (tung shih) before the age of six. Here the young child is thought to lack the "inner" structures which permit cognition, perception, and evaluation, consequently they are uninteresting as rearing-objects.

In other cultural settings, rearing might be considered unnecessary as sociocultural competence is thought to "appear" naturally and without prompting, as Hamilton (1981) argues, is the case among the Australian Anbarras. An Anbarra child's "inner" is thought to simply "mature" regardless of stimulation. All the potential structures and knowledge exists, but they need time, not guidance, to season. Thus there are few instructions or direct correction of behaviour. These are actions which are deemed non-important as adjustments will occur "naturally" with time.

Between these cultures where young children are considered receptive to rearing and where model-presentation is a central rearing strategy, there might also be differences in terms of which senses are to be activated in the process. In Pukapuka in Polynesia (Borofsky, 1987), people stress the importance of **vision** as the predominant inlet to the child's "inner" structures, claiming that learning and rearing come from **observation** within "situationally relevant contexts". Contrary to Gateshead where it is held that models should also stimulate inquiries and consequently be followed up by proper instructions, people in Pukapuka discourage extensive questioning by children. In Gateshead questioning is highly accepted and valued in childrens' behaviour (3) since it is thought that "learning" relies upon the process of receiving and organizing information received by way of all the child's senses, including hearing. It is thought that the child's conscious self is not only capable of, but must also be encouraged to evaluate, organize and memorize all stimuli that it receives through seing, hearing, and feeling. The full potential of the

conscious self must be utilized, especially so during childhood when it might be "stretched" extensively. Children in Gateshead are constantly presented with instructions, corrections, advice, and questions. Related to this is also that children are themselves encouraged to question and inquire about the world around them (4).

It is important to note here that in Gateshead rearing in the home, especially of younger children, is not predominantly directed at cognitive development, but at the moulding of the child's potential "character". The latter, or the child's **Middos**, does not require "growth" or cognitive development, rather it relies upon selective suppression of some and elevation of others of its many and varied character components. It is believed that this will occur through external stimuli, or by way of presenting models of culturally idealized personality traits (Broffenbrenner, 1962; Inkeles, 1968; Kohn 1977; Lambert, 1979). **Middos** elevation is perceived as not depending entirely upon "understanding" or cognition, but as the outcome of imitation and conditioning. Parents must organize their lives in accordance with the axiom of being consistently good examples for their children. They must demonstrate and accentuate what is "good" and eschew that which is "bad", since the child's conscious self will, like a sponge, absorb and process all surrounding impressions. It is that which happens after these impressions enter the conscious self which is interesting from the perspective of personality development.

In children, as in adults, the character potentials - **Middos** - are accessible to the conscious self as well as to the **Yetzorim.** The difference is that the child does not, like the adult, possess a **Yetzer HaTov** which will intercept and encourage the conscious self to ward off the **Yetzer Hora's** intentions (Fig.6). On the other hand, parents have access to and can influence the child's **Middos** by way of its conscious self. It might be argued that during the child's first stage of life until it gains a "complete" human nature, its parents must replace and operate on behalf of its absent **Yetzer HaTov.** It is a "linkage" which poses a great challenge to parenthood. It is also a task which is deemed impossible without discipline and respect from the child. Due to the lack of the **Yetzer HaTov,** the internal agent which can

support the continuous boosting of "good" **Middos**, the **Yetzer Hora** has, in effect been provided with a head start in the quest to enhance good **Middos.** This is why parental "access" is considered so important, for parents must carry the burden and responsibility of ensuring that not only their own good **Middos** outweigh their bad ones, but also those of their child's **Middos.**

The opportunities and dangers inherent in the concept of parental access to the child's **Middos**, are in Gateshead considered a source of responsibility which commences at the moment of conception, the time when the child's **Middos** are determined. Inherent to this idea is the belief that there is a "linkage" between the mother's conscious self and the unborn child's potential **Middos** (Fig.7). This is an idea regards the unborn child's future personality/character as being, from the moment of conception and all throughout the pregnancy under continues development. In other words, from the very moment of conception the unborn child is believed to be endowed with vital "inner" structures -its **Middos**- that are highly susceptible to stimuli outside its own body matrix. Pregnancy does not protect the unborn child's "inner" from corruptive influences since the pregnant mother's own conscious self has a direct and unrestricted access to the unborn child's **Middos.** In short, the mother's conscious self represents a powerful source of stimuli for the unborn child's future personality. This in turn renders the unborn child sensitive to its mother's perceptions, thoughts, and emotions. As one woman put it:

"When I'm pregnant I am realy mindful, more than usual, of what I think, see, hear or feel. It's always at the back of my mind that whatever goes on inside me will eventually influence the baby. Here (in Gateshead) women see the time of pregnancy as a time filled with very special responsibilities."

Having direct access to the child's **Middos** and "by-passing" its yet undeveloped conscious self means that the mother has an uneclectic inlet to the child's "inner" which she has no means of avoiding or controlling. Instead, women in Gateshead argue, it is the environment surrounding and affecting the mother's own conscious

self which has to be monitored.

From my conversations with women in the community, it is clear that although this direct access renders the child vulnerable, it may also be useful. It might be consciously employed as a means of ensuring the enhancement of character traits considered particularly desirable in the unborn child. It is also held that the unborn child's **Middos** are particularly impressionable at the moment of conception.

It is a general understanding that the content and quality of the mother's thoughts at that actual moment will have a decisive bearing upon the child. When asked what it is that will be influenced, there is general consent that it is indeed the **Middos** that are decisively sensitive to the mother's mood and thoughts. Although they provide diverse answers as to the content of their thoughts at the time of conception, they do agree that it is an important part of the process of providing a Torah Jew with a "good start". Thinking of Sages, or just having "kind" thoughts or simply praying, provides the type of "setting" which is thought to have a decisive bearing upon the child's personality outcome.

Similar concern with the foetus has been observed in Bangladesh by Maloney (1981), who carried out research in both Moslem and Hindu communities, aimed at comparing the relationship between people's beliefs and fertility behaviour. She found that people perceived a direct connection between the mental state of a couple during the time of conception and the child's personality, or in her own words:

The mood of the conjugal couple is thought to affect the quality of the child conceived.(Maloney, 1981:158)

The direct correlation between the mother's conscious self and the outcome of the child's personality is also deeply rooted in Gateshead as the two following comments reveal:

"When the Goyim are expecting a child they go about things in a totally different way to us. Just before or after the baby is born they go out and buy a Silver-Cross

Connection between mother's conscious self and that of the unborn child.

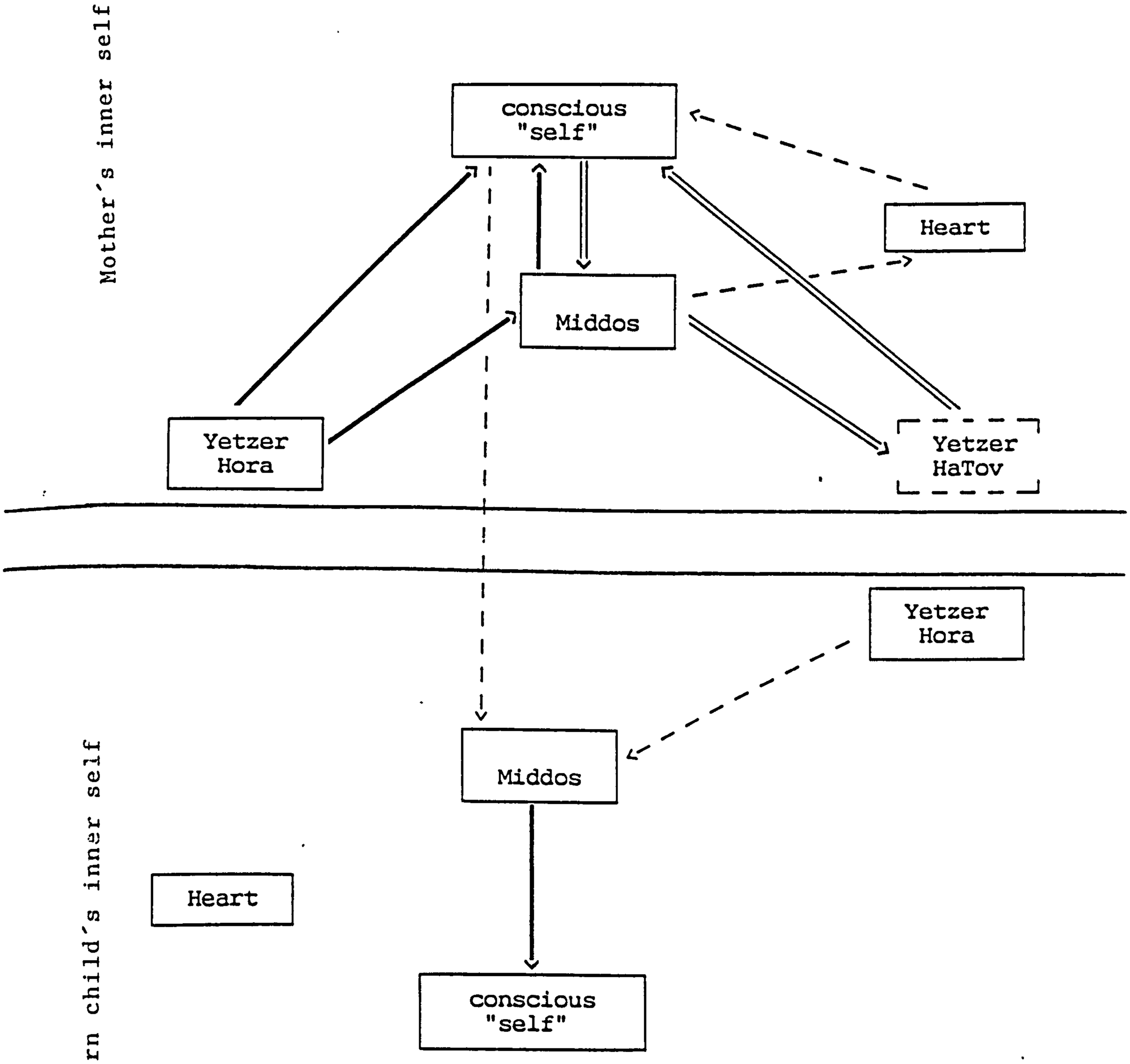


Fig. 7.

pram, paint the baby's room, put its name on the list of the best school and buy the very best they can afford for the new baby. Here in Gateshead we start long before with our preparations. In fact we start at the moment of conception. A woman must think pure and holy thoughts at the moment when the child is conceived. You see, these pure and holy thoughts will affect and give the child a better start and help him to become a Ben Torah. I personally think of the great Patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. And I pray that some of their holiness might be bestowed upon my child".

and a rabbi's wife who explained:

"One day a woman, who for many years had been leading a secular life in luxury and emptiness, came to my husband and asked him: "When should I start teaching my three year old son Judaism?" To this my husband replied: "You are already three years and nine months too late." What he was referring to was that with us the preparations for a child goes on through the entire pregnancy. Actually it commences at the moment of conception, since this is when, by way of thinking the right kind of thoughts, the new life is endowed with purity".

Based upon the association between the mother's conscious self and the unborn child's future personality, mothers in Gateshead are bound to pay heed to their "mental" state and condition not only during conception but throughout the entire pregnancy. The mother is required to avoid the type of environment which is thought to be harmful and to seek only that which is beneficial and guaranteed to have positive effects on the unborn child's **Middos.** Pregnancy in Gateshead does not only call for precaution and concern with the physical milieu, it also requires an awareness of the mother's psychological condition. These are ideas which curb and control the pregnant woman's life in numerous ways. It is a time when precautionary scrutiny of the environment go hand-in-hand with pre-natal clinic visits. This is when they must avoid "evil" or "ugly" sights, not think "bad" thoughts, avoid becoming impatient, envious, or angry and take special care not to listen to people who speak **loshn hora** (evil talk = gossip), never watching the slaughtering of an animal and above all staying clear of non-Jewish influences. By the same token, there are things which she ought to do, think or see such as; frequent **Davening** (praying), reading Hebrew, going to **shiurim** (religious lectures), seeking the blessings of pious and "special" rabbis, exposing herself to Yiddishkeit, and staying close to the home environment. By way of making sure that her conscious self is preoccupied with "good" and "Jewish" activities and that

her thoughts are "pure", she will suppress or augment the unborn child's distinct personality potentials.

This is why people say that:**"What is in the mother's heart, will come out in the child".** These are ideas and beliefs which are not peculiar to Gateshead alone. Kaellstroem (1988) notes that they are similar to ideas regulating what a pregnant Chinese woman is supposed to do and not do during her pregnancy. She is discouraged from leaving the house, talking to "bad" people, looking at "ugly" pictures, using "ugly" language, or allowing herself to be photographed (it might influence the child's looks). Instead she is encouraged to think about her ancestors (whose lineage she is continuing) and have pure, honest, and reasonable thoughts. It is said that the mother:

.. is expected to demonstrate correct moral behaviour throughout the pregnancy. Parents are perceived as responsible for the moulding of the child's personality. The mother is expected to behave impeccably during her pregnancy, as this is perceived as influencing the child. The expectant mother must through her speech, thoughts and actions rear her child in her mind as if it was already born. (Freely translated from Kaellstroem,1983:128)

People in Gateshead "know" that it is only by way of the conscious self that one can influence other "parts" of the person's inner self. Primarily this is a concern which is directed at the child's potential personality, the outcome of a particular character composition, or its **Middos.** Whilst the child does not possess a **Yetzer HaTov,** it is still important indirectly to safeguard the dominance of good **Middos,** and suppress bad ones, thus certifying a "back-up" source for the late arriving **Yetzer HaTov.** Without dedicated parental input the **Yetzer Hora** would, in the words of one woman:

"...have an absolute field-day and do as it pleased. This is why our duty is not only to show them (children) the right way, we must also do the job which later the Yetzer HaTov will do".

Middos are jointly, as previously discussed, susceptible to external pressures of either the conscious self or the **Yetzer Hora.** Based upon the understanding of the

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE CONSCIOUS SELF IN GATESHEAD.

Perception	Belief Thought	Feelings	Intentions	Desires
cause out-side c.self	cause out/in side c.self	cause out/in side c.self	cause out/in side c.self	cause out-side c.self
self agent	self agent	self not agent	self agent	self not agent
not contr. by c.self	partly contr. by c.self	not direct. contr. by c.self	contr. itself	not direct contr. by c.self

Fig. 8.

direct access to the former, parents in Gateshead know not only that they carry the responsibility for, but also which avenue they must follow in order to create a "Torah personality".

Conventions for talking about child rearing in Gateshead places attention and importance on the child's conscious self, its functions, abilities, limitations and, not least, its relation to other "parts" of its "inner" self. When people in Gateshead rear their children they do so, as discussed in the beginning of chapter 6.2, according to a model of the conscious self which is largely congruent with the Western folk model of the mind (D'Andrade, 1987). In an enlightening paper, D'Andrade discusses the Western mind in ways which throw light upon the parts of the model which are seldom made explicit and which people use but find difficult to describe. This model of the mind provides an excellent base for objectifying concepts regarding human nature, as well as revealing the reasoning that underpins pedagogical strategies in Gateshead. There are three central issues concerning the conscious self's "processes" and "states" which must be addressed (Fig.8). They are as follows: a) are their causes located externally or internally to the conscious self? b) is the conscious self the active agent or the passive receiver? c) is the "process" or "event" controllable by the conscious self? To a large extent these questions reveal differing dimensions rather than different approaches to the concept of the conscious self, and combined, they call for and justify it as being both the locus and means for child rearing strategies.

