

CHAPTER XXXV

ASTOR LIBRARY ACQUIRED AS HOME FOR THE HIAS

FROM the time of the signing of the Armistice to the end of 1919, the Hebrew Sheltering and Immigrant Aid Society directors realized that with the actual end of the world conflict there would be a large influx of immigrants for which the Society in its existing quarters at 229 East Broadway, would be unable to care.

From the beginning of the war in 1914, when immigration at once ceased, the Society largely devoted its efforts to enabling the stricken refugees in the war zones to communicate with their families in America and its building was almost entirely occupied by executive offices, with accommodations for only a few casual wayfarers. Practically no provision was made for the large number of immigrants, now to be expected.

Considerable thought had been given by the directors to plans for increasing the capacity of the Society's building either by purchasing the adjoining property and erecting a new building or moving to another part of the city. The consensus of opinion was that it was desirable to move to a neighborhood affording better transit facilities and Mr. Fischel was appointed chairman of a Committee to secure a desirable site.

With thousands of immigrants ready at once to migrate to America, there was no time to await the construction of a new building if the immigrants were to have accommodations on their arrival. It was therefore decided to look for a completed building that could readily be converted to the needs of the moment.

By what appears as the intervention of the Almighty, Mr. Fischel was approached on November 18, 1919 by the real estate firm of Brown, Wheelock and Company, through their representative Mr. Simon Neuman who proposed to Mr. Fischel the purchase by him for investment of the famous Astor Library building on

Lafayette Street and which had been discontinued as a library on the opening of the new public library at Fifth Avenue and Forty Second Street.

With his mind centered on the necessity of a home for immigrants the idea at once occurred to Mr. Fischel that this building would be ideal for the purpose, inasmuch as it could be quickly converted at a reasonable expense. The price asked for the property, however, was \$350,000. While Mr. Fischel regarded this as a low figure, he felt it involved too large a sum to be expended by the Society at that time and decided to buy the building himself, solely as a business proposition. Accordingly, he made an offer of \$325,000, having still in his mind the idea that should the offer be accepted he would turn the building over to the Society, if the directors later decided they cared to purchase it.

Subsequently, Mr. Fischel called together the members of the Building Committee, to whom, in conjunction with the Board of Directors, he submitted the proposition. They regarded it, however, as too large a project financially, for the Society to undertake, although several of the directors individually were in favor of it.

The day following this meeting Mr. Fischel was advised by Mr. Neuman that at a meeting of the executors of the estate his offer for the property, had been accepted, despite the fact much larger offers had been made in the interim. Inasmuch as the contract had been drawn and the executors had agreed to the price, the property, he was told, was regarded as his. Mr. Neuman then offered Mr. Fischel a large profit if he would sell the contract. To this, Mr. Fischel replied:

"I cannot accept any offer for the reason that I have bought the building for the purpose of a home for immigrants and I am certain that I will, in the end, be able to convince the directors that while the amount is a large one, its purchase will be better for the Society than buying ground and erecting a new building, besides which it has the advantage of placing the Society in the

position of at once being able to accommodate the influx of immigrants."

The next day Mr. Fischel received offers of a still larger profit, to all of which he turned a deaf ear, instructing Mr. Neuman to have the contract drawn in the name of the institution, rather than in his name personally, as he felt sure that the directors would realize their mistake and ratify the agreement.

It so happened that Mr. Albert Rosenblatt, an influential member of the Board of Directors, was informed at this time that a friend of his had made a much larger offer for the property than that at which it had been offered to the Society through Mr. Fischel. This friend had been told the property had been sold, although the name of the purchaser had not been disclosed by the estate.

Mr. Rosenblatt went to Mr. John L. Bernstein, president of the Society, and related what he had learned, with the result that Mr. Bernstein immediately called on Mr. Fischel and asked him to bring about another joint meeting of the Building Committee and Board of Directors in order that the matter might be reconsidered.

At this meeting those who had originally opposed the purchase were insistent that the building be acquired even though it became necessary to pay a large profit to the new owner. In short they asked Mr. Fischel to buy it at almost any price at which it might be obtained.

Mr. Fischel asked that the decision of the Board be expressed by an unanimous vote. Mr. Leon Kamaiky, who had most strenuously opposed the proposition at the earlier meeting, then made the motion that Mr. Fischel be empowered to buy the property. The resolution was passed without dissent.

Mr. Fischel then arose and took from his pocket the signed contract made out in the name of the institution and presented it to the president. The scene which followed was dramatic in the extreme. The directors could scarcely believe their own eyes, so carefully had Mr. Fischel guarded his secret. Nor did they

become convinced until they had examined the contract in detail and finally approved it in its entirety. The profit sacrificed by Mr. Fischel through having the contract made in the name of the institution, although the directors had originally rejected the proposition, was a very large one, but he had no regrets in view of the knowledge that he had been enabled to meet the situation with which the Society was confronted.

The action of the Board of Directors did not, however, finally decide the question because it was regarded as desirable to consult Mr. Jacob H. Schiff, always a great friend of the Society, concerning the wisdom of the step. Mr. Bernstein called on Mr. Schiff and informed him of the purchase, as well as the fact that a large sum of money would be required to convert the building to its new uses.

As a banker and accustomed to carefully weighing the ability of institutions to assume new financial burdens, Mr. Schiff at once stated that he felt the obligation was entirely too great for the Society to assume. This opinion, coming from Mr. Schiff, caused a number of the directors to share his view and they were ready to cancel the contract and return the property to Mr. Fischel.

Although he could have profited largely through its resale Mr. Fischel declared that he had confidence in the Jewish people of America and was sure they would respond to an appeal issued by the Society in behalf of the immigrants and that enough money would be raised in this manner to successfully carry out the plans. He then suggested that he would like to be one of a committee to call upon Mr. Schiff again.

Mr. Bernstein, the president, Judge Leon Sanders, a former president, and Mr. Fischel then visited Mr. Schiff and Mr. Fischel, approaching the proposition from an entirely new angle, asked the famous financier and philanthropist this question:

"How are we going to care for the large number of immigrants who are arriving daily? Can we afford to let them take the

chance of going astray without our protection? Furthermore, our present building is very old and is a veritable fire-trap."

The best, quickest and cheapest way to meet the problem was, Mr. Fischel informed Mr. Schiff, to alter the Astor Library building. For this purpose, he declared, all that was needed was \$100,000 with which to take title and \$75,000 for alterations making the building ready for immediate occupancy, as the estate had agreed to take back a mortgage for \$225,000 covering a long period of years.

Mr. Fischel sought to convince Mr. Schiff that inasmuch as the Hebrew Sheltering and Immigrant Aid Society was a national organization, with well organized branches throughout the United States, there would be little difficulty in raising the \$175,000 needed for this worthy purpose.

Mr. Schiff then put the question: "Have we a right to burden the institution with a mortgage of \$225,000?" To this Mr. Fischel promptly replied:

"We represent the Jews of every state of the Union. If the government has the right in an emergency to mortgage the nation to the extent of more than twenty billions of dollars, as was done during the war, then we have a right to mortgage the Jews of the United States for the small sum of \$225,000 to meet this need."

When he had heard this argument, Mr. Schiff was convinced it was correct and not only gave his immediate consent to the purchase of the property but, with the interest he always showed in the immigrant situation, promised to make a large contribution with which to start the appeal.

This change of attitude on the part of Mr. Schiff was all that was needed to command the support of every director and Mr. Fischel was immediately authorized to prepare plans for the alteration of the building.

The next annual meeting of the Society, always an event of large general interest and attended by prominent officials both of the state and of the United States, took place on January 11,

1920. On this occasion, after reading his annual report as treasurer, Mr. Fischel was requested as chairman of the Building Committee as well, to make a report on the purchase of the Astor Library.

This report was as follows:

At the previous annual meetings of our Society, time and again mention has been made of the necessity for a new building in which the work of our organization might be carried on in keeping with its growth. Its present building, at 229 East Broadway, has not only become inadequate, but, due to its age and lack of facilities, it has become unfit either to shelter the immigrants or to provide for the ever-increasing administrative work. The old building, though improved from time to time, could not be made satisfactory, and every dollar spent upon its improvement was practically wasted. Moreover, it was felt that the Society should have a building in keeping with its unique standing in American Jewry and its international character. For, as you well know, the purpose of the Society is to transform the immigrant to America, by proper guidance and education, into an American citizen of the highest type.

