



Caspari Center

for Biblical and Jewish Studies

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We apologize for the late delivery of this "Clippings" item. The material during the first weeks of the month November was scarce and we waited for more. The promised information about the newspaper quoted has not yet arrived to us, and therefore some articles are followed by a description of the paper from which it has been taken to help to understand the tendencies expressed in the article and the possible misrepresentations. Concerning possible copyrights problems: the articles have been edited and condensed quite strongly, except the 19.10 Mishpachah article and 10.11 Kol ha-Ir (Jerusalem, weekly).

Due to other reasons we had an additional delay at the Caspari Center in handling the clippings.

We therefore offer you a 20% reduction on the price on next years clippings (summer 1996-97) as a compensation.

Yours sincerely

Torkild Masvie
Director.

19/10/95, Mishpachah (weekly, Jerusalem)
 EXPOSURE: MISSIONARY MATERIAL DISTRIBUTED HERE!
 By David Me'iri

For approximately six months, missionary material has been distributed in central Jerusalem. Severe confrontations between activists from "Lev le'Achim" and the missionaries have occurred during this period.

Hadashot Mishpachah started researching the subject as a result of information from a young secular boy who barely escaped the missionaries' attempts to convert him. The boy said that the Messianic sect "King of Kings" in the Rehavia neighborhood of Jerusalem was responsible for the distribution of destructive materials in the city.

The sect prints the missionary material in the "Greetings from Jerusalem" print shop in Mevaseret Zion. The print shop is attached to the house of Barry Segal, the president of the sect, at HaShoshanim 9, Mevaseret.

A complaint from a tourist indicated that a certain Judaica shop sells and distributes missionary material under the guise of a shop for religious articles. The tourist said that he wanted to buy an Old Testament Bible, and after he had bought it he was surprised to find a New Testament in his hands. It is no coincidence that the name of the shop is "Greetings from Jerusalem"!

The shop is managed by Batya Segal, daughter of the president of the "King of Kings" sect. Inside the shop, located at Keren haYesod 19 in Jerusalem, there exists an office for the distribution of missionary material. "At the moment the episode is only in its beginning, and of course this serious episode, as disclosed in these pages, will raise echoes and many reactions."

The reaction of the salespeople in the shop speaks for itself. When asked if they belong to the "King of Kings" sect, they replied "No, we do not belong to the "King of Kings" sect. We belong to the Messianic Jews. Do you want to join?" (The "Messianic Jews" are an additional missionary sect and there is no real difference between them and the "King of Kings" sect. D.M.)

There are clearly grounds to suspect that there are additional shops in the city belonging to missionaries. Hadashot Mishpachah is at the moment nearly finished conducting a study on the subject, the results of which will be published soon.

Photos:

Apparently, an innocent souvenir shop. In fact, a distribution station for missionary material.

The offices are guarded by a security company.

The offices of the missionary sect "King of Kings" on Ben Maimon St. in the Rehavia quarter of Jerusalem.

Ultra Orthodox newspaper with a strong anti-Messianic attitude.

[Note: There are some mistakes in the article. The "King of Kings" sect is actually the "King of Kings" congregation. Batya Segal is Barry Segal's wife, not his daughter, and Barry

is not the leader of the "King of Kings" congregation. The whole article seems to have some provocative purpose, which can be seen from the fact that all the addresses are given, and also a photograph of the security system from the outside. (The store has since been broken into.) The passage quoted literally from the article in the 6th paragraph is especially worth noting. The bracketed text in the 8th paragraph is the reporter's own comment.]

27/10/95 Yom le-Yom (weekly, Jerusalem)
 REPRESENTATIVES OF SHAS IN ASHDOD WORK AGAINST THE MISSION
 By Yitzhak Kenan

Representatives of Shas in Ashdod, led by the chairman of their faction in the city council, Rabbi Ovadiah Dahan, are working against increased missionary activity in their town. Rabbi Dahan demanded that the municipality of Ashdod act against the missionaries and close the local church. Rabbi Asher Levi, a city councilman from the Shasag party, joined in this appeal.

Last week, three members of the "Jehovah's Witness" sect were distributing missionary material in an ultra orthodox area, when they were photographed by some Yeshiva students. They promptly fled from the area. About ten members of the same sect have also been distributing propaganda material all over the town.

Ultra Orthodox newspaper with a strong anti-Messianic attitude.

27/10/95 Yom le-Yom (weekly, Jerusalem)
 A MISSIONARY CENTER FOR NON-JEWISH WORSHIP WILL BE ESTABLISHED
 ON MT. CARMEL WITH A 5 MILLION DOLLAR INVESTMENT

A new center for non-Jewish worship, "The Carmel Congregation", will be established in Haifa by an American missionary organization, with an investment of 5 million dollars.