Common to the Western folk model and the one existing in Gateshead, is the way in which people depict the conscious self as having precise functions, limitations and potentials which renders it as both:

a container that is in various states and conditions, thereby having a large number of potentials simultaneously, and also as processor engaged in carrying out operations, thereby being limited to a small number of concurrent actions. (D'Andrade, 1987:116)

From a pedagogical point of view it is a model which permits focussing on the

sources that instigate the various "conditions" and "operations" taking place within the conscious self. In Gateshead, where the conscious self represents a "sponge--like" centre for soaking up and absorbing whatever the involved senses present it with, the cause of mental processes is the indiscriminating receptiveness to that which is received through seeing, hearing, and sensing. By way of monitoring and scrutinizing the sources, selective elimination and inculcation of sociocultural preferences is an operational possibility. As a direct consequence of this insight, people in Gateshead consider source-control and its potentials for governing the conscious self, a highly effective pedagogical instrument.

Based on the assumption that external sources influence the conscious self, it is from a pedagogical perspective, of interest to know which mental "processes" or "events" that are receptive to external, as opposed to internal pressures. Here, **perceptions** are pedagogically interesting as they are the foundation upon which people construe their sociocultural "reality". Perceptions are, in Gateshead, as a rule, thought to be caused by conditions outside the conscious self. A person cannot change the perception of old to young or hot to cold. This in turn means that the child will perceive its surrounding world based upon the "evidence" of what it actually sees, hears, or otherwise senses. Here there is tremendous scope for parental input and manipulation of the child's conscious self and ultimately its understanding of the world it lives in. As one mother phrased it:

"I try never to forget that whatever they see or hear is going to affect them. And I don't just mean their character, it's how they learn what is wrong and what is right. A child only knows what surrounds it, this is why it is so important, and it is our duty to make sure that its surroundings are correct and good. If the child sees you benshing (reciting grace after meals) everyday, this is what he will eventually do himself. It is what he knows to do. Understanding why he must do it, comes later! First they must know what to do".

Thoughts, on the other hand, are partly instigated by causes positioned partly externally to, and partly inside, the conscious self. The person might choose what to think about, but it might be hard to do so in the face of powerful external influences. Such influences might stem from influences outside the body matrix,

or from other "inner" structures such as the **Yetzer Hora** or, as in adults, from the **Yetzer HaTov** (Fig.5). In a similar way, **emotions** originating in the external (to the conscious self, but inside the body matrix) agent of the heart, may influence the conscious self. It is not easy to stop thinking of something which is induced by emotions. How can a person who is frightened of the dark stop thinking scary thoughts in the dark? Similarly, a person can find it hard to think friendly thoughts about someone he/she really dislikes. Deciding what to think about can be problematic if one is unable to ward off alternative promptings. In terms of child rearing though, it is the belief that the conscious self's activity of thinking, and ultimately of believing, can be prompted by pressures from the sociocultural environment which is of the essence. In the words of a mother:

"You want to know if I can decide the way my child thinks? Well, up to a certain point I can. It is not that I can decide or influence what he is to think about. Only the child itself can do that. But I can and should try to direct how he thinks about things. Some of the questions you ask yourself for instance, you ask because of the way in which you have been brought up and trained. You think and talk in a very un-Jewish way. It is not the way a Yid thinks or reasons. What I mean is that we, their parents, must make our children think in a special way. To think like Yidden. It is our obligation and duty to make sure that our children think about life in the correct way".

The second issue which must be addressed is the relation of various "processes" and "events" in relation to the conscious self. The question is whether the conscious self is a passive receiver of, or actively engaged in, the action. In Gateshead the conscious self is both a passive receiver and an active organizer of surrounding experiences or stimuli. Although **perception** is caused partly by external stimuli and **thoughts**, it is the conscious self which is the active agent behind the processes of perceiving and thinking. Consequently, parents must direct their efforts at, and seek the cooperation of the conscious self.

With **feelings** it is a different story. Feelings are the conscious self's experiences of emotions (5). The conscious self is an "object" which has little or no control over what it feels. In other words **feelings** refers to the conscious self's responses to an agent which operates externally to it. Although there are times when the

conscious self might itself set feelings in motion (thinking about what I had said, made me feel embarrassed), it is generally the passive receiver of emotions. Despite this limited direct-control of emotions, there is in Gateshead a concept of indirect-control, whereby **Middos** are seen as the linkage between the conscious self and the locus of emotions - the **heart** (Fig.5). Subsequently as the **Middos** are directly controlled by the conscious self (and the Yetzer Hora), there also exists an avenue for parents to influence and monitor the child's emotions, albeit in a limited fashion, so that the "correct" guidance and good behavioural models can, in effect, ensure that the heart projects culturally appropriate emotions. From birth, the Jewish heart has certain **Middos** of compassion, benevolence, and bashfulness, and the structure of human nature renders the unfolding of these and numerous other emotions, good or bad, open to a certain degree of external governing.

Ideas of governing lead us to the third question as to whether the conscious self can control the various actions taking place within the "inner" self. It is held that while the conscious self cannot control **perceptions**, it can largely do so with **thoughts.** With **emotions** it is an entirely different matter. The conscious self is, as shown, the object and not the agent of emotions and here there is no possibility of direct control, only indirect (Figs.5,6). Nevertheless, the indirect control of emotions (via Middos) is an attractive and valuable opportunity which is acknowledged and frequently exploited in child rearing in Gateshead. That the environment can "override" processes of the conscious self and thus achieve an impact on the heart, provides the environment with valuable importance. Consider the following comment:

"One day my eight year old daughter and a friend were playing a game together. My other girl, who is five, desperately wanted "in" on the game. But the bigger girls wanted to play on their own. I said to my older daughter: "Why don't you let her play? It is not kind to leave her out." Although they did include the little one, I could see that they didn't want it,. so I asked: "Don't you know how painful it is if someone is unkind and leaves you out?" That helped, and they played nicely together. I'm sure they recognized and felt her (the younger girl's) pain at being rejected, and this made them think again. Children's compassion also has to be encouraged you know".

The ultimate goal of child rearing in Gateshead is to ensure, by way of the conscious self, the dominance of "good" over "bad" **Middos**.As the undiscriminating conscious self absorbs and organizes all impressions available through the individual's senses, the sociocultural environment represents not only a powerful catalyst but also a means of directing its "inner" structures. It is an image of self which calls for extensive and conscientious censoring of the environment. Eliminating that which is undesirable and presenting models of that which is desirable, in the conviction that **social learning** depends upon **imitation,** is a strategy which is founded upon a specific understanding of human nature and its structures. The main goal for wanting to influence and regulate **perceptions, thoughts,** and **emotions** in Gateshead, is to create within the child the specific desire to act in specific ways. They seek ultimately to create powerful voluntary intentions for acting according to particular religio-cultural preferences. The woman who insisted:

"For now my five year old daughter will do so because I tell her to, but eventually she will do so because she wants to".

touches upon the connection between **desire** and **intention.** In Gateshead the fundamental hope is that the child will, in time, act in a particular way due to an irresistible pressure from "inside". The locus of this "pressure" is the heart, as desire has an emotional component. In other words, it must and can be implanted indirectly into the child's heart by elevating **Middos** through the medium of the conscious self. Feelings of desire connote a wish to accommodate one's own wishes and needs and touch upon the aspect of selfishness and the functions of the **Yetzer Hora.** It could be claimed that desire epitomizes the individual's selfish needs and ambitions, seeking to induce the conscious self to ignore anything that will hinder or prevent it from reaching its aim. The construct of human nature holds, on the other hand, structures which may counterbalance this drive towards purely selfish desires. Given proper guidance the child's **Middos** (by way of the conscious self) might invoke in the heart the desire to do "good". From the outset this is the natural and inherent disposition of the Jewish person's **Middos,** they need only adequate prompting. It is believed that this desire arises in the heart as a

progressively developing by- product of elevating "good" **Middos.** In relation to the conscious self, desire is caused externally and cannot be directly - only indirectly via the **Middos** - controlled by the latter. The conscious self is not the agent which organizes desire, rather it is the object acted upon, causing the conscious self to instigate intended actions. In short, an intention is the outcome of a specific desire.

There is a qualified difference between the desire as it exists in the **Yetzer Hora** and that of the heart. Whilst the latter is dependent upon "good" **Middos** for its existence, without it, it would remain a potential but dormant emotion, the former is active and independent at all times. Desire to "do good" has to be nourished, desire to "do evil" is self-generating. The **Yetzer Hora** is ready at all times to satisfy its completely selfish needs (note similarity to Freud's concept of "unlimited egoism") which also means it is inclined, at all costs, to avoid that which is not fulfilment of its desire, such as punishment or displeasure. In other words, desire to "do good" relies upon external **Middos**-monitoring by way of model presentation but the **Yetzer Hora** can only be "reached" through **conditioning.** This is why reward and punishment (the hallmarks of the "Conditioning" theory) are conceived as essential rearing devices, permitting parents' intervention in the child's "inner" processes.

The intention of this chapter has been to show that indigenous educational theory in Gateshead, the ideas which underpin their child rearing procedures, are not randomly chosen by the community members, but are highly structured strategies founded upon their specific indigenous ideas concerning human nature. It is also a recognition of the deep problem of characterizing what indigenous actors <u>know</u>, and how that knowledge shapes what they <u>do</u>. Here, I believe, there is a problem in dealing with a community like Gateshead, a community where people, although they share the same Torah and the same geographical location, are not only nationally and socially different among themselves, they also have different religio-cultural backgrounds. Yet, members of the community make use of surprisingly similar rearing strategies.

In much of the ethnography dealing with the outcomes of sharing a "common knowledge", there is a conspicuous void in terms of dealing with variation and distribution of knowledge. In the light of individual preferences and understanding, how can Folk models be of any interest to us? I believe that rather than regarding them as a "set of rules", the contents of Folk models must be understood as frameworks for interpreting, evaluating, and responding to the world around us. This stance permits choice, objections, alterations, or compliance since we may use this framework in different ways, at different times, or use selective fragments of it. Concerned with the number of theoretical and methodological questions which concepts of Folk models pose to cognitive anthropology, Keesing (1987) argues the importance of seeing:

> **Folk models both as collective and social <u>and</u> as mentally held principles and recipes.** (Keesing, 1987:377)

and that to do so we must distinguish between these models as:

> **the pool of common-sense knowledge and understandings of the community, and encoded in language; and models (as), the (alternative, partial) version of these models cognized and invoked by individuals in everyday perceptions, thought and interaction.** (Ibid:377)

Here there is not only scope for variation in distribution and negotiation of knowledge, there is also the understanding of Folk models as surface manifestations of underlying cultural knowledge. This would mean that Folk models cannot only be regarded as intersubjectively shared schema, but also as "operating strategies" which guide people in their use of cultural knowledge. Never disregarding variation in individual competence or preferences, my own interest lies in the ethnographic task of revealing this "pool of commonsense knowledge" and in understanding how it organizes and affects the way in which people interact. I have shown how these ideas and beliefs influence the strategies people negotiate to ensure their children's future competence as sociocultural members, but what I have not done is to show how these children acquire the very same underlying commonsense knowledge

which, in so many ways, enables their parents to perform as competent sociocultural actors.

In what follows it is my intention to reveal how it is that children are able to acquire a specific part of this commonsense knowledge, more precisely: the ways in which children in Gateshead come to see themselves and acquire a particular Jewish understanding of human nature.

Although intrinsic to, and highly consequential to indigenous educational theory, the understanding of the concepts concerning human nature are neither pronounced goals nor are they a conscious component of the otherwise explicit child rearing agenda prevalent in the community. They are instead a kind of "secondary"message inherent in, and underpinning, the ways in which parents interact with their children. It is a "knowledge" which is part of schema which is intersubjectively shared by members of a sociocultural group and which is seldom made explicit. It is not included in the specific conscious contents of that which parents wish their children to acquire, but in **meanings** underpinning parent-child interactions.

This then, is where we must seek if we are to understand how children come to hold and share all, or parts of, this intersubjective schema which is a part of the unpronounced yet "commonsense" understanding of the world around them. It is through involvement and participation in interactions with adults that children are provided with the opportunity of constructing the important sociocultural understanding of human nature or their own "inner" self. That which in time also enables them to operate as moral agents.

Notes to Chapter 6.3

1.
It is thought that girls mature, in every way, earlier than boys.

2.
The boy in fact goes through two "rites de passage" in his life, of which his Bar Mitzva is the second one. The first one takes place on the eighth day of his life. This is the day when a mohel performs the boy's Bris, or his circumcision. There is no ceremony for the girl after her birth. Name giving does not call for celebrations.

3.
This does not mean though that they are encouraged to question the Torah, nor are they permitted to question their parents' decisions.

4.
One of my most memorable impressions of the community is of being immersed in a world where questioning is a vital and dominating style of interacting.

5.
Recently there have been signs that some anthropologists advocate a need for anthropology to include culture's influence on peoples' feelings as well as their thoughts (Lutz ;1983, 1988; Rosaldo 1983; Stephenson 1989). Common to these anthropologists is the belief that the organization of our thoughts and emotions must be sought within their specific sociocultural context.

7.1 TALK, NOT SILENCE IS GOLDEN.

Entering Gateshead is to be reminded of the first Commandment in the Torah: **Ye shall be fruitful and multiply.** This is a Commandment which is taken most seriously in this community where inability to conceive is regarded as a great tragedy and many children a blessing. Everywhere in the community, in the many Kosher milk bottles on door steps, prams and pushchairs parked next to endless rows of little coats and shoes in hallways, colourful childrens' drawings on walls and front doors, safety guards on upstairs windows, in the number of pregnant women and of course the many many children themselves, are the signs that children are indeed seen to be godsent gifts. Here people don't simply **have** children, they are **blessed** with children.

To the women especially, rearing and caring for her children are not only activities which fill most of her day, they are also regarded as her most important tasks in life. Child rearing in Gateshead is an activity which leaves nothing at random, rather, it is a goal-specific task provided with a precise and unambiguous agenda in which there is little scope for alternatives or deviations. Children must be moulded into **Torah Jews** who will dedicate their lives to Torah and **Mitzvot.** In other words, children in Gateshead live their lives surrounded by adults who behave towards them in strict accordance with an agenda in which expected outcomes and practices are well-defined.

Despite the surrounding society at large's insistence that childhood is a kind of free period at the beginning of a human being's life cycle during which it cannot be held, or at least held only to a limited degree responsible for its actions and where carefree self-fulfilment is socially sanctioned, people in Gateshead are convinced that childhood is not a period where mindless irresponsibility is to be encouraged, much less accepted.

The following example demonstrates this difference in terms of peoples' ideas concerning childrens' development pace and acquired abilities as they exist between the community and the society at large: On one occasion a couple of local boys, members of the society at large, had set the dustbin of a Jewish family alight. It was not the first time this had happened and eventually the police were notified. Against all odds, the boys were caught and reprimanded at the local police station. A few days later the police came to the home of the offended Jews to explain that "things had been taken care of" and that although it was an unfortunate incident, it had only been a "prank" played by a couple of very young boys, no more than ten years of age. Since "boys will be boys", it was thought best to forget the whole incident.