The old structure has always been a source of great worry to us, it being virtually a fire-trap. Moreover, it must not be forgotten that, while ten years ago it was located in the center of the Jewish population, conditions have so changed that we are warranted in moving to a new location in order to be nearer to the mass of our people in Greater New York.

We felt that the headquarters of the Hebrew Sheltering and Immigrant Aid Society should be, as it were, a monument to its effort in behalf of the foreign born Jew in this country.

We are most fortunate to be able at this hour—our annual meeting—to announce that the Society has acquired the old Astor Library, located on Lafayette Street and facing the colonial homes that at one time sheltered the greatest literary men of America and Europe, as well as several presidents of the United States. The neighborhood is replete with historic recollections, and it is only fitting and proper that a building which long radiated knowledge shall henceforth be devoted to the noble task

to which the Hebrew Sheltering and Immigrant Aid Society is dedicated.

The Astor Library is centrally located. It is near the subways, the Second and Third Avenue "L's", and crosstown street cars, and can, therefore, be easily reached from every part of Greater New York. The people who come to us from every part of the city for inquiries will henceforth find it much easier to do so than in the past.

The building housed the first public library in America. In style of architecture, it has been regarded as one of the civic monuments of New York. In appreciation of what America has meant to the immigrant we are therefore glad indeed to be able to acquire this building for our future needs and to preserve it, though remodelled in the interior, as one of the city's most valued relics.

The size of the lot is 249 feet long by 130 feet deep. The building is 200 feet wide and 110 feet deep, with 25 feet on each side for open space and ventilation. It is a three-story fireproof structure and the rooms, without exception, have high ceilings and are laid out with good taste. The beautiful architecture commands the respect and attention of the passerby, and its interior, too, is calculated to fill those whom it may attract with a spirit of welcome and appreciation of true brotherhood.

As Chairman of the Building Committee it gives me pleasure to report to you that we have acquired this unique and historical property practically at one-half of its value.

The land on which this building is erected is worth at least \$400,000 and the building could not be erected today for less than \$300,000, a total value of at least \$700,000. We have been fortunate enough to purchase the land and buildings for the sum of \$325,000.

We expect to remodel its interior to enable us to carry on the vast and manifold labors to which our Society is devoting itself and to the additional work that may become ours as time goes on. This reconstruction work will involve an additional sum of \$75,000. The present owners of the property—the New York Public Library Association—have consented to carry a mortgage of \$225,000 and its Directors have, by their sympathy for our work, accorded us every courtesy and consideration.

One of our eminent philanthropists, in a conversation with me, suggested that it was presumptuous on our part to mortgage the

Jews of the City of New York for the sum of \$225,000. My answer was that we are not a local but a national institution. We represent the Jews of every state in the Union; therefore, if our Government had the right to mortgage the Nation to the amount of over twenty billions of dollars during the war, we, the Directors of the Society, feel that we also have the right to mortgage American Jewry for the paltry sum of \$225,000 and we have full confidence in our members that this mortgage will be paid in a very short time and that we will be assisted to a great extent by those whose families we are going to reunite.

The Society has no endowment funds or any resources upon which to draw. The annual income has always been just sufficient to meet the needs of the moment. There was never any money to spare. The Society now looks to its members, and to all of American Jewry, as never before. It has commanded the confidence of American Jewry and the respect of the leading men of this country, including high officials, presidents of universities and editors of newspapers and magazines. This confidence has been manifested again and again in many ways and this gathering today proves absolutely the hearty recognition of the work of our Society, on the part of the people at large.

As Chairman of the Building Committee, as well as Treasurer of this organization, I feel it my duty to inform you that a call for contributions to the Building Fund will be made shortly, and, from former experience, I have no doubt that the members will respond nobly.

In conclusion, I take this means on behalf of the Building Committee to congratulate the members, as well as Jewry in general, upon the purchase of this historic building, and it is our hope that it will be completed and ready for occupancy within the next six months.

At the first meeting of the Board of Directors following this annual meeting the decision was reached that inasmuch as the building when completed would serve the needs of the Society for many years, no expense should be spared in converting it into a national home which might be utilized not alone for its primary object of housing Jewish immigrants but for other communal purposes as well.

The Directors expressed the view that once an appeal for funds was launched it would meet with a generous response from all parts of the country. This prediction was happily more than realized. Nearly half a million dollars poured into the treasury of the Society from every city, town and village in the country, so enthusiastic did the Jewish public become over the idea that the famous Astor Library was to be a national home for immigrants.

Much of the success of the campaign was, of course, due to the generous treatment it received at the hands of the press of the entire country which filled endless columns of space with news of the undertaking, sketches of the history of the library itself and accounts of the work done in behalf of Jewish immigrants from the very inception of the Society.

Of these articles the following from the Jewish Tribune of October 8, 1920, is especially interesting.

THE OLD AND THE NEW ASTOR LIBRARY BUILDING

Harry Fischel, Treasurer of the Hebrew Sheltering and Immigrant Aid Society, Tells the Story of the Purchase of the Historic Landmark to be the Society's new Home.

Whoever is familiar with the history of the first Jewish settlers in New York, when the total population of our present metropolis hardly amounted to one thousand and five hundred, way back in the second half of the seventeenth century, will remember that Peter Stuyvesant, the "Strong-headed," then Governor of New Amsterdam, reluctantly admitted the first twenty-three Jewish refugees from Brazil who came here to seek refuge from the "Holy" Inquisition. They were finally permitted to land on the condition that none of them be allowed to become a burden to the community, and the Jews of New York have kept their vow ever since.

When about thirty-five years ago, the situation of the Jews in Russia and Roumania became unbearable and they began to come to this country in larger numbers than ever before, Amer-

ican Jewry felt that an organized effort was necessary to meet the new immigrant, to extend a brotherly hand to him, to guide him during the first few weeks and months of his stay here, to help him find his bearings, to make a good prospective American citizen of him. The result of this sentiment led to the formation of two organizations, The Hebrew Sheltering Society and the Immigrant Aid Society, which about eleven years ago merged into the present Hebrew Sheltering and Immigrant Aid Society of America.

The readers of the Jewish Tribune have already more than once been made familiar with the work of the Society, with its ever increasing activities, with the truly motherly care it gives to the strangers at our gate, with its recent successful effort to reunite upwards of 30,000 heads of families with their kin in Eastern Europe. Our readers also know that the present home of the Society at 229 East Broadway, has proven inadequate, and that the Society has therefore purchased the Astor Library building at 425-437 Lafayette Street, to be the new home of the Society.

Harry Fischel, who has been treasurer of the Society since its very inception and who has always given of the best of his ability, energy, heart and soul to the welfare of the Society, has given the Jewish Tribune the following account of the plans for the property:

"In planning alterations in the building, there were several problems to be solved. The first was that we had to deal with a large immigration and to provide for it sufficient temporary accommodation, a large dining room and two kitchens, since our institution has always strictly upheld the dietary laws. We also had to take care of separating the immigrants from wayfarers, as we have always done even in our old building, because the wayfarers would exert an undesirable influence on the immigrants, making them feel rather pessimistic towards the opportunities offered by their adopted fatherland.

"The new building, after it has been remodelled, will be a perfect specimen of what a home for the temporary accommodation of Jewish immigrants should be and the Astor Library building, with its great traditions of all that is noble in American citizenship, will become the greatest monument to American Jewry's achievements when occupied by our Society.

"A special feature of the building will be an auditorium which will accommodate about 600 people and will be used for lectures on America, naturalization classes and as a synagogue on the Sabbath and Jewish Holydays.

"On the whole, I may safely state that this building, when completed, will not only be one of the finest edifices in New York, but will be a pride and glory for all Jews of America who have helped transform it into a home for immigrants."

Mr. Fischel added that part of the building will be completed by the first of the year and the entire building will be finished during the early part of the Spring before the Passover holidays, provided the Jews of America respond and contribute liberally to the Building Fund.

The writer left Mr. Fischel with the impression that American Jewry will heed the appeal of the Society that has been doing its work so zealously and devotedly for so many years, a work which helps build up a happier, better Jewry, not in this country alone, but the world over.

