

מבשר

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कद्दीश ले. जे. एम. बेन्जामीन

शवुओथ

Orthodox Rabbi's Visit to India

Rabbi Dr. Louis J. Lehrfield and Mrs. Lehrfield will arrive in Bombay from Delhi on April 18, 1961. Dr. Lehrfield is a distinguished Rabbi and spiritual leader of the Austin Jewish Community Center, Chicago, Illinois.

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is a regulation that men wearing yarmulkas are not 'called up'. There was only one Cohen present - 20 year old David Altshul, an Oxford University student home for Pesach, and the son of a member of the Synagogue. He was wearing a yarmulka of microscopic proportions and thus came within the 'calling up' ban. The honour of the first aliya was given to a *Levi*.

Floral tributes to the dead

Our lady correspondent has also referred to the custom of covering the graves of relatives with flowers. In this context we must emphatically point out *"that every

* Judaism as Creed and Life

form of luxury, resplendent coffins, robes for the dead other than the traditional white shrouds, all floral tributes are interdicted to Jews".

As regards floral wreaths sent by non-Jews, we regret our inability to state explicitly whether these should be retained so as not to offend the feelings of our non-Jewish circle of friends, or returned with thanks.

Horse's Hoof-prints

In her third and last question our lady reader invites our attention to an article by Mr. Judy Webber in the Jewish Chronicle of November 11, 1960 wherein he refers to a stone floor deeply marked by a horse's hoof



Dr. (Miss) Shantabai Bamnolkar, President Beth El Synagogue, Panvel, and Mrs. F. B. Samuel, B.A. M.Ed., Head Mistress, Sir Elly Kadoorie School, are seen garlanding Rabbi Norman Lamm at the welcome accorded to him by the community.

said to be the horse of Prophet Elijah in ancient Isfahan, once the capital of Persia. She compares it with similar belief among the Bene Israels of Prophet Eijah's horse's hoof in a village called Khandala, about three miles from Alibag on the West coast of Bombay, and enquires if, in this modern age, we should persist in these beliefs.

We shall refrain from passing judgment on the authenticity or otherwise of these stories. We shall venture to point out, however, that where the origin of a belief or custom has been forgotten, the Jewish folklorists endeavoured to find some hint or reference to them in the Holy Writ, and thus establish an association of the legend with some tale or hero in Judaism. Though the superstitious beliefs belonging to the domain of Folklore are still prevalent among the Jewish masses, they have never been accepted by official Judaism. Superstition is older than religion, just as the worship of idols is older than the worship of God. But though the religion has triumphed, it does not necessarily mean that superstition has suffered a crushing defeat. Every religion is full of pagan beliefs and practices, and though superstition has, to a certain extent, been relegated to the background, it has not been eliminated. It prevails everywhere and its sway is unlimited. We must exert every effort, through Torah education, to do away with superstition, and worship God in the true way of Judaism.

Bouquets and Brickbats

In the letters addressed to us regarding the "Mebasser", some of our readers have sent five-page treatises, while others have limited their comment to just five lines. Some consider it "magnificent" and "fine", some consider it otherwise. Rabbi Norman Lamm and Mr. S. M. Benjamin, Solicitor, orally warned us that even though our remarks may be correct, we should nevertheless practice restraint in our expression. Our valued reader Mr. B. J. Israel, M.A., feels that our "notes seem more biting than they need have been", while our friend Mr. S. I. Solomon, B.A., LL.B. criticised us for having developed a knack for making enemies. We shall not quarrel with our well-intentioned readers and friends about their honest expression of opinions. In fact we are grateful to them for having expressed their sincere reaction, and plead guilty to all the charges levelled by them against us. All we shall say in our defence is that the "Mebasser" never did, nor ever shall, *initiate* an attack. It merely acted, and will act in future, with vigour only when attempts are made to spread false propaganda about the objects of the U. O. J. C. I., and more especially about some of its office-bearers. We solemnly affirm that, if left to ourselves, our future issues will contain nothing but articles and discussions on religious topics as they affect our community.