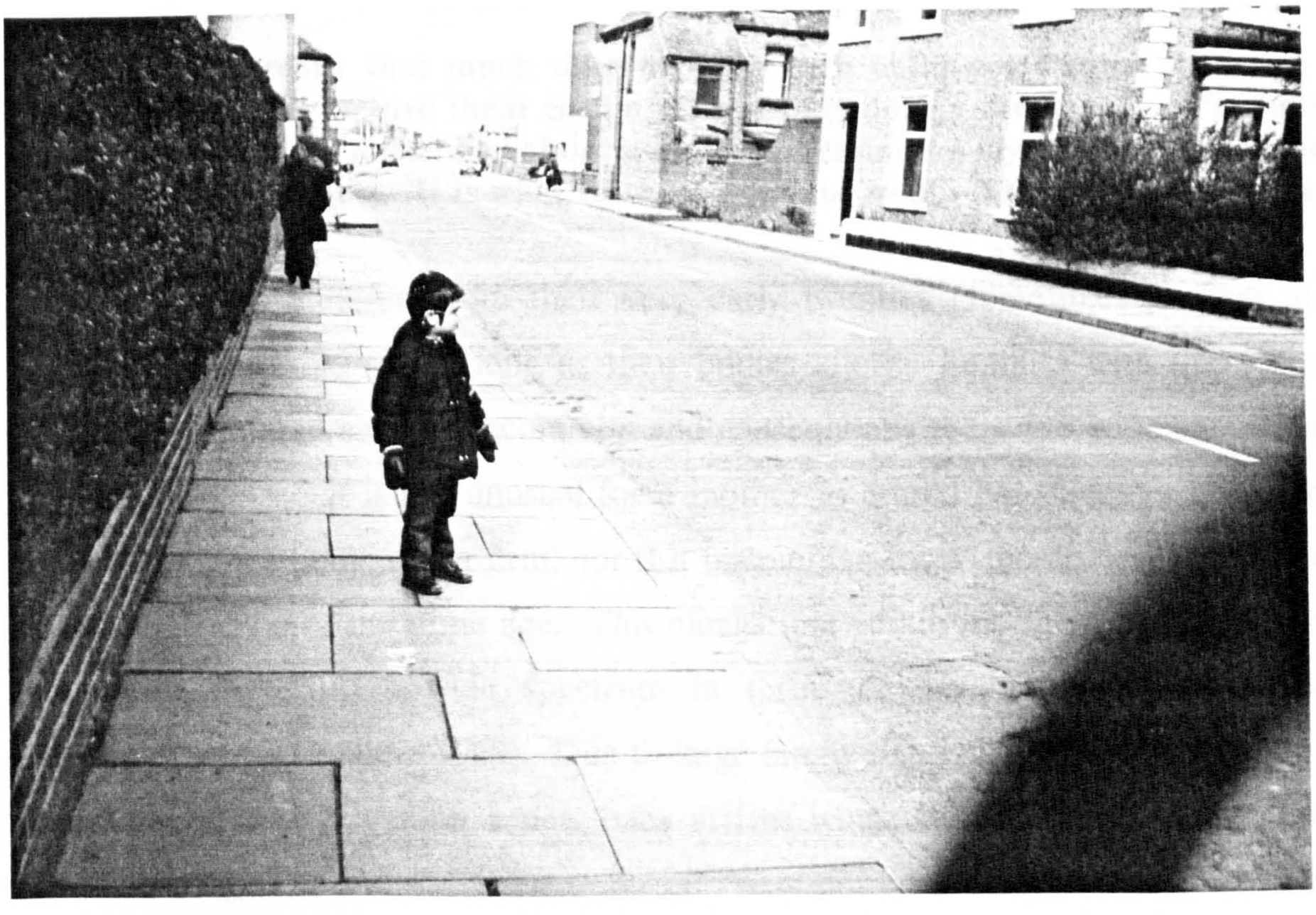
As it turned out, this episod caused discontent and resentment in the community as well as police concern that the community seem most unwilling to acknowledge policing efforts. In a community where children's moral behaviour is given constant consideration, and where complete responsibility for the individual's actions has to be taken on by the girl at the age of twelve and thirteen for the boy, development of "inner" maturity must, by the age of ten, have reached a level where "pranks" are as improbable as uncontrolled bed-wetting. These diverse expectations and acceptances of children's behaviours are the result of diverse sociocultural ideas concerning human nature, its various functions and the development speed of these very same functions.

Childhood in Gateshead, is a time filled with non-negotionable expectations and strict indoctrination. One could claim that socialization is an obsessional activity in Gateshead. It is most certainly an activity which is given much time and concern as well as one which is shown intense interest. The topic of children, how they are best handled, how specific results are achieved, the balance between reward and punishment, their character and ability are the focus of constant concern.

Although children in Gateshead are cherished, always protected, never neglected

ON THEIR WAY HOME FROM SCHOOL.

CHILDREN ON THEIR WAY HOME FOR LUNCH.



and given affection in abundance, there are few signs of indulgence, since parents believe this to be contradictory to that which they seek to create and the values they attempt to reproduce. Parental values (Bronfenbrenner 1958; Becker 1965; Rothbar 1966; Saksena 1975; Kohn 1977; Goodnow 1981, 1984, 1985;) and behaviours, ideally founded upon and in strict accordance with Torah precepts, are well-defined, constantly re-assessed and are regarded as essential to childrens' future ability for moral and ethical conduct. This is why one mother pointed out to me:

"We are so lucky, we never have to worry or doubt that we want the wrong things for our children, like many of the Goyim do. What we want is what Hashem wants us to do. He has also provided us with the proper guidance so that we may succeed. The Torah tells us what we must do and not do. So you see, unless we ignore His instructions or give in to the child's many whims, how can we go wrong?"

In the next quotation, another mother also points to the advantage of having clear-cut rules of rearing in a situation where large sized families do not leave much room for uncertainty:

"There isn't really that much time here for each child you know. Although I especially do try to give them each a special time during the day, it isn't always possible. I try not to feel bad about it and keep reminding myself that what we are doing here is correct. It is what Hashem wants us to do. That always helps me."

Women bear children from their very early twenties (sometimes earlier) and continue to do so for as long as their bodies allow. Families with thirteen or fourteen children are not uncommon and consequently there is a wide age spread among siblings. It is not unusual for a mother to attend her daughter's wedding with her latest baby on her arm, nor is it uncommon for a mother's sister and her daughter to be of the same age. This means that within the same household, the children make up a wide spectrum in terms of developmental stages and requirements (Hannerz 1969). Due to large family size, babyhood is very brief in Gateshead and very soon a new baby arrives which causes an elevation to the toddler stage.

As another child is born, yet more expectations (Sameroff 1985; Farver 1988) are bestowed upon the senior child and by the age of twelve or thirteen it is expected not only to be socioculturally mature, but also to be a valuable help in the household. Children are given tasks to perform early in life. Running errands to the shops, picking up or delivering things to neighbours and friends, folding the washing, tidying the toys, minding younger siblings and so forth. This in turn provides the mother with an important and often much needed relief from the role, among other chores, of prime caregiver. In practical terms, this means that although the mother is very much in control of most activities, not least as caregiver, she can also rely on support and help from her older children. Although both boys and girls are expected to assist in the household chores, the involvement of young boys decreases in pace with their increased involvement with Torah **learning.** This causes no obvious resentment from the girls, since the activity of **learning** is strongly associated with male behaviour, as are household chores with that of the female role.

There is another important aspect of growing up in large size families. Younger children grow up in an environment where they are surrounded by family members that represent various levels of sociocultural competence. It might be argued that children in Gateshead are, within the confinement of their home, presented with a live representation of their entire expected spectrum of development.

As children grow up they all take an active part in rearing their younger siblings. This is an opportunity to demonstrate their own sociocultural competence and to re-affirm the validity of their own behaviours. Not only teen-age siblings engage themselves in the activity of rearing their younger sisters and brothers, a child of seven or eight might often be observed and heard seriously explaining to his/her younger sibling that its preceding behaviour is undesirable or unacceptable. Large families living close together in a restricted area means that they enjoy little privacy and that family members' behavioural standards are readily transmitted to the rest of the family. Family members' actions and ethics are to a large extent open to each others' scrutiny. The intimate access to, and possibility of assessing other

family members' standards of behaviour is an effective way of retaining behavioural conformity. In a community where ethics are of vital importance, this control mechanism is also an efficient means of assessing and ensuring ethical conformity at all age levels. Although the responsibilty for creating sanctioned behavioural models (Goffman 1956) as well as ensuring that these models are abided by, rests ultimately with the parents, their daily and continuous inculcation is carried out by both parents and older siblings (Stratton 1988). Such a system helps to ensure continued and consistent behavioural levels throughout the family. The task of ensuring that each new or younger family member is imbued with the ethics and standards of behaviour expected from a **Torah Jew**, is treated as a collective responsibility.

Growing up in Gateshead is to be exposed to constant correctional sequences. Provided by family members holding differing levels of sociocultural "expertise", the socializational agenda is presented to the younger members in a wide spectrum of competence stages. In fact, this approach has three important functions; it allows parents to assess the level of their childrens' individual sociocultural competence, secondly it re- affirms to older siblings its validity and their own competence, and lastly it aids the younger child in the process of constructing such a competence.

When older siblings correct or intercept the behaviour of their younger siblings, pace of speech becomes slow, as does their parents', with pronunciation stressed and tone of voice serious and entreating. Surrounded by an atmosphere where momentum and speech contours play an important part in speech interactions, children do at an early age demonstrate considerable competence in this specific sociocultural knowledge, both in terms of when and how it is applied.

In Gateshead, where the use of specific correction phonology and word choice is practised in dyadic speech interactions, the child becomes, from a very young age, accustomed to and aware of the "moral implications" which underpin the interaction sequence, by way of intonation contours. The understanding and knowledge of the importance of changing intonation contours over the choice of words in the

process of creating **meaning**, is competently demonstrated by these younger children when they intercept the behaviours of their younger siblings.

Directives or behavioural appeals occupy a considerable proportion of mothers' speech spectrum with their children. Mothers, despite the considerable work-load of very large households as well as small-scale business enterprises (1) and community duties, never seem to lack the interest or energy to correct, instruct and guide their children in the ways of proper behavour. Frequently interrupting her potato-peeling, washing or ironing the mother will request her son or daughter to:

-"Speak kindly to your sister, please"

-"Why don't you let your brother look at your book for a while,

that would be kind,"

-"Please, could you share your crayons with the others?"

-"Now it is his turn, we must always share!"

-"No, that is not how we do it, we do it very gently".

-"I don't want to see that, that is not kind".

-"We must always do our best, mustn't we?"

-"Try to be more generous the next time, will you please? ".

-"That was not very polite! Remember politeness is also a Mitzva".

No doubt these are requests and instructions which might be observed in numerous and differing sociocultural settings. What makes them specifically "Gatesheady" is the dedication and intensity involved in these correctional and directive speech sequences. They are not treated as "passing comments" of little moment, rather they exude the quality of being regarded as containing a substance or property which she entreats the child to foster. It is an interactive style which not only underscores the urgency and imperative of the communicated message, it also challenges the child's undivided attention.

The mother's voice becomes quiet and ingratiating, the pace of speech slows down and the tone of voice is grave, in other words, the entire speech characteristic is altered. The sociocultural importance of the message is further communicated by her body language. Halting all other activities, her motionless limbs and body combined with her direct and fixed look demand attention and compliance. Frequently she will follow up and underscore the correctional and directive activities by introducing religious explanations, anecdotes or logic which further solidify her message (Miller 1989, Carrithers N.D.). These types of interactions demonstrate the way in which specific social situations influence speech and reveal how the form and contour of the latter underscore the importance, urgency and cultural values implied in the message.

Being a young child in Gateshead is to be the focal point of endless amounts of speech sequences. It is to a large extent through instruction, probing, questioning and directives that the parent is thought to be able to negotiate or approach the child's conscious self and thereby achieve possible stimulation of its various **Middos.** The latter is a process (chapter 6.2) which calls for endless socioculturally sanctioned stimuli in various forms. Apart from visually providing the child with "good" model-behaviour, the child must be guided verbally. The conscious self receives its stimuli through all the various senses, of which **hearing** and **seeing** play leading roles. Good **Middos** enhancement and consequent strengthening of the **Yetzer HaTov,** calls for active manipulation of the various senses.

Cognition, located and organized in the conscious self, is also perceived as intrinsically dependent upon that which the child sees, hears, smells and feels. This is a conviction which not only requires strict control of these inlets to the "inner", it also underscores their pedagogical usefulness. Talk is considered as one such efficient inlet, a device which is necessary in the process of rearing children.

Since the child in Gateshead is thought to be born with the ability to cognitively organize external stimuli it is, from birth, awarded communicative competence and consequently treated as a "communicative partner". This is why mother and other

family members address the infant, vocalize to it, ask questions, instruct and greet it. This is done whilst facial expressions clearly correspond with the semantic "content" of the speech sequence. Simultaneously the infant's own voice and body movements are interpreted and "translated" into responses. In other words the care-giver shows considerable willingness and co- operation in aiding the infant in the telling of a story (Schieffelin 1979, 1983; Ochs 1984, 1988; Kulick 1990). In effect, the competent sociocultural member conceals or ignore the infant's incompetence and constructs a sequence whereby he or she simultaneously plays the role of both the speaker and the listener involved in the conversation (Trevarthen 1979). The various strategies employed to interpret what the infant or young child is "saying" and the willingness to take the perspective of the child (Bullowa 1979; Lock 1981) is evident in most infant/care-giver interactions in Gateshead.

In what follows, I will present three examples aimed at demonstrating the dual role which care-givers take on when involved in interactions with infants. The first example is a mother's "conversation" with her five month old boy who has just woken up after his early morning sleep:

Example 1.

LINGUISTIC FORM	PHYSICAL INPUT
Mother:	
Hello gorgeous! Did you have a good sleep?	**facial expression and voice contour questioning**
Infant:	
(Silent)	**Smiles, stretches hands up.**
Mother:	
And a very good-morning to you too. Do you want to come and see what we are doing?	**Facial expression and voice questioning**

Infant:	
Vocalizes	**Waves its hands**
Mother:	
I see! up you come! **Oh! you're heavy.**	**Picks up baby** **Facial expression showing suprise**
You are a big boy!	**Facial expression confirmative**
Infant:	
(Vocalises)	**Rocks body back and forth**
Mother:	
Oh, I'm sorry . You're a very big boy!	**Facial expression and voice contour confirmative**
Infant:	
Vocalizes	**Waves hands**
Mother:	
Oh, really?	**Facial expression and voice contour questioning_**
Infant:	
(Silent)	**Looks at mother**
Mother:	
You want to sit in your pram, do you?	**Facial expression and voice contour questioning**
Infant:	
(Vocalizes)	
Mother:	
All right, as you wish!	**Facial expression**

Lets find your pram	**and voice contour confirmative**

In the next example an older teen-age sister interacts with her three months old sister:

Example 2.

LINGUISTIC FORM	**PHYSICAL INPUT**
Older sister: **Are you hungry, Sarah?**	**Facial expression and voice contour questioning.**
Infant:	
(Silent)	**Waves its hands**
Sister:	
Yes!	**Facial expression and voice contour confirmative**
Would you like some milk?	**Facial expression and voice contour questioning**
Infant:	
(Silent)	**Opens mouth, waves its hands**
Sister:	
Oh, you're that hungry are you?	**Facial expression and voice contour questioning**
Infant:	
(Silent)	**Still waving its hands**

Sister:	
I see	**Facial expression and voice contour confirmative**
Infant:	
Vocalizes	**Grips its feet**
Sister:	
You'd like it straight away?	**Voice questioning, nods her head**
Here, this is for you!	**Puts bottle teat in babies mouth**
Infant:	
Makes sucking noices	**Grasps at the bottle**
Sister:	
You're welcome!	**Smiles**

Lastly the mother who attempts to find out what is ailing her little boy (four months) who has been crying persistently for some time:

Example 3.