CHAPTER XXXVI

DEDICATION OF THE NEW HIAS BUILDING

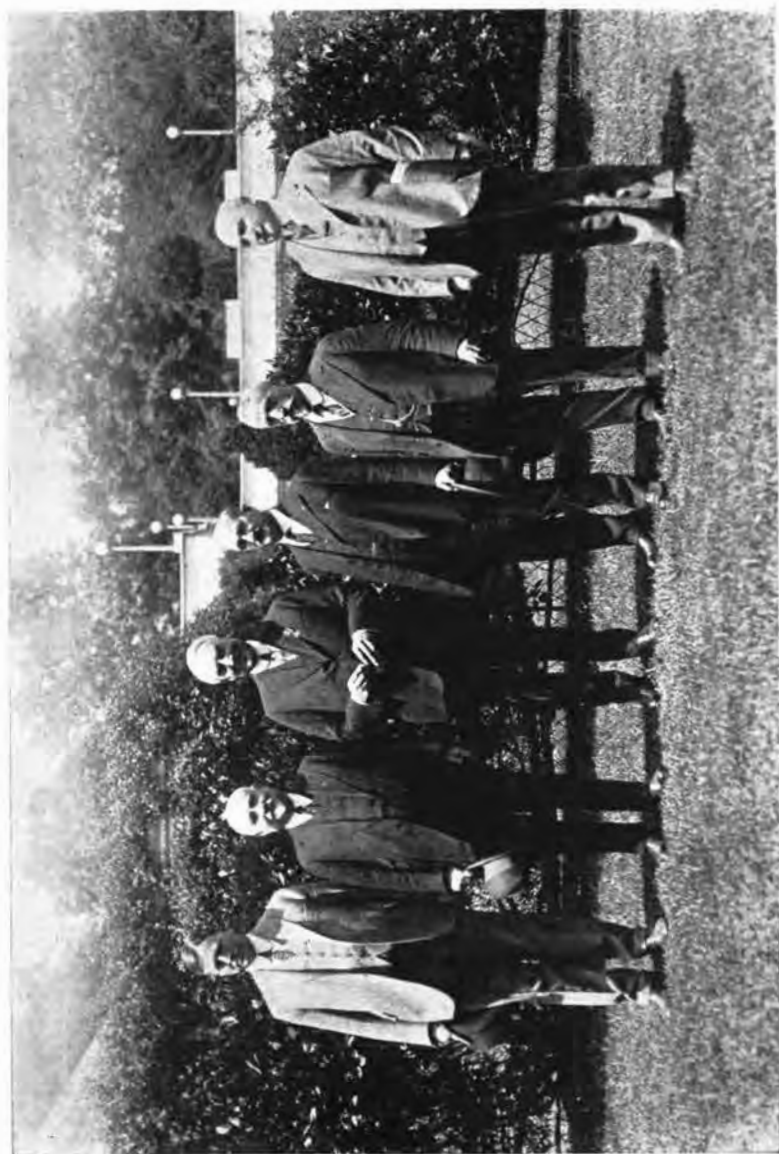
THE work of transforming the Astor Library building into the home for immigrants was commenced by Mr. Fischel in March 1920 and from that time until the middle of 1921 he devoted practically his entire time to this undertaking.

On the completion of the alterations he received the commendation not only of the directors but of all those who inspected the building. Finally the time arrived when the new Immigrant Home was ready to be dedicated and formally opened to the public.

As the only institution dealing with immigrants which was officially recognized by the government, it was decided to invite the President of the United States, the late Warren G. Harding, to attend the dedication ceremonies. A committee was accordingly appointed to visit President Harding at the White House and to extend the formal invitation of the Society.

The directors of the Hebrew Sheltering and Immigrant Aid Society named as members of this committee Judge Leon Sanders, Mr. Leon Kamaiky and Mr. Fischel. The delegation went to Washington on May 18, 1921. The occasion marked the second time that Mr. Fischel had personally called upon a President of the United States in behalf of this organization and the third President he had visited in relation to philanthropic activities.

President Harding received the delegation, which was introduced to him by Congressman Chandler, with his accustomed cordiality. He expressed great admiration for the work the Society had done during the war and for its aid to Jewish immigrants at all times since it was founded. Although Mr. Harding declared he would like to attend the dedication of the new



MR. FISCHER VISITS THE WHITE HOUSE

*Delegation from the H. I. A. S. with the late President Harding, Washington, D. C.,
May 18, 1921.*

building, he expressed his regret that he could not leave Washington on the date fixed, June 5, 1921, because of the pressure of his official duties owing to the still complicated international situation.

Mr. Harding said, however, that he would be willing to officially open the building by pressing an electric button installed in his executive offices and would deliver an address over the telephone. He then appointed as his personal representatives to attend the function the Secretary of Labor, the Hon. James J. Davis; the Assistant Secretary, Edward Henning, and the Solicitor of the Department of Labor, the Hon. S. Risley.

Before the Delegation took its leave the President acceded to a request that he have a picture taken with the members and the White House photographer took the photograph which is herewith reproduced.

The dedication of the building on June 5 was generally recognized as one of the most important events in the history of American Jewry. It was attended by the national directors of the Society from every part of the United States as well as by leading officials of the government and many other men and women of prominence in public and private life.

When, at three o'clock, President Harding pushed the button at the White House, causing the building to be illuminated from top to bottom, the famous structure was filled with the largest throng ever within its doors. Immediately thereafter the President began his address through the telephone, and this was transmitted by amplifiers so that it was heard by every person in the vast audience.

The programme arranged by the Society then followed. Mr. Fischel made the address of welcome after which, as Chairman of the Building Committee, he turned the key of the new immigrants' home over to the President of the Society, Mr. John L. Bernstein. The celebration attendant upon the opening of the structure lasted for a week, during which time the building was visited by thousands of persons from all parts of the country.

The following article reproduced from the Hebrew Standard of June 10, 1921, gives a complete and accurate account of the occasion.

HEBREW SHELTERING AND IMMIGRANT AID
SOCIETY DEDICATION IMPRESSIVE CEREMONY

President Harding Officially Opens New Home. Mr. Harry Fischel, Chairman of the Building Committee, and Mr. Albert Rosenblatt, Chairman of the Building Fund Committee, Deliver Notable Addresses.

The dedication of the new home of the Hebrew Sheltering and Immigrant Aid Society of America at 425-437 Lafayette Street, which began on Sunday afternoon and lasted all this week, was marked by impressive ceremonies.

At 2:30 Sunday afternoon a bell tinkled in one of the rooms in the Astor Library building and John L. Bernstein, president of the Hebrew Sheltering and Immigrant Aid Society announced that the bell had been sounded by President Harding in Washington and that the building was thus formally dedicated to the usage of the Society.

The President of the United States then delivered the following message over the telephone:

"I wish to express to you my congratulations and good wishes on the occasion of the opening and dedication of the new home of your society. Your organization has for more than a score of years carried on a most useful, patriotic and humane service, and I join with you in the hope that with the enlarged facilities you are now securing, you will be able to expand and improve it. The charity and liberality of the Hebrew people always have been peculiarly noticeable and an inspiration to others. I want you to know of my earnest wish for the continuance and enlargement of the splendid work you have done.

"I am informed that the purchase of the new home was made possible through gifts from persons who came to America as immigrants. It seems to me there could be no more emphatic testimony to the usefulness and effectiveness of your society's work for Americanization."

The new home is the culmination of over 30 years of work

of the Hebrew Sheltering and Immigrant Aid Society of America and this fact was strikingly brought out on Sunday. Mr. Harry Fischel, treasurer of the Building Committee, was instrumental in securing the purchase of the Old Astor Library and it was due to his untiring efforts that the Society has so magnificent a structure.

Mr. Leon Kamaiky, first vice-president, welcomed the large and distinguished assembly. He said:

"It is with great pleasure and pride that the officers, directors and Jews of America open this magnificent building for the service of the immigrant and the stranger.

"When King Solomon recited his prayer at the Dedication of the Temple, he said:

"'Also to the stranger who cometh of a far-off country, for he heard of thy name and the outstretched hand, mayest thou listen and do according to all that the stranger will call on thee for.'

"The Directors of this institution have adopted this prayer as their motto, namely to do all for the stranger that he calls for.

"When the World War broke out and the call came from our brethren refugees in Japan, we stretched our hand across the Pacific and helped them with food and shelter and communicated with their relatives in this country who sent them money for passage so that almost everyone who was eligible according to the law was transferred to America. Thousands of families are now happily reunited.