Rabbi Zvi Cohen, the head of Yad le'Achim's anti-missionary dept., said that contractor Mike Hirsch and Philip Bain are involved in the 800 seat project.

In an interview with a missionary newspaper in Gettysburg, Bain said that the project is the realization of a lifelong desire as "a Messianic Jew and a professional architect." The information about the building of this center has raised an emotional storm. The staff of Yad le'Achim in Haifa stated that they would take all possible legal and judicial steps to stop the project, and have even decided to alarm world Jewry to this end.

Ultra Orthodox newspaper with a strong anti-Messianic attitude.

2/11/95, HaShavua (weekly, Bnei Brak)
THE MOST ANTI RELIGIOUS BUDGET: AN INCREASE OF 37 MILLION TO
CHRISTIANS, ONE MILLION TO THE ULTRA ORTHODOX

In the budget presented this week, 'recognized unofficial education' (private schools, most of which are Christian or secular) received a budgetary increase from 50 to 87 million for 21,000 pupils.

In contrast, Talmud Torahs and other religious schools, whose student population increased from 21,000 to 25,000 in the last two years, received a 1 million Shekel increase only. This in spite of repeated solemn promises from the Prime Minister, the* Minister of Finance, and other government officials.

When approached by representatives of the Ultra orthodox community, these governmental leaders answered that they would "attend to the matter."

Ultra Orthodox paper with a strong anti-Messianic bias.

12/11/95, Ha'Aretz

A FESTIVAL OF LITURGICAL MUSIC FROM THE THREE RELIGIONS WILL
BE HELD IN JERUSALEM IN DECEMBER

A liturgical music festival will be held from 21/12 - 6/1 in connection with Jerusalem's 3,000 anniversary, in which Jewish, Christian and Moslem religious music will be performed.

In the section for Christian music, which is the largest one, The Jerusalem Symphony Orchestra will play four compositions: "Repentant David" by Mozart, "Judah Maccabee" by Handel, The Requiem by Verdi, and the Christmas Oratory by Bach. Other groups, both Israeli and foreign (from Vilna and Spain, for example) will also perform.

In the Jewish section there will be a choir conducted by Avner Iti, a concert of cantoral music with cantors Binyamin Miller and Ya'akov Motzan, and an evening of the songs of Shlomo Carlebach.

The Muslim section includes the "Alul Trio", which will perform prayers and ethnic music in Hebrew, Arabic and Ladino, and a Turkish Muslim group playing Turkish, Caucasian, and Afghan adaptations of the Muslim Prayer. At the conclusion of the festival, groups from the three sections will perform together. The concerts will be held in the Jerusalem Theater, The International Convention Hall, Chen Theater, and various churches.

One of the best daily newspapers, politically and religiously neutral.

10.11.1995, Kol ha-'Ir (Jerusalem, weekly)

THE STATE OF THE HALACHAH IS ALREADY HERE

By Michal Spharad

The judge angrily threw away the New Testament and decided unhesitatingly, in spite of the recommendations of the welfare officials, that the three children would stay in the custody of the mentally ill father, and would not grow up in the house of the mother, a Messianic Jew. This happened a few days ago here, in the Rabbinical law court of the city. The one who seeks the origins of Halachic decisions that led to Rabin's murder does not need to go far.

The wrath of the judges in the Rabbinical law court was kindled when the New Testament was placed in front of them as an evidence. "Is it," inquired the judge Mattatياهو Sharim in a threatening tone, "is it true that you believe in this book?" "Yes," answered Ruth (fictitious name) dryly, as if this would have been just one more question among the many in the trial about the custody of her children. And Sharim, his face reddening, snatched the book with his hands, threw it over the table on the side of the judges' stand, and pierced the hall with the shout: "This should be burned!"

Last Thursday, two weeks after the trial, the advocate Ron Weinstock called Ruth and told her that the law court had decided to transfer the three children to the custody of their father. The presiding judge Sharim and the judges David Atia and Avraham Klab rejected the unequivocal recommendation of the two welfare officials to leave the children to the mother. Neither did they attach any great importance to the fact that the father has been diagnosed ill with a psychiatric disease causing violence, and were not impressed by the fact that he has beaten Ruth for years. Even the request of the children themselves to remain with the mother was not expressed in the verdict of the court. "Concerning her faith, the mother belongs to the Christian sect, and she is trying to influence the children to go in her way," the judges argued laconically.