LINGUISTIC FORM	**PHYSICAL INPUT**
Mother:	
What's wrong? Tell me! **Have you got a tummy ache?**	**Facial expression and voice contour questioning**

Infant:	
(Cries)	**Clenches its fists**
Mother:	
All right! Would you like me to rub your tummy?	**Facial expression and contour questioning**
Infant:	
(Still Crying)	**Waving hands**
Mother:	
So that's what you wanted, was it?	**Voice questioning, rubs the infants stomach**
Infant:	
(Cries less persistently)	
Mother:	
Yes?	**Facial expression and voice contour questioning**
Infant:	
(Stops crying)	**Looks at mother**
Mother:	
Yes, that's better!	**Facial expression and voice contour affirmative**

All the time these dyadic turn-taking conversations were going on, the care-giver gazed at the child, practising face-to-face interaction and making quite pronounced accommodations to the infant's cognitive immaturity (Keenan 1976). This is in fact in accordance with the conviction existing in the community that the child is, from birth, a social being which, in spite of certain incompetences, is to be included

and reckoned with in social life (Harre 1986).

As Ochs (1984, 1988) shows us this is an area where there is much cross-cultural variation. Although Ochs provides us with a comprehensive representation as to when and how Samoan, Kululian and Anglo/American children are recognized as social beings and subsequently as communicative partners, she fails to explain or reveal the different indigenous beliefs and ideas which underpin such a reasoning. The Western tendency towards "masking incompetence" in their infants, or the Samoan understanding that infants are "baby thing thing" or even the Kululian conviction that they "have no understanding", are all beliefs which arise from indigenous ideas and concepts concerning human nature and its development. It is also a "connection" which is conspicuously lacking in recent socialization research. "Baby talk" (Ferguson 1977; Watson-Gegeo, 1986a) is very rarely used in Gateshead, which is in line with the conviction that one need not over simplify conversation with the child (Sachs 1976,1977) since it is quite capable of understanding. This does not mean that parents do not explain or choose less sophisticated words, only that they do not adjust their speech to, or adapt a specific type of simplified register such as: **"Look at the moo- moo (cow)".** or **"Now mummy will give you your din-dins (dinner)"**, often practised within the society at large. One might expect that the lack of over-simplification in speech interactions with children leads to frequent correctional sequences or demands for the child to engage in repeating routines (Watson Gegeo, 1986b). In fact, repeating routines, whereby the child is encouraged to repeat the correct prononciation after an adult, are not over-represented in the community. This might be due to the mother's constant and heavy work-loads as well as to the general belief (and there are many children to prove them right) that:

"Children "pick up" language as they go along by simply listening to so many of us talking in the household".

There is one area though, where care-givers do intervene, guide, correct and demand the child to repeat after the adult and that is when the child is saying a

Brocha (blessing before eating) or **Benching** (Grace after a meal). In religious rituals there are early and strict demands for compliance and competence in speech as well as body posture. The child is expected to start these procedures between 30 and 32 months and to thereafter demonstrate, with increasing competence, its ability to recognize and carry out such specific symbolic and ritualized behaviours. The **correlation** of an important social context with speech activities (Gumperz 1982b) is in Gateshead regarded as a cognitive ability which is believed to be perfected somewhat later than both speech and perception skills. Important social contexts, such as religious rituals, are not to be subverted through incompetence.

In an unimportant or mundane social context, such as everyday conversation, inadequacy and imperfection is admissible (Watson- Gegeo 1986a). Mothers say that children should not be required to say their **Brochas** until they can pronounce the words. Typically, until the child is able to recite the Brocha properly, the mother initiates the ritual by saying the first word of the blessing: **"Boruch..."**, she then waits for the child to say the first letter of the following word. When the child starts to say **"A.."** the mother immediately continues with the rest of the world **.."Attoh"**. From then on the mother seeks to match her own words and pace of speech with those of the child, with her own voice and "correct" prononciation slighty louder than that of the child's. In effect the child only pronounces the first part of each word, with the mother's voice finishing it off. In this manner the mother's voice becomes a kind of perfected echo to the child's imperfect reciting of the blessing (2).

Care-givers in Gateshead agree that speaking to, correcting and instructing the child from its first moment of life is not only a means of "entertaining" or giving the child attention, it is central in the quest to mould it into a competent moral actor. Since the internal faculties needed to organize perception and thought are present at birth, there is no need for extensive special accommodations adapted to the child's particular capacities or requirements. What is of essence though is that the child be spoken to, informed, guided and corrected verbally in combination with presentation of visual models and examples of sanctioned behaviours. As one

mother put it:

The child might not have a Yetzer HaTov from the begining but instead it has the capacity to learn, when guided, what is right and what is wrong. So Hashem provided the child with a mind in order that parents may teach the child from the very begining. Knowing comes first!"

Or the mother who claimed that:

"We might not always realize it, but children understand a lot more than we give them credit for. That is how it was intended. You see, He meant for us to teach our children from a very early age His Laws and their special duties as Jews. This He made possible by way of equipping our children with early understanding. It is there already, we must just show them and guide them."

Although the child is perceived as being born with an "incomplete inner" self, parents "pretend" that the child has both the **Yetzorim.** In effect, the child's "inner" shortcomings are concealed, and it is treated as if its "inner" self is fully equipped and capable of organizing moral conduct. Such a deception is carried out by way of talking to and treating the child as a competent moral agent. People say that it is the duty of parents to make sure that their own **Yetzer HaTov** is "extended" and operates on behalf of the child's lacking "inner" component. Inherent in this strategy is the notion that parents' "compensation" predisposes and prepares the "ground" for subsequent and ensuing "inner" completeness.

This type of pretence is carried out and socioculturally condoned in the conviction that treating the child as a moral agent from an early age, promotes the child's "good" **Middos** (via the inlet of the conscious self) and provides an ideal and favourable condition for the later arrival of the **Yetzer HaTov.** This mother's lengthy and specific comment demonstrates this point:

"Even if the child's Yetzer HaTov is not ready, we must still make sure that it knows from the beginning that it must try not to give in to the Yetzer Hora. Of course the child will always want to please itself. But if we just sit and watch, the child will grow up like a beast, without any regard for others. Parents must not let this happen! Instead it is <u>we</u> who must discover and somehow steer the child

away from evil ways, because if we do so systematically, it will eventually be able to do this itself. It's not an easy job for us parents, but how else will the child know what to do when it grows up? There is only one solution; we must show our children the proper way to behave. Mind you, at the same time we also have to face our own fights with Yetza Hora, it never tires. It is no good just sitting back and waiting for the child's Yetzer HaTov to develop, if we haven,t done our job the bad Middos will be too powerful by then! And this is why good Middos are so important, they will help the child to make the right decisions later in life. But good Middos must be worked at and encouraged by us parents. We must direct or sort of bring out good Middos, and, of course, discourage bad ones. This is why, you see, that it's vital to keep on at them, to insist that they look for and recognize a mitzva. At times I wonder if I'm too strict or hard on them, but my husband says that we can't be too strict in this matter.

The next mother also stresses parental input and the obligation to act on the behalf

of the child's absent **Yetzer HaTov:**

There is a concept which says that nobody is born righteous and nobody is born evil. Everyone is given the same opportunity at birth. You will get children who are weaker or stronger than others. They will have different Middos which are directable to right or wrong and that's were education and upbringing come in. If a person likes to see blood he should either become a circumsizer or slaughterer. In other words, you are using that Middah in a positive manner by directing it into a right pattern. It is the same with all the characteristics the baby is born with. Parents have both right and obligation to rectify and direct. We have to direct them where they can't find the right way on their own, since they are without a Yetzer HaTov. We must also, in this way, bring forth lovingkindness so that we can ensure Menschlichkeit in each generation".

Children growing up in Gateshead are constantly exposed to speech in one form or another. They are frequently involved in speech sequences where they are given information, questioned, corrected,told something or simply shown speech courtesy. Talk, in numerous forms and contexts, constitutes a pervasive and important occupation in Gateshead and is a vital constituent of the environment which surrounds the child. This is an environment which is intensive and pervasive. Infants and young children are in Gateshead the objects of extensive verbal attention, through which parents consciously attempt to inculcate culturally valued ethics and moral behaviour. The objective in the first part of this chapter has been to reveal the speech environment surrounding children in Gateshead and to

ultimately use this as a basis from which to show how language is vital to children's acquisition of specific sociocultural knowledge. Apart from a wide and important repertoire of sanctioned values, the speech environment provide children with vital clues enabling them to acquire yet another type of knowledge, equally important to their future ability to operate as a moral agents.

When parents talk to their children they do so in accordance with specific sociocultural ideas and beliefs concerning the child's ability and competence. In other words, peoples' understanding of the development of human nature directs and organizes the form and content of parents' communication with their children. In the next part of this chapter I aim to show how ideas and beliefs concerning human nature have direct implications for, and therefore provide the child with the information and clues that enables it to construct an understanding of its own "inner" self. What parents do not consciously appreciate is that while they are teaching their children accepted sociocultural behaviours, they are simultaneously accommodating and aiding their children in gaining , not only their their own self-perceptions but also, a specific Jewish understanding of human nature.

Notes chapter 7.1

1.
Many of the women in the community engage in small-scale business enterprises in their homes. Travel-agency, accountancy, and various small shops and services which cater for the community's special requirements are to be found in one of the rooms in many of the homes.

2.
Although the child is not yet capable of pronouncing the ritualistic sequence accurately, it is well aware that it is a procedure which is required before any food-intake and that its format, content and decorum is situationally specific.

7.2 INTERROGATION, OR SOCIOCULTURAL KNOWLEDGE TRANSMISSION?

> **The basic assumption is that something is being communicated. What is at issue is how it is to be interpreted.**
> (Cook-Gumperz 1983. p. 126)

The ability to communicate is cross-culturally regarded as as an essential competence which all children must acquire if they are to be regarded as full members of society. Neverthelesss we were until very recently, left with a very shallow understanding of the connection between communication and sociocultural knowledge. Then within the last decade, work by linguistic and anthropological **constructionists**, focusing on the inter- relationship between the two, have produced convincing evidence that their approach offers increased and qualitative understanding of the role which communication plays in the acquisition and transmission of sociocultural knowledge (Schieffelin 1979, 1986; Cook-Gumperz 1983, 1986; Ochs 1984, 1988; Harre 1986; Watson-Gegeo 1986 a, b; Clancy 1986 a, b; Robinson 1988; Daas 1989; Kulick 1990).

Their work show us that the acquisition of language provides the child with a number of added components which are inseparable from speech actions and that these, depending on their context (Wittgenstein 1958; Suchman 1987,), order and form (Vygosky 1962; Silverstein 1976), help create meaningful interactions. Although novel as an approach in socialization research, this is a stance which rests on both Mead's (1962) idea that people construe their sociocultural environments through language and Wittgenstein's (1958) conviction that language is to be regarded as a public expression of emotions and beliefs. This stance was

influenced and supported by Vygosky's (1962) claim that the organizing principles of feeling and thought must be sought in the structure of language since it is the latter which pronounces or expresses these very same constructs.

In time these ideas developed into, or formed the basis for ethnomethodology (Garfinkel 1967; Heritage 1984; Goodwin 1990), which focuses upon the ways in which language expression renders the social world publicly available and mutually intelligible to all sociocultural members. Our various ways of "making sense", and typification of commonsense reasoning (Suchman 1987) are considered by ethnomethodologists as a social science topic in itself. Garfinkel (1967), who refused to accept that neither adults nor children are "cultural dopes" but active investigators of their sociocultural environment, described the activity of ethnomethodology as:

the investigation of the rational properties of indexical expressions and other practical actions as contingent ongoing accomplishments of organized artful practices of everyday life." (ibid. p. 11)

When Garfinkel uses the term "indexical expression" he does in fact call for the need to take into account and pay attention to the inherent but unarticulated **meaning** underpinning that which people say. He seeks to reveal the content and implications of what the interacting agent actually "has in mind". Garfinkel's treatment of the term "indexical expression" is based upon the same reasoning which Morris (1970) made use of when he claimed that:

an indexical sign designates what it denotes attention to. An indexical sign does not characterize what it denotes (accept to indicate roughly the space-time co-ordinates) and need not be similar to what it denotes. (ibid. p24)

Garfinkel further insists that people recognize each other's communicative intent because:

The properties of indexical expressions and indexical actions are ordered properties. These consist of organizationally demonstrable sense, or facticity, or methodic use, or agreement among "cultural colleagues." Their ordered properties consist of

organizationally demonstrable rational properties of indexical expression and indexical actions. Those ordered properties are ongoing achievements of the concerted commonplace activities of investigators. The demonstrable rationality of indexical expressions and indexical actions retains over the course of its managed production by members the character of ordinary, familiar, routinized practical circumstances. As process and attainment the produced rationality of indexical expressions consists of practical tasks subject to every exigency of organizationally situated conduct. (ibid: 11)

For social scientists concerned with the ways in which the child acquires ability to express itself and make sense of its sociocultural environment, ethnomethodology offers an inlet into an understanding of the **meaning** which underpins various communication sequences. In other words it reveals the ways in which language profiency requires, apart from linguistic constructs, specific sociocultural knowledge. Unlike traditional ideas concerning language acquisition, which were based upon the Chomskyan contention that children have an assumed innate ability to **reproduce** language, especially grammatical skills, the focus of interest has in recent years been on the:

cognitively established routine chains of actions that are for the most part not available to conscious inspection and are available for description only after the event. To accept that these routinized chains of action operate as discourse practices is also to accept that language codes social information, this information is sociolinguistically retrieved and recoded in talk, (Cook-Gumperz 1983. p. 126)

Added to this, phonological and morphosyntactic constructs such as pitch, intonation, genres, sequencing, interruptions etc. are also features which indicate to people how to interpret (degrees of seriousnes or playfulness in) the interactional sequence. The latter, which Goffman (1974) refers to as **keying**, is an intrinsic feature of conversation. Constructionists view **meaning** as the outcome of **codes** organized in culturally context specific order and forms. The particular way in which people speak to each other is regarded as carrying sociocultural information. Embedded in language and expressed through conversation, are cultural theories of the world, values, ideas and beliefs, making language a powerful medium of socialization.

To the constructionist, language provides the child with a display of culturally expected ways of thinking, reasoning, behaving and feeling, and consequently language represents a significant part of its sociocultural environment. This is precisely the point made by Wentworth (1980) who insists that children, through participation in interactional sequences, learn to competently recognize and operate in these socioculturally defined contexts. According to Gumperz (1983), what children learn to recognize through participation in interactions are **contextual cues** and the conventions or use they reflect are what he calls **contextualization conventions.** These conventions he describes as:

> **those aspects of verbal-signalling processes which enable us to relate what is said at any time to previous, interactive experience and which function to retrieve the social and situational knowledge which is essential for the indirect inferences which must be made in participating in conversational exchanges.** (ibid. p. 117)

Agreeing that the socioculturally competent person is a product of society, it is the commonly held dichotomous presentation of the individual as the **receiver** and the society as **giver** which Wentworth (1980) argues against. He sees the sociocultural environment as providing the individual with the environment in which the individual can discover, by trial and error, the situationally expected or "correct" behaviour. In short, he claims that:

> **socialization is taken as an actual interactional display of the sociocultural environment.** (Wentworth 1980. p.68)

In practice such an approach perceives socialization as:

> **first a presentation (to the novice, through interaction and by others) of the <u>rules</u> whereby "respectable" behaviour might be constructed. Secondarily, it is the presentation of techniques, maxims, trivia and all those other discrete items of information that sociologists may have listed in definitions of socialization.** (Ibid 1980. p. 68-9)

It is a stance which views childhood as a social "apprenticeship" during which:

the novice has the opportunity to practice, make mistakes and behave in a manner unbecoming a member. The socialization process is an opportunity for the individual to discover personally the design for respectable conduct and begin building his repetoire of actual content. (Ibid. p. 69)

Wentworth's contention that interaction sequences are a significant part of the environment into which the child is submerged, allows for historical and contextual considerations. It recognises that each historical and social circumstance provides the situation in hand with its own unique dimension and qualities and that these in turn influence, temper and adjust the interactional sequence. It is a theory which also allows for individual diversity (an individual's interpretations, evaluations and adaptations might lead to non-identical notions) as well as seeking to relate this to specific historical interactional situations, whilst also seeking to incorporate the notion of continuous shifts and changes in the sociocultural environment.