"When peace was declared in Europe, the Hebrew Sheltering and Immigrant Aid Society sent a commission to Europe to unite those families whose bread-winners were in this country.

"The commission, consisting of Mr. Jacob Massell and myself, had a very hard task. When we came to Europe in February, 1920, we found that there were no shops, no railroads and no way to send money. After hard work we found a solution and we may say with pride, that we have united upwards of 30,000 families.

"Although our work will be somewhat hampered by the new immigration law, there remains plenty of work to do for our unfortunate brethren on the other side, and we hope to accomplish more good with your cooperation and help.

"In the meantime when our work increased, we found our-

selves cramped for room. The home on East Broadway became inadequate and many times we had to go out at night to find a place where the newly arrived immigrants could be sheltered.

"The Board decided on a new home. After a long search we decided to buy this building and make it suitable for our work. We found this location, an admirable one on account of its being accessible by elevated, subway and street railways. We have rebuilt it and furnished it at a great cost, as you have probably seen by going through it.

"We dedicate this building today and hope to proceed with our enlarged work here to the glory of American Jewry."

In transferring this building and its key to the Society, Mr. Fischel delivered the following address:

"On behalf of the Building Committee, I extend to you our heartiest welcome to this new and splendid home for immigrants. My friends, I have had the good fortune to be connected with this institution from its infancy to the present day, from the time it was organized in the basement of 68 Essex Street. I had the privilege to participate in the purchase of its first house at 210 Madison Street in the year 1890, thirty-one years ago, at which time I was elected treasurer of the institution, and have successively held this office until the present day. I was also privileged to participate in the purchasing of the two houses at 229-231 East Broadway, through the generosity of the late Mr. Jacob H. Schiff, on which occasion I also had the honor of being the chairman of the Building Committee.

"On the occasion of the opening of the new building at 229-231 East Broadway, in 1908, when I delivered the key to the president, the late Mr. Nathan Hutkoff, who had been president of this institution for many years, I well remember expressing the hope that I might live to see the time when that building should become too small for our various activities and that our next building would be three times the size of that one. My friends, my hope has been more than fulfilled. Our institution has grown so big that our old building cannot accommodate even one-quarter of our present activities, and I have lived to see it. Since the Almighty has given me the privilege to bring about the purchase of this historical Astor Library building and also the privilege of reconstructing it into this palatial home for immigrants, I will use this occasion to thank the Almighty for all

that He has done for us by delivering a blessing. 'Blessed art Thou O Lord our God, King of the Universe, Who has kept us in life and has preserved us and has enabled us to reach the opening of this building.'

"I believe you all remember the story in the Bible when God ordered Moses to build a tabernacle. Moses being the great leader of the people was occupied with many problems, and could not spare the time for the building of the Tabernacle. He therefore appointed the great master Bezalel as chairman of the Building Committee together with the best men available to help him. The great master, with all his ability and with all the instructions given to him by Moses, did not know how to build the tabernacle until God Himself showed Bezalel a complete model of the structure, with all its details, decorations and even the draperies. Having been shown this model, having the money required at his disposal, having no unions to deal with, he had no difficulty in accomplishing his task. Our committee, however, did not have any model by which to be guided, nor did we find any other institution anywhere of this kind by whose experience we could benefit. Under these circumstances our committee had many problems to solve.

"My friends, in order to acquaint you with some of these many problems, I will give you a brief resume of the different activities for which comfortable space has been provided in this, our new building.

"First came the necessity of separating the immigrants from those who have been in America for many years, but who, through adverse circumstances, are compelled to seek shelter in our home for a short time until they obtain employment.

"While the number of these is not many, this condition however, exists. The reason for the separation is obvious. The Jewish immigrant on leaving his native country pictures America not only as a land of refuge, but a land of true democracy and opportunity. On arriving in our institution, should he meet those unfortunates, either male or female, who are compelled to call at our home for temporary shelter, he will be entirely disillusioned, and immediately become disappointed. Therefore, in order to prevent the meeting of these two classes we have provided separate entrances, separate registration rooms, separate reading rooms, even separate showers and bathrooms.

"The Building Committee has given a good deal of thought and consideration to provide the necessary accommodations and comforts for both male and female, such as separate quarters for men and women, spacious and airy dormitories, separate reading and writing rooms, separate bath rooms and all other sanitary accommodations which were impossible in our old building on account of lack of space.

"Another great problem which our committee solved was to provide separate rooms for entire families, that is special sleeping quarters for husbands, their wives and children. In our old home, we were compelled to separate husbands from their wives and children for the same reason, that of not having enough space. The committee is therefore very happy that all these conditions are thoroughly remedied in our new home.

"A great deal of attention has been given by our committee to providing the necessary room for educational work. The spacious auditorium will be used for lectures, which will be given to the immigrants, illustrating through moving pictures the different parts of the country, with its splendor and resources, the possibilities and opportunities offered to them there, and through such pictures, an effort will be made to induce them to spread out all over the United States.

"This auditorium will also be used as a synagogue on Saturdays and Holy Days, while a smaller room will be used for daily religious services. On the second floor we have a number of classrooms for the purpose of teaching the immigrants English and preparing them for American citizenship. There are thousands of American Jews who come to the headquarters of the Society for information on various matters connected with immigration. In the spacious room west of the waiting room we will be in a better position to take care of our patrons than was possible in our old home. Various activities of the Society, as represented by the Executive and Administrative departments, the Bureau of Work in Foreign Countries, the Bureau of Advice, the Bureau of Oriental Jews, etc., will be housed in offices fitting both the important work performed by our Society and the great number of applicants who come for advice and information.

"The dietary laws prescribed by our Jewish religion have always been most rigidly observed in the home of our Society, and the observances have been approved by the most representative

men and women in this country and abroad. In order to more carefully carry out these observances, we have provided in this building separate kitchens, with the best up-to-date modern kitchen equipment under the most sanitary conditions, one for dairy and the other for meat cooking; we have also provided separate pantries as well as separate dish-washing machines and separate refrigerating rooms, so that the necessity of supervision of Kashruth will be reduced to a minimum. There will be no danger of mixing the dishes, since there will be no connection between the two kitchens.

"In conclusion I wish to say that in planning this building not a stone was left unturned to provide sanitary conditions and cheerful surroundings, bearing in mind that the immigrant having emerged from an environment where gloom and unhappiness prevailed, must be made to feel as soon as he enters our home that everything has changed for the better and that he now has a chance to start life anew, under new conditions, in happier surroundings, as symbolized by the Hebrew Sheltering and Immigrant Aid Society of America.

"I take this means of extending my sincere thanks and appreciation to every one of the members of the Building Committee who have always been ready and willing to respond to my call for consultation and advice, and I feel that were it not for their devotion to this work, in spite of the fact that I have given to this building all my time, my energy and my long experience in the construction of buildings, I could never have accomplished the great work which was necessary to transform the old building into this home for immigrants.

"Last, but not least, special thanks are due to Mr. Fain, our general manager, for the great assistance he has been to me in the performance of my work. I feel certain that when you are guided through this building and see all the departments, you will agree with me that this building of ours is not alone a source of honor and pride to those who have contributed to the building fund, but it will redound to the glory of American Jewry.

"I am now ready to deliver to you the key of the building. I regret this building has been completed at the same time the new immigration law has gone into effect, thereby preventing us at once from making full use of our facilities. However, we need not be discouraged, as this building has not been built for one

year, but rather for many years to come. Furthermore, when our Committee was in Washington to invite the President to the opening of this building, I had the honor and privilege of meeting those officials who have been given the power to carry out this immigration law, namely, the Hon. James J. Davis, Secretary of Labor; the Hon. Edward Henning, Assistant Secretary, and the Hon. S. Risley, Solicitor of the Department of Labor, the last of whom we have with us this afternoon. All these are big men with hearts as big as themselves. My impression after meeting them is that they are in full sympathy with the immigrant and will give them the benefit of every doubt in order to admit them.

"Mr. President, under ordinary circumstances if I were only the chairman of the Building Committee I would say to you that my work has ceased, and your responsibility has increased, but being also the treasurer of this Society, I feel that my responsibility together with yours has increased. It is therefore, our duty, together with the Board of Directors to put our shoulders to the wheel and work much harder in order to raise the funds necessary to maintain this large institution.