The case is an individual one, but the implications affect many. According to the law, the judges are demanded to give the judgment in accordance with "the welfare of the child," but from this story it is possible to learn that in the system of the Rabbinical law court the welfare of the

child is always congruous with the degree of closeness of one of the parents to religion (Jewish, of course), whatever his condition otherwise.

In Ruth's case, for example, in order to base the claim that the welfare of the child is first of all to keep him at a distance from foreign religious influences, the Rabbis were compelled to enlist somewhat strange assumptions. "As is known, a state like this (in which the children are brought up in Christianity; M.S.) causes continuous conflicts which influence their mental health adversely," it was claimed in the decision of the court. In the continuation it was also written, in the same axiomatic tone, that this mental problem is more serious in girls than in boys.

Ruth lost her children to her husband because she admitted that she belongs to the Messianic Jews. According to the same principle the Rabbinical law courts would be likely to grant precedence to a parent who keeps the commandments over a secular parent. In principle, it is possible to appeal to the Great Rabbinical Law Court against the decision, and after that to the High Court of Justice, but as long as the authority to judge in claims of guardianship is given to the Rabbinical law courts, any interference with their reasoning is limited. The Rabbinical law court possesses its authority in two cases: when the two sides voluntarily prefer it to the district law court, or when one of them (usually the husband, because of the Halachic inclination to his favor) connects the subject of the children to the claim of divorce.

The father is not capable of functioning

Ruth, 45, was born in a village near Helsinki in Finland. During a trip to Europe she met a half-Jewish family in Paris, and through them became acquainted with the Jewish congregation in France, fell in love with Judaism and decided to visit Israel. In 1978 she came to Israel with the intention of staying here for a year, but then she met her husband, and the love blossomed. Ruth was converted by the then Chief Rabbi, Shlomo Goren, and even became religious, and in 1980 she got married and received Israeli citizenship. To them were born a son and two daughters.

The problems started when Ruth's husband returned from the War of Lebanon with the symptoms of paranoid schizophrenia: anxieties, frequent changes in the mood and outbursts of physical and verbal violence. Between his hospitalizations he used, according to Ruth's claim, to beat her, and some years ago she was even forced to flee for two weeks to a hostel for beaten women in Rehov Ge'ulah. In their crowded two-room flat there was permanent tension. Ruth, working at nights as a caregiver in the invalid ward in an old-age home, earns little more than the minimum wages, and her husband gets provision from the Ministry of Defence. Approximately five years ago she met some people who were members of the congregation of Messianic Jews, and, influenced by them, she joined the congregation.

In January this year Ruth's husband lodged, through his lawyer, advo-

cate Roni Bar-On, a claim of divorce and a petition for the guardianship of the children. The divorce passed without problems, and a week after the lodging of the claim the two were divorced. Concerning the claim for the custody of the children it was decided to ask a report of the Welfare from the Relief Department of the Municipality.

In the end of July the two welfare officials submitted their conclusion to the Rabbinical law court. Concerning the father, they determined that "he is not able to function as a parent in an one-parent family framework". The officials pointed out that all the three children had expressed their wish to stay with their mother if the parents would cease living together. Concerning Ruth, it was determined in the report: "The mother is more capable than the father to take care of the children. The mother is more balanced in her relation to the needs of the children, and capable of empathy towards their wishes and distresses. It is she who initiates and keeps the connection with the educational frameworks and with care-taking factors."

The officials even took the trouble to point out that the children do not know what Messianic Jews are, and that Ruth does not take them with her to the activities of the congregation. It seems that they were anxious to add this comment in awareness of the weaknesses of the body that ordered the report, and not as a pure social parameter. The children, it was recommended in the report, must remain with the mother.

I am not sorry for having told the truth

On 18th of October the sides presented themselves for a trial in the Rabbinical law court. On the face of it, the report was bound to close the dispute for the benefit of the mother, because a judicial decision contradicting an unequivocal recommendation of the relief officials is most rare. The lawyer of the father, advocate Roni Bar-On, opened and announced that it was his wish to present some books as an evidence to the law court. He took from his bag a copy of the New Testament and some other Christian books, laid them down in front of the judges and said: "What kind of relief officials do we have? They send Jewish children to forced conversion." The advocate Bar-On confirmed this week that he indeed had expressed himself that way, and added that he is proud of the words.

The advocate Weinstock requested that Ruth be given possibility to respond to the claims concerning her faith, and added: "There are good Jews who believe that the Messiah is the Lubavitscher, there are Jews who do not believe in the existence of the Messiah at all, and there are those who see in Uri Malmilian Messiah (a sarcasm to Bar-On who was the chairman of Beitar; M.S.) From any one of them the children are not taken away because of their faith."