The individual's selective and descriptive ability and tendency in negotiating his/her environment, as reflected in interactional sequences, seems also to have been on Sapiro's mind over fifty years ago when he wrote:

The true locus of culture is in the interactions of specific individuals, and, on the subjective side, in the world of meanings which each one of these individuals may unconsciously abstract for himself from the participation in these interactions. (Sapiro 1932)

Founded on ethnomethodological principles, constructionists have gone one step further in attempting to find the answers as to how competence in sociocultural knowledge is procured. Although we are still in the early stages of research into the acquisition and socialization of activity/event competence, we do now know that by way of providing explicit instructions and guidance in how and when to talk and what is appropriate to say in a range of recurrent contexts, caregivers provide children with signals or cues as to the underlying **meaning** which accompany the various speech interactions. It is through the **active** participation in speech interactions that the child is able to acquire the tacit understanding and knowledge of these very same cues and is provided with the opportunity to construct the

consequent competence in the sociocultural organization of activities and events (Cook-Gumperz 1983; Schieffelin 1986; Ochs 1988).

Constructionists do not view the child as a passive, though impressionable bystander, who in the face of "objective social facts" can but resign itself into to being moulded into a competent social member. On the contrary, as Valsiner (1988) argues, it is a theory which views the child as an active agent, and where:

> **..the child is included as an active partner in the social process that guides his or her own development. That active role is observed in the child's opportunity for modifying his relations with the environment in ways that do not follow the goals set by his "socializers" - adults or older siblings.** (Valsiner 1988. p. 289)

Similarly Ochs (1988) implies the child's active involvement when she claims that it is by way of:

> **<u>participating</u> in conversational interaction that young children acquire tacit knowledge of how to index and create contexts.** (Ochs 1988. p.22)

For instance, anthropologists like Platt (1985) and Nicolaisen (1985) have shown how children in acquiring language competence also learn to understand and use knowledge of status and role. Theirs is a concern with the ways in which language structures carry information about the social order and the ways in which children become competent users of this order. The child's acquisition of an understanding of the social order is also the focus of Toren's (1985) work among children in Fiji. She provides convincing material as to the ways in which rules of food exchange, affection , orders and discipline surrounding the children in their daily lives, aid them in developing familiarity with cultural constructs such as social hierarchy and gender.

Departing from a common paradigm concerned with **meaning** these anthropologists arrive at the same conclusion namely that children construct an understanding and become competent users of the rules which govern the social order within a specific

environment by way of interacting with members of that same social order. Here, social order is not viewed as an overarching entity, an objective conglomerate of rules and laws (as in the Durkheimian view), but as existing in the very relationships which link people together.

Social order is not merely reflected in relationships, it is (constructed in) relationships. It is the required intimate knowledge and competence in negotiating social order, the **how, why** and **when** people are linked and the specific **situational behaviour** it calls for, which children acquire by participating in and actively operating as an integral part of this very relationship. Children must not only learn to define, recognize and interpret the social activities surrounding them, they must also learn to adjust and adapt their own actions accordingly.

Although not all acquisition research is directly involved with linguistics they all share the common conviction that children do not simply **copy** but **construct** an understanding of the meanings and operational organization of such "key values", through active participation and involvement in interactions which reveal their context specific use. However most acquisition research relies heavily on linguistics and has thus been able to demonstrate how ideas and values concerning **self**, among other notions, (Watson-Gegeo 1986a) are infused (and thereby acquired by children) into conversation between parents and children. Among the Kwara'ae (ibid) these values are, among others, control of emotions and the idea that the well-being of the group takes precedence over the needs and feelings of the individual. Although a presentation of speech interactional material would have given Watson-Gegeo's analysis more reliability and conviction, her claim that the above mentioned values and ideas are reflected in the style and content of adult- child interactions, is still a potent argument which strengthens the theory that sociocultural values and beliefs are:

"strategically realized in different ways and at different levels in the ongoing situations that constitute the child's social world" (ibid. p.124).

In practice, the study of language socialization patterns is achieved by giving careful attention to the caregiver-child interaction and thus seeking the ways in which wider cultural constructs (ideas and beliefs) organize the content and structure of these conversations. This is the method used by Clancy (1986) to show us how the particular value placed on consensus, empathy and on indirection in Japanese society, is embedded in and constitutive of the way in which Japanese mothers interact with their children. Although her work shows us effectively how particular features in communicative style can be related to specific cultural values, I believe that these interactions must also be seen as reflecting underlying ideas and beliefs constituent of the culturally specific construction of **human nature.**

If people regard empathy or the protection of the communicative partner's feelings to be of the essence in conversation, thus causing indirection, it indicates or even reveals ideas concerning the structure and functions of the communicative partner's "inner". I believe that it is the underlying, yet unconscious "knowledge" (D'Andrade 1987) which those mothers have of the condition and organization of a person's "inner" structures which in part, directs the ways in which she interacts with her child. She is not only teaching or inculcating in her child proper conduct, she is also indicating to the child that peoples' "inner" have particular qualities and functions which are sensitive to external stimuli and must therefore be shown consideration and caution (indicating the opposite; they can also be abused or injured). The Japanese child is, through interactions with its mother, introduced to the idea that social life calls for consideration and careful protection of other peoples' feelings; which is the outcome of an "inner" process that people are unable completely to control and remove from social influence. The latter is, I suggest, a "deeper" interactional **meaning** underpinning communication that enables the Japanese child to construct, apart from proper communicative conventions, an understanding of the particular Japanese variation of human nature.

Although she does not directly refer to this particular part of the message which is being conveyed to children in communication with their mothers, Clancy does so indirectly when she claims that the way language is used and understood reflects:

cultural beliefs about the way people are (Clancy 1986. p. 213)

Understanding the abilities and limitations of human nature, I believe, provides a "platform" from which the person evaluates and organizes his/her own strategies and conduct in interactions with his/her social environment. As a point of departure, man's view of himself and consequently his relation to other individuals , not only as an actor in a given social order, but also the individual's notion of what constitutes a human-being, (created and interpreted in ways which are tangential to ideologies of society) makes up an interwoven component, or a specific dimension of the sociocultural knowledge which the child acquires through participation in social interactions. Investigating how such a concept transforms itself into everyday interaction between parents and children I regard as yet another step towards becoming more comfortable with our somewhat blurred perception of "cultural reproduction". That early childhood years are significant in the development of self-constructs is widely recognized (Samuels 1977; Lewis 1979 a,b) but our understandings of the actual process by which the child acquires both the knowledge and the contextual validity of these sociocultural constructs, is still limited.

The linguistic/ethnographic material which will be presented has been chosen to represent a pattern of speech interaction which I have been able to observe frequently and consistently and which is used by all mothers with whom I worked in Gateshead. Though words and social context might vary, sentence construction, syntax and speech contours reveal similarities which have convinced me that these speech situations reflect a conglomerate of specific sociocultural knowledge.

As stressed previously, much time in Gateshead is spent in trying to inculcate moral conduct and in enhancing the child's ability to reject tempting and self-fulfilling inclinations. Still, it is not enough to gain the child's co-operation simply because it fears the consequences if it does not obey parents' requests (although this is also an important aspect, See Ervin-Tripp 1977), parents must also ensure the child's future **voluntary** compliance.

When asked how voluntary compliance can be gained, mothers as previously discussed, invariably indicate an understanding of the child as being moulded into specific behaviour patterns through guidance and model presentations from parents. The following comment demonstrates this conviction:

"If we as parents show them, time and time again, the correct way, and if we help the child to keep his bad Middos in check and to encourage his good (Middos), he will eventually <u>want</u> to do good. We must first force the child to all this, but I believe the right environment and atmosphere will make it a natural thing to the child. I'm not saying that he won't face difficult battles - his Yetzer Hora will make sure of that - but that he will want the outcome to be right. And it is up to us to put that in his mind!"

The phrase; "put that in his mind" indicates the understanding that parents must obtain the co-operation and consent of the child's conscious self if they are to make the child conduct itself according to moral precepts. Despite insisting that modelling and guidance will eventually bring forth desired behaviours, parents also recognize the importance of making the child aware of its own involvement and responsibility in the outcome of its conduct. It has to be made to understand that its behaviour is conditioned by its own "inner choice" since the dichotomy of "good" and "bad" conduct is the direct outcome of a process emanating from its own "inner" structures.

Parents are convinced that if these measures are introduced early and firmly enough, the child will eventually make the right "choice" out of love and fear of G-D, and not just to please those around it. They perceive the child as being an active agent who must eventually him/herself (as an autonomous independent individual) deal with the forces that exist within itself. Consequently the aim of parents is to nourish the child's own **intentionality.** The ethnopsychological perception of **intentionality** is based upon the distinction between **self** and **others.** Intention is found within the independent self. Although the individual might be moved or directed by others, there is, in terms of intentionality, a marked boundary between the two. It is conceived that the purposeful, wilful and intended nature of **intentionality** arises within the individual as a result of a process whereby acquired

religiocultural knowledge implanted in the conscious self, establishes within the individual a notion of what is moral as opposed to the immoral. In due course this notion will stir the individual to wish to engage in "correct" or "good" courses of actions. It is this maturing and growth of intentionality which the mother refers to when she claims that:

"Today I'm forcing my children to do things the correct way. If we do this long and forcefully enough, the children will eventually, some easier than others, make this their dominant behaviour, and force will no longer be needed. When they are little, children for instance, say their Brocha by rote because we tell them to. But by the time they are nine or ten they do it because they know it is the right thing to do, and then they <u>want</u> to do the right thing. By then it is <u>deep</u> enough in them. So that means that they are nearly getting ready to do an expected Mitzva, and to do it for the right reason".

The last statement is important for it indicates perceptions of a self-sustaining mechanism of personal control (perceived also as important for and as instigating social control). This is what parents strive for; to make the child conduct itself in accordance with G-D's Laws and Will of its own free desire and wish and not simply because it is told or forced to do so. These are notions which arise, it is believed, out of an acquired awe of G-D, combined with a desire (located in the heart) or a voluntary choice (by the conscious self) to comply with His Laws and Decrees. Here we see once again, how in Gateshead ideas concerning human nature justify careful manipulation of the child's environment and the possibilities which arise from external stimuli control. The latter are thought to offer society (and the ethnic group) an important advantage in that they might not only extract the individual's consent and co- operation based upon rules and sanctions, but may also, through negotiating the conscious self, ensure the indivdual's deep felt and voluntary support and compliance.

My point is that parents do not achieve this goal nor do they provide the child with an understanding of its own human nature by way of instructions, images, explanations or model presentations alone. Albeit important components, the latter rely upon the support of a particular linguistic mode. Having listened carefully

to conversations between mothers and their children, it appears that mothers make use of a specific linguistic form when attempting to enforce certain attitudes and reactions in their children. This is a form particularly striking when the mother disapproves of the child's behaviour. In these instances, she not only attempts to re-direct the child's current behaviour, she also wants the child to recognize its improper conduct. In these **correctional** interactions, the child is first confronted with its undesirable actions, then made to reflect upon them, and finally it is presented with an alternative course of action which is in line with accepted values and norms. The sequence of **interrogation** followed by **value-declaration** is the interactional construct which is most commonly practised by parents in Gateshead when they correct the conduct of children between the ages of twelve months and seven years. In schematic form the **correctional** construct presents itself as follows:

COMMUNICATIVE CONSTRUCT FOR INCREASED VALUE ENHANCEMENT.

	Form	Exemplified
1. **Mother**	Interrogative	"Why are you...?" "Is it..?"
2. **Child**	Non-verbal	Looks at mother.. Tilts head..
3. **Mother**	Declarative	"You must always.." "Try to.."
4. **Child**	Non- or verbal	Nods. Changes course of action. Affirmative answer.

Often the mother's oscillation between **interrogative** and **declarative** forms may take several turns, or a course of double interrogation will precede a declaration, but the two forms are always found within the same sequence when dealing with corrections and alterations of a child's behaviour. In the following interactional sequence this oscillation is repeated several times, as well as demonstrating "doubling" of the interrogative form. The "scene" is the kitchen, five children are seated for lunch whilst the sixth is busy "washing" (1). The children have said their **Brochas** and

are now eating. The mother, who suspects that her five year old son has been less than particular with his **Brocha** turns to him:

<u>EXAMPLE 1.</u>

Mother: **"Have you made your Brocha?**

Boy: (Nods his head)

Mother: **"Did you make a loud one?"**

Boy: (Looks down at the table)

Mother: **"No? I don't like that. So now you have forgotten how to make a Brocha?**

Boy: (Looks silently and non-co-operatively at her.)

Mother: **"Right? Sit properly thank you! We have met before, haven't we? Put your legs together and say your Brocha nicely. Can you do that, do you think? "**

Boy: (Straightens himself up, legs together he starts reciting a Brocha with a loud and clear voice.)

Mother: (Nods her head approvingly and turns her attention to her three year old son who has now also finished eating.)

Mother: **"Yes? - Have you finished?"**

Boy: **"yes."**

Mother: **"So, now we don't say Brochas in this house?"**

Boy: **Yes"** (Looks down)

Mother: **"So? Make a nice Brocha, already!"**

Boy: (Recites his Brocha)

Mother: **"Good".**

Boy: (Gets up to leave)

Mother: **"So now you think you may leave?"**

Boy: (Looks at the mother)

Mother: **"We should <u>ask</u> to leave the table."**

Boy: **"Please may I leave the table?".**

Mother:**"Thank you!".** (Nods approvingly at the boy)

At the overt structural level we might here observe how the mother, through a

series of oscillations between **interrogations** and **declarations**, is able to instigate "correct behaviour". The knowledge which her questions indicate is neither lacking in nor unknown to the child, although its actions do not conform with this knowledge or competence. Rather than initially "reminding" the child by direct information, the mother attempts to alter the child's behaviour by "shaming" (Schieffelin 1983). By way of interrogation the mother "exposes" the child's non-compliance and deviation from accepted values and thus highlights "correct behaviour". The mother knows full well that the child is aware of the "correct behaviour" and by way of exposure she underlines and emphasises the obligation to conform. Having made this point, the mother "reminds"the child (thus reinforces) what is expected of him/her.

In what follows, I will further focus on those features of Gateshead mothers' communicative style which I regard as fostering conformity to particular sociocultural values combined with an understanding of the particular qualities, concrete abilities, obligations and loyalties that are intrinsic to their specific variation of individualism. It is the recognition of and the competence in orchestrating its private and autonomous "inner" which eventually will enable the child to participate in expected acts of moral conduct. The child must not only know <u>what</u> is expected of it, also <u>how</u> this is to be achieved.

In the following interactions, typical of **correctional** speech, the mothers begin by questioning the child's current behaviour, then move on to explicit directives. This interactive form together with matching tone and contour of voice as well as facial expression, aids the child in "knowing" what it ought to do or what not do. It also provides the child with the understanding that whatever the outcome, all conduct is the product and consequence of a process, preceding all its public actions, which take place "within" itself. Questioning one type of action and suggesting another, indicates to the child that both the locus of selection as well as the mechanisms that organize the selective process, reside within itself.