"My friends, one word more. I want to point out to you the interesting fact that this building has been built by immigrants with money collected from immigrants, to be used as a haven of refuge for immigrants."

Mr. John L. Bernstein, in accepting the building and the key, paid a high tribute to Mr. Fischel. He said:

"On behalf of my brother directors and on behalf of the 40,000 members of this Society, I take pride and pleasure in receiving from you this symbolic key of our new building. You, as a man who was one of the first organizers of the Sheltering House; you, who took part in the organization of the other society, the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society; you, who were present at the merger of these two organizations into one; you, who have at all times stood as a pillar of this institution, it is but fit and proper that you should be the one to present this key, not to me alone, but to the Board of Directors, to the 40,000 members whom I have mentioned and to the Jews or America.

"If there was ever a time in the history of Jewry or in the history of America when a building of this kind was necessary, when work of the kind that we are doing was necessary for the

welfare, not only of Jews, but of humanity at large, this is the time, and you, working as you have for the past thirty years for all things that were good and kind, for all things that were helpful, it is but fit and proper that now, when you have passed middle age, that you should be standing here before this great assembly and be able to say to them and to me and to the others, that this, the latest work that you have done, perhaps transcends everything else that you have ever accomplished.

"You are an exemplification of the Jewish immigrants of America. You came here poor. You came here from a land where you and your forefathers were persecuted. You came to these United States, the land of liberty, which opened the doors to you and you, as a man, you as a Jewish immigrant, have understood what America has done for you, that it has but lent to you, that it is up to you to repay in good citizenship, in service to humanity, to your fellowmen and to your fellow Americans.

"You have done that this many years, and this latest service (I know it will not be the last) is, but a culmination of the life of usefulness which you have led, the life of kindness, loving kindness, that you have led.

"I am proud that you are a member of our Board. I am proud that you are here today presenting me with this key, and I hope that your efforts on behalf of the less fortunate of your fellow beings will not lessen, that your advancing age will not take away from you the energy which you have always displayed in helping your fellow beings. And I know that this Ark, this holy Ark which you and Mrs. Fischel have contributed, which was one of your contributions to this building, will ever bear testimony to the interest you have taken in the religion of our fathers and in the principles of America."

Addresses were also made by Oscar S. Straus, formerly Secretary of Commerce; Solicitor Risley, Leon Sanders, Mr. Jacob Massel, Congressman Isaac Siegel and the Hon. Judge Hugo Pam of Chicago, Ill., who has just returned from Europe as one of the Society's European commissioners.

Mr. Straus said it was a great tribute to the immigrants who came here that they organized the Society, now with 40,000 members, in order to make the task of those who came after them somewhat easier.

He said there was a kind of compensation in history and de-

clared it was significant that John Jacob Astor, who came to this country in the latter part of the eighteenth century, got his start by becoming the employee of an immigrant Jew named Levy, who taught him the trade of furrier, from which position Astor laid the foundation of his great fortune.

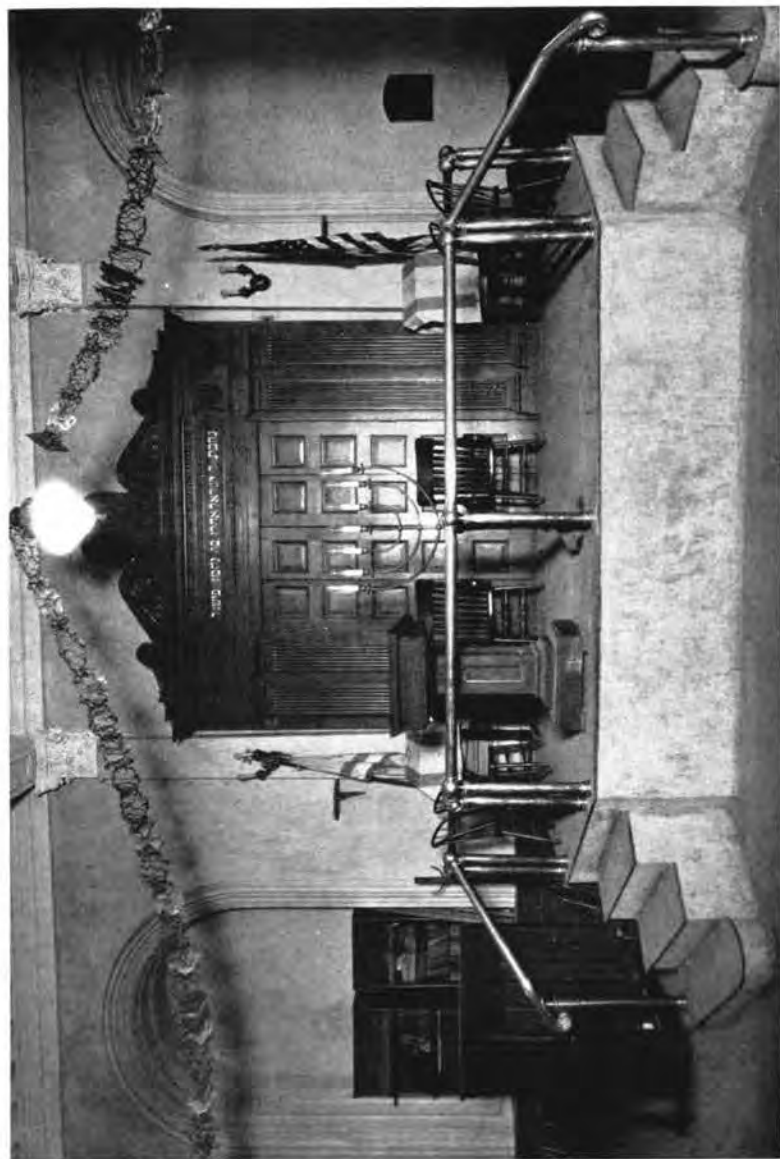
Although, he said, the conditions that resulted in fixing a limit on immigration were extraordinary and the policy probably has good reasons behind it, he declared that "whatsoever the conditions" the policy was contrary to the historic spirit of the country.

Mr. Risley explained the necessity for the present limitation of immigration and said that Americanization was an educational and political growth which must ultimately supplant preconceived opinions, "and this progress may be seriously retarded by a suspicious or hostile attitude toward the alien." He made a plea for a "square deal" for the immigrant.

Telegrams were read from Governors of twenty-eight States, and other officials.

Rabbi Herbert S. Goldstein delivered the opening prayer and Rabbi M. S. Margolies gave the Benediction.

Cantor Josef Rosenblatt recited the Dedication Psalms.



ARK OF THE SYNAGOGUE

*Presented to the New Home of the Hebrew Sheltering and Immigrant
Aid Society by Mr. and Mrs. Fischel
on the occasion of its dedication, June 5, 1921.*

CHAPTER XXXVII

NEW BUILDINGS FOR THE RABBI ISAAC ELCHANAN YESHIVA

THE principal institutions with which Mr. Fischel had identified himself in the very earliest days of his communal work were all destined, it seemed, to grow in public estimation and usefulness, so that with the passing of the years they required new and larger accommodations with which to carry on their work.

This had been successively true of the Beth Israel Hospital, the Hebrew Sheltering and Immigrant Aid Society, Uptown Talmud Torah, Hebrew Free Loan Society and Home for the Daughters of Jacob and was now to be true of the Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Jewish Theological Seminary.

In the five years which had elapsed since the dedication in 1915 of this institution's new building at 9-11 Montgomery Street, it had, under the leadership of Dr. Bernard Revel, already outgrown its facilities and was unable to care for but a small part of the number of students who sought admission to its halls.

Mr. Fischel was again appointed chairman of a committee to purchase a site for a new structure or preferably to acquire a building already in existence, if a suitable one could be obtained.

The Home of the Daughters of Jacob had completed its new building at 167th Street, Teller and Findlay Avenues, the Bronx. Mr. Fischel, who was also chairman of the Building Committee of that institution, suggested to the directors of the Home that they sell their former building at 301-303 East Broadway to the Yeshiva, with the result that in November, 1920, this transaction between the two institutions was consummated.

Mr. Fischel then undertook the task of converting these buildings into a suitable structure for the Yeshiva, expending upon the

operation six months of his time and energy, so that the new Yeshiva building was ready to be dedicated on April 3, 1921.