Rabbi Sharim turned to Ruth and asked if she believes in the New Testament. Ruth, contrary to the advice of her friends and intimates, did not lie but answered in the affirmative. At that moment the honorable judicial mask fell from Sharim's face, and the hall of the law court turned into a wrestling arena. Sharim grasped the New Testament, and shouting, "This book should be burned," he threw it away forcefully. Weinstock demanded Sharim to disqualify himself from judging the case, but Sharim rejected the suggestion with disrespect and reproached Weinstock: "How are you at all able to represent matters like these?!" Ruth wanted to say something about her faith, but the judges refused.

Bar-On on his part continued his argument and called up to the stand of the witnesses Ze'ev Schtiglitz, an expert from the organization Lev le-achim, who talked about the missionary doctrine of the Messianic Jews. When the expert concluded his talk, Weinstock requested the judges to allow Ruth to relate to his words, but Sharim rejected his request and said: "There is no need. She already said that she believes in the New Testament."

"What I wanted to say," said Ruth this week to "Kol ha-'Ir," "is that I feel like a Jew in every respect. True, I believe in Jesus, the Messiah, and in the New Testament, but I did not by this cease to be Jewish."

Are you sorry about having told the truth?

No. I cannot lie. I did not come to Israel and I did not convert to Judaism in order to lie now.

She does not yet believe that her children would be taken from her. From her point of view the question is only about some forms to be filled out. "What, that the police would take them by force?" she laughs. "There is no chance. The children do not want. What would they do? Carry them off on their arms?"

In the legal verdict it was in addition decided that because the father is not able to raise the children by himself, he is obliged to send them to a boarding school. The law court appointed Schtiglitz as responsible for arranging the boarding school framework. In addition, the law court decided to remove Ruth from her home, because it belongs to her husband.

Last Sunday Weinstock lodged a request to hold up the proceedings for the purpose of lodging an appeal. The law court demonstrated this time exceptional efficiency and rejected the request already the next day. Also the request to disqualify the composition [of the judges] was rejected. Weinstock lodged an appeal to the Rabbinical Great Law Court, and at the same time pleaded to the High Court of Justice with an additional petition to delay the actions. The Rabbinical Great Law Court rejected his petition, while the High Court of Justice granted to Ruth an interim

order for the holding up of the proceedings until the final decision. Weinstock also demanded in a sharp letter to the Minister of Religious Affairs, Shim'on Shtarit, an urgent investigation concerning Sharim's behavior. "If I would see a man who would behave like this towards the Bible/Old Testament," he wrote, "I would immediately declare him guilty of antisemitism." It was not possible to get hold of Shtarit's response for more than a week. By the way, after the legal verdict was given, Ruth was thrown out of her home twice by her ex-husband, and was forced to stay the night at friends.

Pages from the protocol disappeared

The trials of the Rabbinical Law Court are closed from the media in order to protect the privacy of an individual. In this case Ruth hopes that it is exactly the exposure that would help her. In a greatly absurd way, the rules of protection protect here the law court itself. The advocate Weinstock was not given a copy of the protocol, and when he asked for the portfolio in order to photocopy the documents inside it, he discovered that pages of the protocol had "disappeared".

The director/administrator of the Rabbinical law court, Rabbi Eliyahu Ben-Dohan, does not accept the claim that the Rabbis would prefer the parent nearer to Judaism: "If there is any doubt about that the child will come out crazy and religious, or normal and secular, the judge will prefer the secular option," he says. Concerning the plot of the trial in connection with Ruth's children, Ben-Dohan has a refined version: "The Rabbi gave a push to the New Testament," he says, "and the book moved to the other table." Ben-Dohan denies that Sharim would have shouted that the book should be burned.

But Sharim sounds different. Immediately after I presented myself and explained that I called concerning an incident that took place in his hall, he got alarmed and asked: "Is this about the New Testament? Are you writing a report?"

How did you know that it concerns the New Testament?

It is an event that occurred lately. Who turned to you? What do they want?

I want your reaction to the claims.

I am not interested in relating to this. I want to know who turned to you.

During the discussion Sharim denied the whole incident, and in the end changed his mind and decided not to respond at all. Concerning the claims that he reproached Weinstock about him representing Ruth, and

that he did not let Ruth express herself, Sharim said that he does not remember it to have been so.

And after all this, Ruth is not angry with Sharim. "May God bless him," she says, "he does not know what he does. The Rabbis in Israel have changed the Jewish religion to a way of controlling, and I will not let them control me."