When I have discussed this particular style of interaction with people in Gateshead

it is often argued that the use of **interrogation** is a cultural style which has been prevalent for centuries in Jewish communities in which single-minded dedication to Talmud study has always remained among the most important of values. Through the study of Talmud, the conglomerate and rabbinical explanations of all the laws of the Torah, men are provided (for only men may engage themselves in this activity) with an understanding of the Torah which goes far beyond simply knowing what a specific law is. Talmudic study offers an understanding of how the laws were developed, what ethical and moral considerations may have been responsible for their formulations. The study of Talmud is based upon argumentation, in which two partners search for consistencies by way of examining traditional legal opinions and also relating them to changed historical circumstances. It involves the **chavrusa** (study partners) in intellectual banter which is of the highest intellectual order, requiring an analytical ability combined with a capacity to organize and argue one's point to the end. Over time, this highly inquisitive and argumentative tradition has developed into a specific interactive style. Helmreich (1982) refers to this in his vivid desrciption of the American Yeshivas:

"A perhaps unintended but striking outcome of Talmudic study emerges in the patterns of interaction. Among those in the Yeshiva world there is a certain kind of banter, perhaps one could call it verbal roughhousing, that often takes place and is done in a kidding manner."(Helmreich 1982. p.115)

Since Helmreich was brought up in a Jewish environment he was soon able to adapt to this type of interaction, something which seemed to be a lot harder for Mitchell (1988), a non-Jewish anthropologist who with very little previous experience in Jewish interactional style, found his fieldwork in an orthodox community to be both unnerving and difficult "to handle". In his own words:

"Learning this disputatious interaction style was a challenge because it was different from my own circumspect cultural style, in which one should protect the feelings of the other person and open disagreements, especially with relative strangers, are avoided. One must think quickly to marshall evidence for convincing riposte." (Mitchell 1988. p.235)

Whilst I do not propose that the specific type or style of interaction which both these writers refer to, does not have firm and convincing roots in centuries of Talmudic studies, I do claim that there is "more to the story". The above mentioned style of interaction is one which I believe to be a "masculine" style which constitutes part of the socioculturally determined male behaviour. It is also an area in which social standing and male prestige is acquired. The all-male territory of Talmud has never been a part of the female sphere, apart from that which she has seen and heard in contact with men. I suggest that in a community where men and women live very separate "types" of lives (Moore 1988) in terms of occupation, socialisation and responsibilities, it is quite feasible as well as reasonable to postulate that there exists differing gender directed types of interactional styles. Though this paper is not specifically concerned with gender, it is still a point which cannot be completely ignored in a society where it plays a significant role in the social organization.

Women in Gateshead do at times themselves engage in a style of interaction which to the outsider might seem excessively inquisitive and argumentative. As I became familiar with life and people in Gateshead I came to realize that their's is a style of interaction where directness and forthrightness is highly valued and where **loshn hore** (idle gossip) is considered its antithesis. The general idea seems to be that it is better to be frank and direct since "talking about" anybody, good or bad, is inexcusable. Instead of "finding out" through others (though this happens as well) women (and men I expect) in Gateshead pose questions and express their views in a straight- forward fashion which never ceased to suprise me.

I did occasionally find this candour uncomfortable, but with time it became an interactive style which I learned to appreciate personally, and which also enhanced my research work as it helped to minimize ambiguity and provided me with clearer behavioural guidelines. Having said all this, I hasten to add that women in Gateshead do not project the competitive and interruptive style of interaction which is frequently described by male social scientists (Helmreich 1982, Mitchell 1988, Zborowski1952, Heilman 1973) of orthodox Jewish men, since this is not within the framework of **tznius** (modest) behaviour which in Gateshead underpins

all aspects of female life.

Even when women do adopt argumentative behaviour, it is never in interactions with their children, with whom they do not wish to be engaged in any type of argumentation. What might be viewed as an intellectual exercise between men (even between father and son) would be viewed as **chutspa** (impertinence) between mother and child. In her interaction with her children, the mother does not expect nor accepts being engaged in any kind of "exchange of opinions", since this would be seen as implying (to the child) a shortcoming or imperfection in her own behaviour or judgement which in turn might undermine the highly valued **derech eretz** (respect). In the words of one mother:

"A mother should <u>never</u> lower herself to argue with a child or even apologize too much to the child, it cheapens her in the eyes of the child".

Extensive verbal input addressed directly to the child as in Gateshead, does not mean that children are frequently used as equal partners in conversation. Mothers in Gateshead say that they prefer to **ask** the child to do something rather than **telling** it to do so, since refusal of the latter constitutes **chutspa** (impertinence) or disrespect for parents which should be avoided even if it does require slight "manipulation" from the mother. The reasoning seems to be that if the child is presented with a choice, a refusal of any of the alternatives is preferable to a refusal of a direct order. I believe that presenting the child with a request, in fact leaves the child in Gateshead with little room for its own preferences; a request does not indicate options, rather it is a culturally specific style implying expected compliance.

As will be shown in the following **corrective** sequences, children are presented with two alternatives for conduct, both of which are perfectly familiar to the children. The first is socially unacceptable and the other in line with sociocultural values and ideas. Rather than reflecting an "easy-going" attitude, or a spectrum of optional socially accepted normative behaviours, the "choice" is, I believe, a reflection of

the conviction that moral conduct can only be instigated through the conscious self's sensitivity to, and ability to operate and organize particular "inner" structures. Mothers' speech interactions reflect this ethnopsychology. In part, it is the belief that both the origin of the "evil" and the means with which to curb this force and do "good", lie "within" the individual that is being communicated to the children in the ensuing interactions. It is the understanding that the individual, within him/herself, carries those mental sub-divisions (fig. 5) which enables him/her to generate the moral conduct that the child is presented with and given the opportunity to construct through its participation in **corrective** interactions. Forcing the child to question and reflect upon its conduct and then presenting it with an alternative avenue, the mother confronts the child with its own "inner" self. Re-phrased, she makes the child accept that the operational and organizational "instruments" which it uses to instigate and conduct behavioural **choice** (and which ultimately carries responsibility), are located within and controlled by its own "inner" self.

Mothers' initial interrogations reveal the childrens' own selfish actions. The latter are then placed in opposition to the "good" actions and are presented by the mothers as subsequent "optional" courses of action. In this manner, mothers adopt what I call an **optional approach** through which they present the child with an "alternative" type of conduct or response which in effect "forces" the child to display and make public his/her behavioural preferences and intentions. As will be shown in the following examples, the child's own involvement in these correctional sequences is not required to be highly verbal, rather it is recognition, attention and subsequent compliance that is demanded.

EXAMPLE 2:

Ben, seven years old, has come home from school with a pencil which his mother recognises as not belonging to him:

(1) Mother: **"What have you got there?"**

(2) Ben: **"I found it at school".**

(3) Mother: **"And does that make it yours?"**

(4) Ben: (Looks down at the floor and is silent)

(5) Mother: **"What do you do with things that you find in the class room?"**

(6) Ben: (Remains silent with head bent)

(7) Mother: **"Give it to the teacher, yes? Tomorrow you have to take it to your teacher, yes?"**

(8) Ben: (Nods his head)

Here the mother first confronts the boy with a question (1) to which the answer is quite obvious. It is not the object in itself that is of interest to her, it is its correct ownership which she investigates. Knowing the answer full well herself, she attempts to "expose" or "shame" the boy into revealing the pen's true ownership. The boy who is quite aware of his mother's intention, as well as himself being at fault, avoids the issue by way of diversion. Rather than responding to the question of ownership he reveals where and how it came into his possession (2). His reply indicates to the mother that her son is neither blind nor ignorant of the fact that he has misbehaved and she accepts his evasive manoeuvre as confirmation of this. By way of **interrogation** (3) she once again establishes that the boy has transgressed and that there is a specific procedure which must be followed (when finding something in school) in the situational context which he refers to. His silence (4) is accepted as recognition of shame, which satisfies the mother that her son has sufficient knowledge of "proper" conduct.

Having established that the boy is aware of having transgressed the rules of responsible behaviour and accepted norms, the mother now turns her attention to **correctional** strategies. To her rhetorical question (5) she offers her son an **optional** strategy (6) which is in compliance with accepted values and behavioural standards. The "yes" at the end accentuates its importance and forces the boy to "reveal" his expected concurrence. Making quite sure that he has not only understood but has also fully accepted what is being expected from him, the mother repeats herself (7),

thus underlining proper contextual conduct. No verbal answer is demanded of Ben, his mere nod (8) convinces his mother that she has made good use of this opportunity of drawing to his attention the good as against the evil ways of conducting his life. The clear message is that the property of others must be strictly respected and that there are clear rules which ensure this.

Much the same pattern of interaction was revealed when a little girl of five had left her coat on the floor in the hallway:

EXAMPLE 3.

(1) Mother: **"What's that on the floor? Pick it up, please."**

(2) Girl: (Goes slowly and reluctantly to pick it up.)

(3) Mother: **"How will your coat look if its left on the floor?"**

(4) Girl: (Bends down slowly to pick up the coat)

(5) Mother: **"Come on! You know that things should be put in their proper place."**

(6) Girl: (Picks up the coat)

(7) Mother: **"If you leave it on the floor it will get dirty and then how will you look?"**

(8) Girl: (still slow)

(9) Mother: **"You must take better care of your things!"**

(10) Girl: (Hangs the coat up and returns)

(11) Mother: **"What did you do wrong?"**

(12) Girl: **"I threw my coat on the floor"** (Looks "ashamed")

In this situation, the mother of the girl makes use of the same oscillation between interrogation and optional structure as Ben's mother did. The only difference is that the girl is required to give a verbal response (7) in the form of self-criticism (8) as a means of satisfying her mother that she accepts that her initial choice of behaviour was unacceptable. Neatness and order is highly valued as is respect for rules and regulations. The child had, in spite of this knowledge, shown negligence of both and had to be duly reprimanded.

In the next example the three year old girl is sitting at the kitchen table playing with some toys. A toy falls to the floor and the girl who can't reach it without getting down from her chair, stretches her hand down, whines and looks at her mother:

<u>EXAMPLE 4.</u>

(1) Mother: **"So, you want that I should pick it up for you?"**

(2) Girl: (Still stretching her hand continues to look at her mother.)

(3) Mother: **"So now we keep servants do we?"**

(4) Girl: (Retracts her hand and looks down at the table)

(5) Mother: **"We do not expect others to serve us do we?"**

(6) Girl: (Looks down and shakes her head silently)

(7) Mother: **"If help is really needed we must ask nicely for it. Not unkindly, you know that don't you?"**

(8) Girl: (Nods)

(9) Mother: **"So how do we ask?"**

(10) Girl: **"Please".**

(11) Mother: **"That's right, darling"** (Gives the child the toy)

Here, the mother first confronts the child by way of a question with the "wrong" alternative (1) whereafter she uses irony as a means of revealing the unacceptable behaviour (3) of attempting to make others satisfy her own selfish desires. The little girl, who is quite aware that her choice of conduct is not in line with contextual expectations, attempts at first to ignore her mother's intervention (2) but then due to her mother's insistent prompting demonstrates her recognition of her mother's underlying message and amends her conduct (4). The child's verification that she is quite familiar with proper sociocultural conduct, makes her mother take the next step in her correctional scheme. She now presents the child with a rhetorical question (5) which underlines non-acceptable behaviour and is satisfied with a non-verbal affirmative reply from the child (6). Convinced that the child recognizes her transgression the mother proceeds to spell-out proper contextual conduct (7).

Here the mother also attempts to verify the conduct she expects. Whereas her former comments have indicated that asking favours or help of others due to laziness or self-indulgence is objectionable, she now explains that inability or difficulty might permit a person to ask for the assistance of others but that this in turn calls for a specific course of action (7). Once again the child indicates recognition (8) whilst the mother insists upon verbal recognition (9). The child accommodates the mother's wish (10) who then shows her satisfaction by way of compliance with the child's initial request. The requisite confirmation that the child acknowledges her wrongdoing as well as her awareness of sociocultural values, concludes the **correctional** sequence of speech interactions.

In the next example the mother of a twenty three month old boy discovered that her son had "helped himself" to an apple from the fruit-bowl:

EXAMPLE 5.

(1) Mother: **"Did you ask me my dear?"**

(2) Boy: (Looks down at his feet)

(3) Mother: (Takes the apple from his hand and "offers" it to the boy saying:) **"Would you like an apple?..Yes, please!! Next time you must ask me, all right?"** (Looks questioningly at the boy)

(4) Boy: (Nods his confirmation)

(5) Mother: **"So, what do we say?"**

(6) Boy: **"Please".**

(7) Mother: **"That's better!".** (Gives the child the apple)

(8) Boy: **"Thank you".**

The mother's aim here is to ensure that her child recognizes and abides by the rule that what is not mine I may not take without permission and that the latter must be sought according to specific conventions. The mother's strategy here is first to "shame" the child by way of exposing his wrong behaviour (1). The answer to her question which is is known to both mother and child, serves here to reveal the child's transgression. That the child is aware of his wrong-doing, as well as the

content of the conduct which the mother is attempting to convey, is clear by the child's response (2). Having established that the child recognizes "the wrong way", she presents the child with "the right way" by means of presenting him with a "story" in which she plays the interactional role of both herself and her son (3). To ensure that there is no ambiguity regarding the **meaning** underpinning her "story", she decides to verbalise the latter in the form of a question (3). Her son's non-verbal affirmation (4) and further response (6) indicates to the mother that the child is aware and further reminded of proper conduct.

The same oscillation between questioning and presentation of values, is evident in the next sequence where the little boy of seven informs his mother how he had told his father to pick up a book for him in the childrens' section of the (Jewish) library. The mother uses the above mentioned strategy as a means of inculcating the importance of showing respect to ones parents.

EXAMPLE 6.

(1) Mother: **"You TOLD him? Do we tell parents what to do?"**

(2) Boy: **"No, but.."**

(3) Mother: **"You don't tell your father what to do!! That is very bad. Very bad."**

(4) Boy: (Remains silent)

(5) Mother: **"Isn't it?"** (sharp voice)

(6) Boy: **"Yes"**

(7) Mother: **"Yes what?"**

(8) Boy: **"It is very bad."**

(9) Mother: **"You may ask - but never tell your parents! Yes?"**

(10) Boy: **"Yes."**

Here the mother's oscillation between **interrogative** and **declarative** forms is doubled and she demands of her son that he participates verbally in the interaction sequence. As his mother told me later when we discussed this particular incident:

"Some things are so important if we are to succeed, like respect for parents, that we simply must be sure that they understand what we expect from them. Often I have told them these things many times already, but I still need to make sure that they understand that I will not accept any slackening".

In the next example, the mother who asks her four year old boy to bring in his cars from the rain, initially sets out to inculcate the value of preserving and not destroying that which we have been given. As will be shown, her son's response also brings about his mother's active attempt to make the child accept the importance of accepting, with gratitude, whatever G-D offers us. Here we see how the oscillation between the **interrogative** and the **declarative** form might also be multiplied to present several values within the same interactional sequence:

<u>EXAMPLE 6.</u>

(1) Mother: **"Why are your nice cars left outside in the rain?"**

(2) Boy: **"It's raining".**

(3) Mother: **"So? You get a bit of rain?"**

(4) Boy: (Still looks reluctant, is silent)

(5) Mother: **"So? You want to sit and wait for sunshine?"**

(6) Boy: **"No, but.."**

(7) Mother: **"So, we are grateful for some rain as well! Now, would you please go and pick up the cars?"**

(8) Boy: (goes towards the door)

(9) Mother: **"It is right that we should look after what we have been given. Isn't it?"**

(10) Boy: **"Yes"** (opens the door)

(11) Mother: (Smiles at boy)

The mother's question (1) is meant to underline and expose the boy's negligence and socioculturally unacceptable behaviour of being careless with what has been provided for us. The boy in response seeks his mother's acceptance that specific weather conditions bring about relief from certain responsibilities (2). But the

mother is non-accommodating (3) and wonders about her child's logic in thinking that rain brings about a respite in his duties (5). Not prepared to listen to what she considers to be unacceptable reasoning from her child (6) she informs the child that rain is not a negative condition which offers release from normal expectations, rather it is a gift to be grateful for (7). Consequently the boy, now aware of what the situation calls for (8), is still expected to take care of his toys (9).