In his capacity as Chairman of the Building Committee, Mr. Fischel on that date turned over the keys of the building to the President and in his remarks called attention to the fact that when it was constructed for the Home of the Daughters of Jacob he had prophesied the next building of the Home would occupy an entire block. This prophecy had come true, Mr. Fischel pointed out, and it was his expectation that the next home of the Yeshiva likewise would occupy an entire block.

Once again Mr. Fischel's glimpse into the future proved an accurate one for this Yeshiva now owns nearly three whole blocks on upper Amsterdam Avenue, where, on a part of the property, three buildings are already under construction covering nearly a full block.

A week was given over to the dedication of the East Broadway building, each day being marked by a celebration conducted by a different organization, including those of the Rabbinate, educational institutions and the Yeshiva's alumni.

This event, as was the dedication of the first Yeshiva building, was hailed by the public and by the Jewish and English press as an occasion of the utmost importance to the future of traditional Judaism. One of the many articles which appeared at the time is herewith reproduced from the Jewish Tribune of April 9, 1921.

NEW YESHIVAH BUILDING IS DEDICATED

Sunday afternoon the new home of the Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary, 301-303 East Broadway, New York City, was dedicated. The ceremonies began with a march of the directors, members of the faculty and students from the old building, 9-11 Montgomery Street.

Harry Fischel, chairman of the building committee, presided and delivered a brief address, Rabbi M. S. Margolies delivered the opening prayer. He was followed by Nathan Lampert.

Gustave S. Roth was presented by Mr. Fischel with a gold key, with which he opened the new building.

Cantor Josef Rosenblatt sang several appropriate liturgical selections and recited a prayer in memory of Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Spector—the celebrated Rav of Kovno, after whom the institution is named. Those assembled marched into the building where speeches were made by the Rev. H. Masliansky, Rabbi J. Levenson and others.

Sunday evening a banquet in honor of the dedication was given, Rabbi Herbert S. Goldstein acting as toastmaster. Addresses were made by Rabbi M. S. Margolies, Rabbi Meyer Berlin, Rabbi Bernard Drachman, Rabbi Philip Klein, Sol Rosenbloom of Pittsburgh, and Julius Siegel, senior student of the Yeshivah. The sum of \$20,000 was contributed by those present.

The ceremonies continued throughout the week, addresses being delivered on other days by Rabbi B. L. Leventhal of Philadelphia, Rabbi Solomon E. Jaffe, Rabbi E. M. Preil of Elizabeth, N. J., Dr. Meyer Waxman, Rabbi N. H. Ebin of Buffalo, Rabbi Sol Friedman of Pittsburgh, Rabbi Aaron D. Burack of Brooklyn, Rabbi D. B. Zvirin of Philadelphia and others.

Rabbi B. Revel, president of the faculty, owing to severe illness, was unable to take part in the celebration.

CHAPTER XXXVIII

LIVING UP TO A TRUST

WHEN in 1885, Mr. Fischel emigrated to America, his brother, Philip, with the latter's wife and three small children, two girls and a boy, remained in Russia in no better worldly condition than were his father and mother.

In December, 1890, Mr. Fischel decided to help his brother provide for his family and accordingly brought him to America where after several months he was able to earn a living. It was not long, however, before the Almighty saw fit to afflict him with typhoid fever and within a week after contracting this disease he was taken to the better world. His last words to Mr. Fischel were: "I am leaving my family in your hands."

Deeply mindful of the obligation imposed upon him, Mr. Fischel sent for his brother's wife and children, ranging in age from three to eight years, and settled them in Chicago, where Mrs. Philip Fischel had a brother, sister and several other relatives. From that time until his sister-in-law remarried and was able to care for the children herself, Mr. Fischel provided for the family's needs. After a few years the mother died and the three children were left orphans. The two girls then kept house for their brother, continuing to live with him even after his marriage.

Having promised his brother always to look out for his children, Mr. Fischel determined that when either of the girls should marry he would attend the wedding and lead them to the altar in place of their departed father. The younger sister, Mary, was the first to find a suitable helpmate and Mr. Fischel, who attended her marriage, which took place in Chicago, represented his late brother in every way.

Two years later the elder sister, Bessie, informed her uncle

that she had become engaged and that her marriage was set for August 20, 1920. On this occasion, Mr. Fischel, with his wife and two unmarried daughters, Bertha and Rose, made the journey to Chicago for the wedding and were met at the station by the bride and groom to be. At the same time a committee of the Chicago branch of the Hebrew Sheltering and Immigrant Aid Society, headed by its president, Mr. Adolph Copeland, met them and extended an invitation to Mr. Fischel to attend a meeting at the Hebrew Sheltering House on Monday evening, August 23, for the purpose of giving the Chicagoans a first hand report concerning the purchase of the Astor Library Building.

Although reluctant to accept this invitation for the reason that he had expected to leave Chicago in time to keep an important business engagement in New York on that evening, Mr. Fischel saw the opportunity to secure a large contribution for the building fund of the H. I. A. S. and accordingly decided it was his duty to remain over. What was his surprise on reaching the hall to find a committee in evening dress waiting to escort him to a spacious dining room where tables were set for a repast for several hundred persons.

Following Mr. Fischel's report and his appeal to the gathering, a large sum of money was contributed by those present toward the building fund.

CHAPTER XXXIX

MARRIAGE OF HIS THIRD DAUGHTER

IN view of Mr. Fischel's strenuous activities in communal life, he had formed the habit of spending a few days out of each month in Atlantic City, as a means of conserving his energy.

It was on December 31, 1920, while on one of these brief vacations, accompanied by his devoted wife and his two daughters, that his daughter Bertha met Dr. Henry A. Rafsky. There was a mutual attraction from the moment they met. After an unusually brief courtship they became engaged in February and were married on April 10, 1921. This union Mr. Fischel believes was certainly ordained by the Almighty.

The wedding was solemnized in the Congregation Kehillath Jeshurun, by Rabbis M. S. Margolis, Elias A. Solomon and the bride's brother-in-law, Rabbi Herbert S. Goldstein. Like the previous weddings in the family, it was attended by many outstanding leaders in American Jewry.

The ceremony was followed by a wedding supper in the home of Mr. and Mrs. Fischel. In honor of this happy occasion, Mr. Fischel made a contribution of \$5,000 towards the Building Fund which was being raised at that time for the Hebrew Sheltering and Immigrant Aid Society of America.

Once more Mr. Fischel found occasion to express his gratitude to the Almighty for all His blessings, not only for giving him the means and the opportunity to serve his fellow men, but for vouchsafing to him the happy marriage of his children and enabling them to follow in the path laid down by him, both in religious and communal work.

Dr. Rafsky is connected with Lenox Hill and Beth Israel Hospitals. He is president of Medical Board of the Home of the Daughters of Jacob, and is the author of many papers on gastro-



MR. FISCHEL'S THIRD SON-IN-LAW,
Dr. and Mrs. Henry A. Rafsky and their children.

enterology. Besides his professional activities, he has found time to be an active trustee in the Congregation Kehillath Jeshurun. One of the unique accomplishments growing out of his endeavors in behalf of Orthodox Judaism, was his successful reorganization of the Jewish community in Beechhurst, Whitestone, L. I., into a unified Congregational Center which he effected during a short stay while on a summer vacation there.

Mrs. Rafsky is a member of the Religious School Committee of the Council of Jewish Women and a directress of the Home of the Daughters of Jacob, a member of the Executive Board of the Women's Branch of the Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations of America; a directress of the Hebrew Day Nursery of New York and a member of the Women's Committee of the Yeshivah College Dormitory Fund. She is also affiliated with the Federation of Jewish Charities and the New York Chapter of Hadassah.

The couple have a strong inclination for communal work, with the result that they are giving a great deal of their time and service for the betterment of humanity.

CHAPTER XL

DEPARTURE FOR A SECOND VISIT TO PALESTINE

MR. FISCHEL had never entirely given up his thought of accomplishing something toward the development of Palestine, despite the fact that he had, in accordance with the wishes of Jewish leaders, abandoned for the time being his plan for the organization of the Palestine Development Corporation. With the completion of the building of the new Home for Immigrants, he determined to visit the Holy Land for a second time, with a view to determining from personal observation, what might best be done to advance the cause of the Jewish homeland. Accordingly on June 29, 1921, he engaged passage for Palestine for his wife, his youngest daughter, Rose and himself.