I propose that the interactional form prevalent in these **corrective** sequences does not simply instruct in proper forms of behaviour, but also provides children with another level or dimension of **meaning.** This extra dimension of **meaning**, based upon specific indigenous beliefs, communicates to the children the contents and organization of their "inner" self. This is a critical element in the child's construction of its own self- image. Yet it is a dimension which few anthropologists have given much attention to, and one which parents in the community are, as a rule, quite unconscious of. In a community like Gateshead where moral conduct is a cultural imperative organizing much of social life, it is important for people to recognize and to "know" the source of this behaviour and to ensure continued moral life through its reproduction. In Gateshead, where the individual is the origin of all conduct, conversation with children, especially in **corrective** sequences, involves a **moral** discourse in which the outlines of the Torah value system are highlighted and where conversational structures take into account various beliefs concerning the limitations and qualities of human nature.

This is not to say that parents consciously socialize or speak to their children in specific ways with the intent of aiding them in gaining an understanding and operational expertise of their "inner", rather that the indigenous construct of **human nature**, partly predisposes and organizes interactional structures and form independent of the speaker's communicative intent. Accordingly, what a person actually and consciously wishes to communicate is also conditioned by the beliefs he/she holds regarding the communicative co-partner's various mental sub- divisions. The cultural ideas concerning the mental processes whereby people come to perceive and evaluate and/or how they may be hurt or pleased are constructs which

to some extent condition and organize verbal communication. Together, they constitute a "knowledge" which children must acquire to become competent sociocultural members.

Let us for a moment return to Clancy's (1986) work in Japan. She demonstrates how Japanese mothers direct their childrens' attention towards the feelings (DeVos 1985) of others (hito') thus not only emphasizing the importance of avoiding social disapproval, but also locating the source and locus of evaluation and emotion as existing "within" the individual. In other words, these interaction sequences between mother and child not only teach the child to conform to social expectations but also how and where these expectations arise.

Mothers in Japan teach their children the importance of indirection (which amounts to consideration of the "other's" feelings) through the pairing of indirect with direct utterances as a means to:

interpret the indirect, polite speech of others as expressing the same strong feelings and wishes as more direct utterances. (Ibid:229)

This awareness is "good" and therefore important for children to know since it enables them:

to anticipate the needs of others, so that they will not be forced to make a direct request. (ibid:233)

In this way Japanese children also become familiar with the idea that utterances reach and evoke specific elements within people, and that their use must consequently be organized according to specific rules and conventions. In Japan these communicative conventions are directed by a deep apprehension of group disapproval. In other words, the cultural imperative of social conformity calls for special attention to be given to peoples' evaluations and emotions, their sources and capacities.

In a similar fashion, children in Gateshead, where moral conduct is of the essence, must come to accept and "know" that such behaviour emanates from their "inner" self. Participating in the type of communication, described above, which combines the inculcation of conformity to social expectations with the secondary **meaning** that it is itself an autonomous entity, the child acquires the knowledge that it is not only capable of rejecting one type of conduct and projecting another, it must also carry responsibility for this selective process.

By way of constructing the understanding that behavioural choice is the outcome of the conscious self's organization of particular mental activities and that those activities precede all its actions, the child comes to know itself as a potential moral agent. Mothers' oscillation between **interrogative** and **declarative** forms shapes the child's insight into its own self and thus helps it construct the culturally specific concept of human nature. Forced to justify its actions and being presented with behavioural alternatives engenders in the child the notion that there are links between "inner" mental processes and behaviours. It is introduced to the concept that the conscious self can reflect and react upon these processes and that consequently it carries responsibility for its own actions. Consistent exposure to this interactive form prompts the child to acknowledge that actions are not arbitrary or unstructured events, but intentional strategies which have been foregone by deliberation and intent. The underlying and all-important message is that the conscious self can both experience and evaluate its own actions and that this in turn provides the human being with the capacity for self-knowledge and self-control. In short, that the "tools" which enable the child to operate as moral agents resides within and are governed by itself.

The idea that motivation and instigation of behaviour is the outcome of independent forces residing within the individual, calls for segregation of body and mind as well as thoughts and emotions. In stark contrast to this notion is that of the Ifaluk (Micronesia) who Lutz (1988) found to have no such sharp distinction between thought and emotion nor between the individual and the social. The origin of behaviour is not sought in the individual but perceived as: "**an environmental**

trigger" where the:

"most important facets of these situations, moreover, include the behaviour of other actors" (Lutz 1988, p.103).

Thus, it seems that causes of one's emotions and behaviours are, among the Ifaluk, not sought in wholly internal sources, but reside with one's fellow men. In the words of Lutz:

"The extent to which other people are sometimes seen as the ultimate source of one's own behaviour often means that the responsibility (i.e., the cause therefore occasionally the blame) for one's internal state lies with the other". (ibid p. 103).

Whether people live and communicate in Micronesia or in Gateshead their ideas and beliefs concerning human nature, its structures, capacities, limitations and obligations as well as its development, transform themselves into everyday interactions. Such interactions are a part of the everyday experience of children in Gateshead. They present the child with a wide spectrum of reasonings, motivations, beliefs and logics which jointly enable the child to construct an understanding of this level of **meaning** which underpins sociocultural routines. A vital part of the sociocultural knowledge which every child in Gateshead has to acquire, is a sensitivity to its "inner" structures. It must become familiar with the contention that it is an autonomous entity whose participation in social life, depends upon its ability to manage and organize its "inner" mental properties. In whichever way it decides to act, responsibility and initiative rest firmly with itself; the individual who is the instigator of conduct.

This competence, the very core of individualism, is one which children acquire not only through exposure to adults' conscious, concrete and objectified presentation of these mental structures and their functions, but also through participation in discourse routines which verify and make use of their existence. The objectification of the "inner" structures is presented to the child in anecdotes, stories or analogies; whilst their contextual importance and role in both outcome and quality

of conduct, is communicated and acquired intersubjectively. This is why Das (1989) claims that:

Culture is not communicated to the child in any society as commands but is, rather, embedded in a series of different contexts. (ibid. p. 273)

No adult in Gateshead is oblivious to the various aspects of human nature, neither is it a concept which is shrouded in mysticism. On the contrary, human nature is a meaningful concept which is regarded as an inescapable reality which demands specific attention and deliberation. People imply, discuss and refer to its structure and functions in a number of ways and contexts and consequently it is a vital component of the sociocultural environment surrounding the child, as this mother's remark effectively demonstrates:

"As a little girl I remember my father telling me that there are two people "inside" me. A good person, and a bad person. He said that to be a good Jew I had to let the good person dominate. Now, with my own children I use the same idea. I explain to them about the yetzorim in much the same way. I believe this makes it quite clear to them what it is that Hashem expects of them".

As does the mother who stresses that it is vital that parents take time to:

"explain to children not only <u>what</u> they must do, but <u>how</u> they must do it. It is no good just saying: "no, no and no", he must understand <u>how</u> he can say no to temptations. He must know that he should make use of his good Middos and try, always try, to avoid the snares and the will of the Yetzer hora. This is not easy, but it is possible if he really wants to do good. I tell my children that the best way to do this is to constantly look for, and collect mitzvot. That is how we can resist the influence of Yetzer hora. Often I tell my younger children that doing a mitzva is a help in building the Beis Hamikdosh (3rd Temple) **and that each of their mitzvot is a brick onto the Temple. They must be made to understand that our life on earth is the time during which we must collect our mitzvot. And that according to these - your "luggage" - you will be judged in Olam Haba** (world to come). **You must take, yourself, every opportunity you can get. You see, the mitzvot "feed" the Neshomo** (soul) **and this cannot be done in the "after world", only here. All these things the child must know, and that's what we, as parents, must teach them."**

Each new member in Gateshead must come to know that he or she is an

autonomous individual, separate and distinct from all others. It is a concept which is founded upon a coherent set of ideas which also help the person to see him/herself in relation to others and which are vital to his/her self image. Children come into this world with no such notion. Each child must itself acquire the sociocultural content and form of human nature through contact with its surrounding social world. Due to the tenacity with which mothers in the community substantiate their ideas concerning human nature to their children, both directly through concrete descriptions and indirectly through interactions, they do in fact, as Das (1989) insists:

" make a gift of self and the world to the child" (Ibid, p. 265)

Notes Chapter 7.2

1.
"Washing" here pertains to the ritual washing of hands before saying **Hamotze** which is the Brocha (benediction) before eating bread.

8.1 CONCLUDING REMARKS

Today most of Britain's provincial Jewish communities are showing persistent signs of "dying out". Communities which used to be prosperous enclaves in Britain's cities have seen recent generations leaving and are today populated by a rapidly diminishing group of older members. And yet, in the middle of all this decline, the community of Gateshead has not only grown in size but has gained the reputation as one of the world's most distinguished and revered orthodox communities. Throughout this thesis, I have emphasized its members' particular approach to life and the centrality of inter-personal ethics in regulating life within the community. In order to account for the particular sub-group position which Gateshead has acquired within the world of orthodoxy it is necessary to consider a wide range of factors. I have tried to uncover the historical, economic, philosophical and religious circumstances which jointly have transformed this **baalei batim** (laymen) community into one of **talmidei chochomim** (scholars). I have also tried to trace the connections between their recent concern with inter-personal ethics and the historically variable and complex set of ideas and beliefs which underpin peoples' understanding of human nature.

My assumption in conducting the research presented in this thesis has been that the consensus and degree of conformity to rules of inter-personal ethics existing in Gateshead cannot simply be explained in terms of religious decrees or philosophical strategies. The analyst must consider the ways in which the religious decrees imbue in people the notion of intent and the inclination to behave as socioculturally prescribed. I contend that their eagerness and level of success in treating one another with "loving-care" is also a reflection of an increased awareness of the functions and limitations of their "inner" self. Concern with introspection has caused people to define and thus make it possible for people to "think about" and consider the various "inner" processes that instigate behaviour. People are able to see themselves and thus operate as moral agents. The notion is simply that the individual's behaviour is linked to and governed by his/her "inner" self and that

moral behaviour relies upon the proper governing of this entity. Although inherent to and underpinning peoples' reasonings and actions in various sociocultural activities and contexts, I have attempted to explain the implications of their specific understanding of human nature for indigenous educational theory and inter-ethnic interactions. In order to ivestigate how ideas of human nature affect the way in which children are reared and treated I studied the way in which children acquire an understanding of this particular sociocultural model. The latter is in fact a process that must be regarded as the reproduction of sociocultural knowledge.

Brought about by a particular combination of historical, economic and religio-philosophical circumstances, the re-negotiation of the sociocultural model of human nature has created and reproduced a particular **Gatesheady** behaviour which sets members of the community apart from members of other orthodox communities. Perhaps it is well to recapitulate some of the features which preceded this historical transformation and which I have reviewed in chapters 1, 2 and 3.

With hindsight we have come to know that Rev. D.Dryan's efforts, supported by the financial aid of some members of Sunderland's Jewish community, to open Britain's third Yeshiva in Gateshead and the choice of Rabbbi N. Landinsky as its leader, was the first step on the road to making this community a world centre for Jewish studies. The existence of such a community in a free European country became all the more important with the onset of World-War Two, when the Nazis destroyed all the European Jewish learning institutions and crushed its intellectuals and scholars. To a religion and people whose very foundation is scriptural this annihilation was a very real threat to its existence, to which the only solution seemed to be to ensure a place where higher Jewish scholars could undertake the imminent task of collecting, preserving and regenerating the knowledge otherwise lost to Judaism. Gateshead represented such a location.

When the Yeshiva was set up and later when in 1940 the Kolel was established under the leadership of Rabbi Shakovitsky, it was clear from the outset that both institutions would adhere to the **Litvishe derech** (Lithuanian tradition). This approach which features in-depth analysis of rabbinical commentaries of the Talmud became the Litvishe trade mark in the days when the **Hassidim** and their leaders claimed that the unlearned were equals of the learned in the eyes of G-D. Unlike the **Hassidim** who stressed the emotional and spiritual aspects of Judaism, the **Mitnagdim** sought to revitalize the importance and position of the Torah in the lives of the people.

The specific choice of Rabbis and scholars who were trained in the Litvishe tradition meant that Gateshead's learning institutions were from the outset committed to **Torah lishmo** or the dignifying of the act of learning itself. This approach which insists that the act of Torah study has a higher spiritual purpose, became the guiding spirit of Gateshead's learning institutions.

Until after the Second World War the practice of **Torah Lishmo** could only be carried out by a select few who had the financial backing to do so. Most men had to acquire a trade or a profession in order that they might take on the **Mitzvot** of marrying and having children. One of the effects which the holocaust and what is now known as the "ethnic cleansing" process of the Nazi era had on the world Jewry was to crystallize the ambition to ensure the continued survival of Jewish knowledge and heritage. Further fuelled by the predicament of the State of Israel, the "six day" and "Yom Kippur" wars, Jews from all over the world have engaged themselves in this common task.

The revival of **Torah lishmo** was to many orthodox Jews regarded as the most efficient solution. It was a solution which hundreds and thousands of Jews around the world have shown themselves willing to support financially. Consequently the act of **Torah lishmo** has in post-war years persistently shown itself to have capital generating side-effects which today enable thousands of both young and mature men to engage in years of full-time Torah studies. It is an

activity which is economically self- contained and which today permits the Gateshead community to educate and take on an ever increasing number of students and staff.

In post-war years the Renaissance within orthodoxy and the growing number of **Baalei Tshuva** has created an ever increasing demand for formal Jewish knowledge. Gateshead has been able to satisfy this demand by offering a concise agenda for cultural knowledge and has established learning institutions and proper funding programs for such an undertaking. The steady rise in community membership which has occurred in post-war years can therefore be claimed to have partly been caused by its reputation as a centre for transmission of formal cultural knowledge.

Apart from its highly specialized learning institutions, Gateshead is also able to offer its members yet another vital facility. Through the years, commencing as early as the mid- forties, Gateshead has built several Jewish schools in the community which enable children to gain their entire education without ever having to leave the community. These children receive their education without the pervasive influence of the society at large which is inherent in all secular schools. In this way, children in Gateshead grow up in what is regarded as an entirely "Yiddish" atmosphere. Educating boys and girls in this type of environment and holding the society at large at bay has become increasingly valued within the orthodox section of Judaism in post-war years.

It is doubtful whether the German orthodox refugees who arrived in the community just before the war and who organized the Jewish schools, realized the importance which these were to have in the future of the community. But undeniably the existence of a complete Jewish education system from kindergarden to university has played a vital role in attracting large numbers of families to Gateshead. In the words of a Baal Tshuva:

"Gateshead is so special because here everyone has the same standards and here all

our needs are taken care of from the cradle to the grave."

An overarching conclusion which can be drawn concerning the post- war development of the community is that it has created for itself a socioeconomic niche which releases it from the constraints inherent in the structure of the general economy and that its present existence is intimately tied to within-ethnic group requirements.

As described in chapter 4 Gateshead has also, in addition to offering an academic level which has awarded the community the reputation of being **the** Jewish University town of Europe, distinguished itself and gained a particular sub-group position within the world of Jewry based upon their collective adherence to a specific philosophy and approach to life. Although this position is intimately tied to the learning institutions' active involvement with the ancient tradition of **Mussar,** it is the community members' collective, earnest and whole-hearted commitment to this traditional Jewish philosophy which has awarded the community with its status as a distinguished Torah community. Further, as reported in chapter 4, Mussar is an interest which has intensified peoples' ethnic identity and their desire to keep the society at large at bay.

My own interest has been to come to grips with the sociocultural model of human nature as the vehicle for moral conduct. The results of my investigations of this specific model as it exists in Gateshead today is reported in chapter 5. I suggest that the extent and consensus to which people have become committed to the highest standards of inter-personal ethics in Gateshead implies that we need to consider how **Mussar** has affected the common- sense understandings that people have of the world around them. More specifically, I have argued that the cultural imperative which ethics have been provided with, is partly a reflection of peoples' increased awareness of their "inner" self, or the concept of human nature.

The overall assumption has been that the inter-personal changes which have occurred in the community in recent years cannot simply be explained in terms of

peoples' pre-occupation with ethics or **Mussar** per se, but must also consider the specific effects which this religious philosophy has had on peoples' cultural models perceived as the cognitive schemas which are intersubjectively shared among members of the community. Like D'Andrade (1987) I understand these cognitive schemas as consisting:

of a small number of conceptual objects and their relations to each other. (Ibid. p. 112)

As constituent of cultural models such cognitive schemas may be part of and underpin various other cultural models. Although this permits scope for much individual differentiation, competent members of any culture must have a basic knowledge of at least those cultural models which are widely incorporated into other models. One such widely incorporated cultural model which is an intrinsic part of various other models is the construct of human nature.

This is a culture specific model which underpins peoples' interpretations of, and governs their actions, in a number of social activities and has in particular, as I have reported in chapter 6, bearing upon the activities of child rearing and inter-ethnic relations.

Cultural models of this latter kind are intersubjectively shared by all competent members of a given group and need not be made explicit when people deal with each other. . People make their common interpretation and interact out of "obvious" but frequently unpronounced assumptions of the world around them. How then has the introduction of and the concern with **Mussar** affected peoples' sociocultural activities?

Considering such questions means investigating a cognitive construct of which people commonly have, if at all, a very vague awareness. They are, as I have shown in chapter 5 and 6, largely unable to provide comprehensive or detailed descriptions

of the model. They do on the other hand show considerable proficiency in their daily use and practice of this construct. The outcome of a particular interest in inter-personal ethics in Gateshead has been that people in the community have had to renegotiate and gain an increased awareness concerning the composition and functions of their own "inner" self. They have, in other words, made explicit if not all then parts of ther intersubjectively shared ideas concerning human nature. By way of objectifying this cultural model and providing it with a conscious validity people have geared their consciousness towards seeing themselves as capable of and responsible for generating moral conduct. In other words, **Mussar** has, with its insistence on introspection, helped people in Gateshead to selectively articulate the concept of human nature. This concept is one which deals with the self as being the locus of personal and individual responsibility. The individual possesses the means to instigate moral conduct. In the capacity of audience to and being able to govern its own performance the self is perceived as a distinct and intrinsically private sphere residing within and only controllable and accessible to the individual. It is a self-image which regards, as explained in the final part of chapter 6, the conscious self as capable of experiencing and evaluating its own actions and which in turn provides the person with the capacity for self-control and self-knowledge. This is the capacity which **Mussar** takes into account in that it is a philosophy which stresses the need to recognize and effectively curb particular undesirable elements of one's "inner" self.

Having first been established as an activity and particular element in the community's higher learning institutions and predominantly undertaken by men, the pre-occupation with inter- personal ethics has in post-war years increasingly become inherent in both male and female behaviour. In the words of one of the men in the community:

"Of course women must know about ethics! How else can the mother correctly carry out her duty of educating our sons and daughters into becoming a Ben or Bas Torah (son or daughters of Torah)? And how, without proper ethics, can she provide a good environment for their development?

Living as conscientious moral agents demands that all members of the community understand and "know" the "inner" process which generates moral and ethical conduct. The individual, who is expected to govern his/her "inner" self in ways which pre-empt undesirable but instigate "good" conduct, must "know" how to satisfy this cultural imperative. Whereas the understanding of human nature used to be merely:

> **a well-learned set of procedures** (which) **one knows how to carry out rather than a body of fact one can recount.** (D'Andrade 1987 p.114)

its content and **meaning** is no longer an obscure "knowledge" but a relatively well-defined concept and an intrinsic part of peoples' reality. It is a reality which depicts human nature as having precise functions, limitations and specific potentials. This increased awareness which I study in chapter 7, produces states of moral consciousness and creates what Parish (1989. p.314) calls **moral knowing.** It is this awareness and not simply philosophical insight, which helps the individual to see and conduct him/herself as a moral being capable of creating moral conduct.

Inherent also in the concept of human nature is that it provides "knowledge" of how to treat a person as he/she passes through the various stages of his/her life span. Beliefs of development pace and maturation of capacities is inherent in the concept and thus governs the treatment of children (as well as elders). Not suprisingly, the indigenous educational theory prevailing in Gateshead and presented in chapter 6, are consistent with their understandings of the characteristics and development of human nature. Indeed, indigenous educational theory is an example of how certain cultural models are applicable to and part of other cultural models. Re- phrased, the cultural model of human nature is incorporated into the model of how to go about the task of making the child into a competent social member. The implications of child rearing practices in Gateshead are that people do not randomly chose their educational theory but that these are highly structured strategies founded upon their specific ideas concerning human nature. Like parents everywhere, adults in Gateshead reproduce themselves and their ideas about

themselves in child rearing practices which are underpinned by what they "know" about human nature.

Another change that has gained momentum in Gateshead is an increasing desire to isolate the community from the surrounding society at large. My inquiry which are reported in the first part of chapter 6, would suggest that this is a change which also requires that we consider certain aspects of the re-negotiated concept of human nature. The reasoning underpinning the isolationistic ethnic behaviour in Gateshead is in fact in line with those prevailing in indigenous educational theory. Inherent in the model of human nature as it exists in Gateshead is the inability of the conscious self to fend off undesirable external stimuli thus jeorpardizing the intent of moral conduct. The latter understanding is one which has bearings upon inter-ethnic relations. As the conscious self is unable to discriminate or ignore the external stimuli, the environment which the person is exposed to must be modified. Since the society at large is regarded as in many ways contaminating it is a source of stimuli which must be dealt with in a selective and cautious manner.

It deserves to be pointed out that although indigenous educational theories are indirectly aimed at the development of the child's "inner" self, the ultimate and conscious aim of the process of rearing is to make he/she into a competent member of society. In other words, to make the child subscribe to the attitudes and values which the group seeks to engender. My argument is that children must, in the process of becoming competent sociocultural members, also acquire an understanding of their "inner" self. I have therefore investigated how the process of child rearing represents society with an opportunity to reproduce this "knowledge" and of ensuring future compliance with specific forms of behaviour, as described in chapter 7. Without this "knowledge", intersubjectively shared by all the members of the group, the child is unable to act and see itself as a moral agent. The time and effort which parents invest in rearing their children into moral agents is indicative of the importance which inter-personal ethics have been given in the community. Children must not only be taught how to behave for their own sakes but also for the sake of society. That which is deemed essential is also high up on

the list of peoples' rearing agenda. My contention is that without being able to reproduce this intersubjectively shared "knowledge", the community could not have sustained its concern and adherence to inter-personal ethics nor could it have achieved its present segregational policy.

As a component in a large and complex sociocultural knowledge repetoire, the understanding of the functions, limitations and potentials of their own "inner" self enables children to undertake the expected obligation of being and behaving as a moral agent. The basic expectation of children in Gateshead is that they will come to understand that they have the choice in terms of their conduct and that they themselves carry the responsibility for behavioural outcome.

Care-givers in Gateshead provide children with an image of their "inner" self in various ways. It is presented to the children in the narrative and in direct discriptions, but even more pervasive and certainly more persistent, is the way in which this image underpins and is constitutive of how people talk to children as I show in in the second part of chapter 7.

Although not always pronounced, ideas and beliefs concerning the sociocultural construct of human nature are revealed in underlying **meanings** which, apart from helping to create meaningful interactions, present the child with its self-image. I have therefore investigated how children are drawn into conversations and treated, from an early age, as communicative partners. I have in the second part of chapter 7 described how this allows children to gain an insight into and provides them with the opportunity of constructing an understanding of the world they live in. An implicit but vital component of this understanding is the cultural model of human nature. Underpinning particular types of interactions, the cultural model of human nature is presented to the child though its active involvement in interaction sequences. In this process the child itself plays an active part since its own and particular actions have a profound impact on the interactive sequence.

In Gateshead adults "know" and children come to realize that they are moral beings

and therefore equipped with the "tools" required to live according to the Covenant. G-D has not only provided man with a task he has also in His wisdom and love created man with a **Yetzer Hora** and a **Yetzer HaTov.** Moral conduct, it is believed, relies upon man's rejection of the former and enhancement of the latter. Hence it is a process governed by man himself. These are beliefs which are vital to peoples' relationships and have historically demonstrated a high level of plasticity as well as ability to generate local response to change. As I understand it, the model of human nature is widely incorporated into the sociocultural communalities which are intersubjectively shared and which unite people in Gateshead. I believe that intersubjective sharing is inherent in ethnicity and does as such deserve consideration by those anthropologists who are concerned with ethnicity and community life.

By way of examining the subtlety and complexity of human nature and its organization of mental life in Gateshead I have come to learn that people in Gateshead have taken on the full responsibility of their acquired awareness that they themselves are moral agents. Their lives are reflections of this conscious knowledge and the community is a remarkable proof and support of their conviction that the well-being of society depends upon the activities of the individual.

GLOSSARY

Aliya = A spiritual striving striving "upwards".

Alrightnicks = Materialist who lacks modesty, sensitivity or "Edelkeit" (sensitive, refined or modest qualities).

Amei Haaretzim = Jews who are unknowledgeable and uneducated in Jewsih law.

Asres HaDibros = Ten Commandments.

Baal Tshuva = (Someone who repents) One who returns to faith.

Baalei Batim = Laymen.

Bar Mitzva = (Lit. son of the Commandments) When a boy reaches the age of thirteen he is duty bound to to observe all the Mitzvot (Commandments) as an adult.

Bas Mitzva = (Lit. daughter of the Commandments) Same as above but the girl is twelve when she takes on this obligation.

Bas Torah = Daugter of Torah.

Bayeshon = One who is shy, bashful and who has qualities of being considerate and respectful towards his fellow man.

Beis Yaakov = (Lit. House of Jacob from Exodus 19:3. House of Jacob i.e. women and children or sons of Israel men) Seminars for Jewish girls.

Ben Torah = Son of Torah. It denotes to a young man who both studies Torah and who lives his life according to its precepts.

Benching = Grace after meal.

Brocha = Blessing before eating.

Bochur = (Plur. bochurim) Yeshiva student.

Chavrusa = A partner system when studying the Talmud.

Cheder = The elementary religious school for boys.

Chilul Hashem = (in this context means) Profaining the name of G-D.

Chinuch = Jewish education or upbringing.

Da'as Torah = Torah perspective.

Daven = Pray.

Derech = Approach or tradition.

Derech HaTorah = The way of the Torah.

Eitzoh = Advice.

Frum = A religious, observant and pious Jew.

Frumkeit = the state of being "frum".

Gomlei Chasodim = Benevolent.

Goy = (plur. Goyim) Commonly refers to a non-Jew.

Guf = Physical part of the body.

Halacha = (Halachic adj.) Generic term for the whole legal system of Judaism.

Har Sinai = Mount Sinai.

Hashem = G-D.

Hassidim = Are the followers of the Chasidic Philosophy and way of life which was founded in the seventeenth century by Israel Baal Shem Tov..

Haskalah = Is the name of Enlightenment in Hebrew.

Haskofah = Religious outlook on life

Kashrut = The maintenance of Jewsih dietary laws, the state of being Kosher.

Kiddush Hashem = For the sanctification of G-D's name.

Kolel = A post-graduate institution for Talmudic study.

Kosher = religiously permissible (according to rules of Kashrut).

Learnen = The Anglicized term for the word Yiddish verb of "lernen" refering to the time spent in religious studies.

Litvishe derech = Lithuanian tradition.

Loshn Hora = (Lit. evil talk) Gossip.

Masgiach = The supervisor of the Yeshiva.

Maskilim = The followers of the Haskalah movement.

Mezuza = A little oblong container that is affixed on the right on the front door jamb.

Middos = (Sing. Middah, meaning "measure") Personality or character traits.

Middah Tovos = Good personality potentials.

Mikveh = A ritual bath.

Mitnagdim = opposers of the Hassidic movement.

Mitzva = (plural Mitzvot) Commandment.

Mussar = exhortation towards higher levels of ethical and moral behaviour.

Mussar Stiblech = Moral gathering places.

Mussar shmuessen = A talk to achieve spiritual uplifting.

Neshomo = Soul.

Pasken = Give a ruling on religious law or practice.

Peyos = The long earlocks worn by male orthodox Jews.

Pilpul = Dialectics.

Pshat = The method of explaining the Torah and Talmud according to the straightforward meaning inherent in the text.

Rachamonim = Compassionate.

Rebbe = Teacher, the title given to a learned man. Usually a Hassidic leader.

Roshei Yeshiva = Head of the Yeshiva.

Schleymous = Perfection in every way (through good Middos and observance of Mitzvot).

Sem = Seminar for Jewish girls.

Shabbos = Sabbath.

Shaalo = A question or request for advice on a religious matter.

Sheitel = Wig worn by married orthodox women.

Shiur = (Plur. Shiurim) a lecture or a Talmud class.

Shkotsim =Generally refers to aggressive looking non-Jewish youth.

Shtender = A wooden lectern to put books on when learning.

Shtetl = A Jewish village or small town in Eastern Europe.

Shtibl = A small house or room where men meet to pray and engage in religious studies and discussions.

Shochet = An authorized slaughterer of animals, according to halachic requirements.

Shomer Shabbos = Means that someone adhers strictly to all the rules (Mitzvot) connected to the Sabbath. Being "shomer shabbos" has also become a religious yardstick and therefore pertains to a person's degree of religiosity and commitment to the halachic Laws.

Shomer Shabbos community = A community where the level of religiosity and commitment to halachic laws is generally high among the community's members.

Shul = Synagogue.

Shulcan Aruch = (Lit. The set table) is the title of the great compendium of Halacha compiled by Rabbi Joseph Caro.

Sifrei Kodesh = Books of sacred literature.

Sukka = A booth where during the festivals of Sukkoth (Tabernacles) people sit and have their meals.

Tachlis = (Hebr.) purpose.

Talmud = The codified oral law, together its rabbinic analysis and commentary.

Talmidei chachomim = Talmudic scholars.

Tehilim = Psalms.

Torah Lishmo = Learning Torah for its own sake.

Trefa = unkosher.

Tzadic = A most righteous or saintly man (can also mean a Hassidic Rebbe).

Tzedakah = charity.

Tzitzis = The ritually knottet fringes at the four corners of a garment worn under the shirt by male orthodox Jews.

Tznius = Modesty.

Yarmulk = Skullcap worn by male orthodox Jews.

Yeshiva = An academy of higher or advanced Jewsih learning.

Yetzer = (Plur. Yetzorim) Inclinations.

Yetzer HaTov = good inclination.

Yetzer Hora = Evil inclination.

Yiddishkeit = Jewishness.

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