Although Mr. Fischel did his utmost to keep his sailing a secret, in some manner it leaked out and the directors of the Hebrew Sheltering and Immigrant Aid Society took advantage of the opportunity to tender Mr. Fischel a dinner in appreciation of the work he had done as Chairman of the Building Committee as well as to wish him bon voyage on his departure for the Holy Land.

The dinner, which was held in the auditorium of the reconstructed Astor Library Building, which had been dedicated only three weeks before as the new Immigrant Home, was the first social function arranged there and was attended by the directors of the institution, and their wives, the heads of a number of other institutions with which Mr. Fischel was affiliated, as well as by many public officials and others prominent in Jewish affairs in the city. The toastmaster was Judge Leon Sanders and addresses were delivered by Judge Otto A. Rosalsky, Hon. Samuel Koenig, chairman of the Republican County Committee of New York, Congressman Isaac Siegel and Rabbi Herbert S. Goldstein, who spoke on behalf of the Fischel family.

Mr. Albert Rosenblatt, chairman of the committee which succeeded in raising nearly half a million dollars for the new building, presented Mr. Fischel with a loving cup which bore the following inscription:

"Presented to Harry Fischel by the Building Committee of the Hebrew Sheltering and Immigrant Aid Society of America in recognition of his services as Chairman—Monday, June twenty-seventh, nineteen hundred and twenty-one."

At the conclusion of the banquet the President of the Institution, Mr. John L. Bernstein, who was the last speaker, took Mr. Fischel completely by surprise by unveiling a magnificent oil painting of the guest of the evening, which was presented to him in recognition of his work as a member of the Board of Directors. Mr. Bernstein in making the presentation, however, stated that it was the wish of the Board that Mr. Fischel should permit the portrait to be hung in the Board of Directors' Room and to remain the property of the institution.

Mr. Fischel was too overcome to respond to the President's remarks, and Rabbi Goldstein accepted the portrait in his behalf, giving it back to the Board to be used in the manner they had requested.

The following, which was published in the Hebrew Standard in its issue of July 2, 1921, describes the occasion succinctly:

HIAS GIVES FAREWELL TO HARRY FISCHEL, ITS MOST LOYAL WORKER

The Board of Directors of the Hebrew Sheltering and Immigrant Aid Society of America tendered a dinner to Harry Fischel in recognition of his services as Chairman of the Building Committee of the new home and on the occasion of his departure on a visit to the Holy Land, Monday evening, at the HIAS building, 425-437 Lafayette Street.

Judge Leon Sanders was toastmaster and speeches eulogizing the work of Mr. and Mrs. Fischel were delivered by Judge Otto A. Rosalsky, Congressman Isaac Siegel, Albert Rosenblatt, Chair-

man of the Building Fund Committee, and John L. Bernstein, the president. The latter presented Mr. Fischel with a magnificent loving cup as a tribute from the members of the Building Committee. Rabbi Herbert S. Goldstein spoke for the family, after which an oil painting of Mr. Fischel was unveiled. The portrait is being placed in the Board room of the Society. Mr. Fischel in his response spoke of his desires and hopes and said his forthcoming visit to Palestine was dictated by a wish to be of some service to his people. Mr. Fischel donated \$5,000 to the Building Fund. In the official program, the following tribute was paid to Mr. and Mrs. Fischel:

AU REVOIR

"The members of the Board of Directors, in bidding a temporary farewell to their colleague, have in mind the fact that Mr. Fischel has been the treasurer of the Society for more than 30 years and during that period has given loyal service.

"Mr. Fischel had for years had the vision of a beautiful home for the Society and the HIAS building at 425-437 Lafayette Street is the realization of that vision.

"Mrs. Fischel accompanies Mr. Fischel. She is the first vice-president of the Rose N. Lesser Auxiliary, affiliated with the Society and has thus energetically furthered our cause.

"May their journey be a most pleasant one and may they witness and participate in the rebuilding of Zion."

Mr. Fischel, accompanied by Mrs. Fischel and Miss Rose Fischel, sailed Thursday. They will be gone about three months.

On the day Mr. Fischel sailed for Palestine he received a number of telegrams and letters wishing him Godspeed, among them communications from the President of Beth Israel Hospital, addressed to Judge Sanders, from the Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary and from President Bernstein of the Hebrew Sheltering and Immigrant Aid Society, formally acknowledging Mr. Fischel's additional contribution of \$5,000 made to the Building Fund on the eve of his sailing. These communications are given herewith.

Judge Leon Sanders, Chairman,
Dinner to Harry Fischel,
Hebrew Sheltering & Aid Society

June 27th, 1927.

Mrs. Cohen and I regret exceedingly that my illness prevents us from doing our share towards honoring Mr. Harry Fischel on the eve of his departure for the Holy Land. Knowing Mr. Fischel as I do, I am convinced that his trip to Palestine has not been planned solely for his personal pleasure and if the result of his journey will be as fruitful for good for Jews and Judaism in the Diaspora, Universal Israel will be the gainer even though his friends will have to forego the pleasure of his society during his absence. That his trip be blessed by God is the wish of his sincere friend.

JOSEPH H. COHEN, President
Beth Israel Hospital.

RABBI ISAAC ELCHANAN THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

Mr. Harry Fischel,
276 Fifth Avenue
New York City

June 28, 1921

My dear Mr. Fischel:

Permit me to address to you a few lines on behalf of the Yeshivah and those who are anxious for its welfare and progress.

The faculty and student body, as well as all in the office feel their indebtedness and gratitude for your active work and assistance given the Yeshivah, during the period of constructing our new building, and for all you have done during the long time of your connection with it and wish to express to you their sincerest gratification and indebtedness.

At the time of your leaving this country for an extended trip to our Holy Land, they all wish you their sincerest Bon Voyage. May the Lord Almighty crown your visit to the Holy Land with success for the future of Palestine, and may He send you health on the trip and bring about the realization of your plans.

I am writing this letter upon the request of the Faculty and the student body and I need not tell you that I, personally, share these sentiments with them. I only hope that with your return from the Holy Land you will devote even more time to the

Yeshivah, the institution which is so dear to you and to which you are so devoted.

It is the unfortunate position of the Yeshivah that it could not make an elaborate farewell to you as other institutions did, but you surely have the good wishes and blessings of all of us, the blessings which come from our innermost hearts and which will be accepted by you, I hope, the same way.

Reiterating our thanks and best wishes and ardently hoping that the trip will be a healthy and a successful one for you and yours, I beg to remain,

Most respectfully yours,

SAMUEL L. SAR, Manager.

Mr. Harry Fischel
276 Fifth Avenue
New York City

New York, June 29, 1921.

My dear Mr. Fischel:

I beg to acknowledge the receipt of your favor of this day, enclosing check for \$5,000 as your further contribution towards the building fund of the Hebrew Sheltering and Immigrant Aid Society.

You ought to be proud of the fact that yours is the largest contribution to the building fund, with the exception of that of the late lamented Mr. Jacob H. Schiff.

All through my life I have tried very hard not to be envious of other people, but I must admit to you that I would have considered myself very happy if I could emulate your example and match your contribution. I, of course, bear in mind not only the money contributed, but your contribution of the expert knowledge, indomitable energy and months of time which you were able to give to the erection of what, everybody agrees, is the greatest institutional building of its kind in the United States.

I am sure that all the members of the Board do appreciate the services which you have rendered in the cause of alleviating the sufferings of the Wandering Jew for the past thirty years, and especially, during the last few years, when to their knowl-

edge you have given a great deal of your substance and all of yourself to that cause.

It is my sincere wish that the part that you will take in the upbuilding of the Jewish Homeland may be no smaller than that part you have taken in the upbuilding of HIAS.

May I in all solemnity exercise my prerogative as direct descendant of Aaron, the High Priest, and ask you to take with you upon your journey the priestly benediction of old.

With kind regards to Mrs. Fischel, I remain,

Yours sincerely,

JOHN L. BERNSTEIN, President.

The Fischels embarked on July 4 on the S. S. Berengaria, for Palestine. In accordance with Mr. Fischel's insistence on observing the dietary laws when traveling on either land or sea, he arranged with the Cunard Steamship Company, as in the case of his previous voyage to Europe, for facilities to this end.

Through the courtesy of Mr. W. H. Allison, General Caterer of the Cunard Line, a separate kitchen, with new cooking utensils, a Jewish cook and a Jewish waiter were provided. Mr. Allison even came from his home in the country the day prior to the sailing to see that these arrangements had been carried out.

Mr. Fischel received permission from the Captain of the Berengaria to use his private reception room as a temporary synagogue. Religious services were conducted there three times a day throughout the voyage and were attended by many of the Jewish passengers in the first and second class cabins.

The Fischels landed at Cherbourg and the day following arrived in Paris. The steamer on which they were scheduled to leave for Port Said was to depart on Friday, July 15, so that the party was compelled to wait in Paris until Thursday the fourteenth.

Mr. Fischel employed this time to visit the Paris branch of the Hebrew Immigrant and Sheltering Aid Society where he observed with satisfaction and interest, the work being done in behalf of refugees from many countries, compelled to remain in

Paris until their passports were vized by the American Consul. Accompanied by Mr. Shapiro, Manager of the Branch, Mr. Fischel and his wife and daughter, also visited the Rothschild Hospital and many other Jewish institutions in the French capital.

The party reached Marseilles on Friday to board the steamer "Nalderea" for Port Said and Mr. Fischel was just beginning to wonder how he should be able to observe the dietary laws on this part of his journey when, much to his surprise, he learned on boarding the vessel that instructions from Mr. Ballin, Chief Steward of the Cunard Steamship Company, had preceded him and that practically the same arrangements which had prevailed on the "Berengaria" had been provided for himself and the members of his party on the "Nalderea."

They reached Port Said on July 20 and proceeded by train to Cantarra where, crossing the Suez Canal, they took the train for Jerusalem, reaching that city on July 22.

Mr. Fischel was much impressed with the tremendous improvements which he beheld on every side. The city of Jerusalem was, indeed, almost unrecognizable to him as the place he remembered from his previous visit to the Holy Land, eleven years before.

For the first few days following his arrival he occupied his time with visits to the various institutions with which he had become acquainted on his first trip and everywhere was happy to note the great progress which had taken place under the British administration of the country.

CHAPTER XLI

MR. FISCHEL'S RECEPTION BY SIR HERBERT SAMUEL —PROVIDES HOME FOR CHIEF RABBI

THE news of Mr. Fischel's arrival reached the ears of His Excellency, The High Commissioner, Sir Herbert Samuel, as a result of which on Sunday, July 24th, Mr. Fischel was visited at his hotel by a military officer who presented to him an invitation to call upon the High Commissioner, at the Government House, on the following day.

In accordance with the English custom, this officer read the invitation before formally handing it to Mr. Fischel. The invitation said:

"His Excellency, The High Commissioner, requests the pleasure of your presence at the Government House on Monday the 25th at 2:30 P. M. Should this time be inconvenient for you, you are requested to name an hour that will be satisfactory."

Mr. Fischel, of course, accepted the appointment for the hour fixed by Sir Herbert, welcoming the opportunity of consulting the Commissioner as to what steps might best be taken to carry out the principal objective of his visit, that of aiding in the upbuilding of the Jewish Homeland.

On arriving at the Government House the following day Mr. Fischel was ushered into the private office of the High Commissioner, whom he found a modest English gentleman attired in ordinary civilian clothing.

Mr. Fischel had been warned by the High Commissioner's Secretary that owing to the great number of visitors, Sir Herbert was compelled to insist on a time limit of twenty-minutes for each audience. In order, therefore, to accomplish the utmost in the time allotted to him, Mr. Fischel counted every moment.

When the twenty minutes were up the Secretary entered the

apartment and informed the Commissioner that a certain official was waiting for him. His answer was that this official should be referred to Mrs. Samuel who would entertain him until he was disengaged. Mr. Fischel's interview lasted an hour and three-quarters, during which time, despite the Secretary's interruptions at the expiration of almost every twenty-minute period, Sir Herbert disposed of all his callers either by sending them to Lady Samuel or to someone else.

Mr. Fischel was greatly pleased with the results of his visit to the High Commissioner, who suggested that he make a tour through the Holy Land, visiting the principal towns and cities and meeting the people and upon his return to Jerusalem that he should again call upon him.

Mr. Fischel found that not only was Sir Herbert a man with a true Jewish heart, ready and anxious to help the Jewish people to establish their homeland, but that he was especially interested in Chief Rabbi Abraham I. Kook, of whom he spoke in the highest terms.

Sir Herbert pointed out to Mr. Fischel that whereas the Chief representative of other religions in the city of Jerusalem each occupied a suitable residence, Rabbi Kook was compelled to live on the second floor of an old and dilapidated building where the proper reception to visitors was impossible. He stated that this residence ill-befitted the dignity of the high office of the Chief Rabbi of Palestine. He therefore advised Mr. Fischel that he would be glad if on the latter's return he would try to interest a few wealthy Americans for the purpose of building a more suitable home for the Chief Rabbi.

Upon reaching his hotel, Mr. Fischel placed the problem before his wife and daughter, with the result that, after short deliberation, they reached the decision to build a home for the Rabbi entirely at their own expense.

Mr. Fischel then called on Rabbi Kook and informed him of his conversation with the High Commissioner and the determination he had reached. Rabbi Kook at first declined Mr. Fischel's

offer but after a great deal of persuasion finally agreed to accept the gift, not as a personal tribute but as one made in recognition of his office.

Mr. Fischel then questioned the Chief Rabbi at length as to his requirements. In a very modest way Rabbi Kook replied that his personal needs were small but that inasmuch as it was Mr. Fischel's wish to provide a residence for the Chief Rabbi of Palestine, rather than for an individual, such a building should comprise the following: a salon to receive special guests, a meeting room for the reception of the general public, a succah or tabernacle, a synagogue with a separate room for women, a dining room, kitchen, three bedrooms and bathrooms and rooms for male and female servants.

Mr. Fischel, following his interview with the Chief Rabbi went at once to an architect and instructed him to prepare plans in accordance with the latter's suggestions.

On terminating his interview with the High Commissioner Mr. Fischel had requested the privilege of presenting to His Excellency a number of Americans who had accompanied him to Palestine and who also were desirous of aiding in the upbuilding of the Jewish Homeland.

Sir Herbert at once granted this request and on July 27, Mr. Fischel had the honor of presenting to the High Commissioner, in addition to Mrs. Fischel and his daughter, Rabbi Aaron Teitelbaum, Mr. and Mrs. Max Abrams, Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Horowitz, Mr. Jacob Levy and son, Mr. and Mrs. Charles Werbelowsky, Mr. and Mrs. Max Hirschenoff, Mr. and Mrs. Hyman Goldman and son of Rochester, New York, and Mr. and Mrs. Abram Mazer.

Sir Herbert, in person, escorted the entire party through the Government House and expressed to them his hope for the formation of an American business corporation, having as its purpose the development of the country in behalf of the Jewish people.

A few days after this interview Mr. Fischel and his party left Jerusalem in several automobiles for a trip through the Holy

Land. Upon reaching Nazareth the party found the chief official of that place awaiting a visit from the High Commissioner, with soldiers drawn up in military array for review. Cavalry had been stationed along both sides of the highway, forming a long line, and when the Fischel party in its cars reached the beginning of this line, it was mistaken for the High Commissioner's entourage so that it was accorded military honors and was saluted for the entire distance until the hotel in Nazareth was reached, where, for the first time, they learned the occasion for this unexpected reception.

About half an hour later the High Commissioner with his escort arrived at the same hotel and Mr. Fischel enjoyed the great pleasure of seeing a Jewish Prince, the First Prince of Israel since the destruction of the Temple 1900 years before, received with the high honors befitting a ruler of the people.

After a tour through all of Palestine, the party returned to Jerusalem where Mr. Fischel again called upon the High Commissioner and informed him of the plans he had arrived at, as a result of his inspection of the country. Mr. Fischel told the High Commissioner that on his return to America he would undertake the formation of such a commercial company as Sir Herbert had declared was necessary for the development of the country and also for the first time advised him of his intention to build a residence for the Chief Rabbi, the cornerstone of which would be laid before Mr. Fischel left for America. This news was received by Sir Herbert with expressions of great satisfaction and pleasure.

As soon as Mr. Fischel returned to Jerusalem he called a conference of the most representative Jews, to discuss with them various questions concerning the proposed home for the Chief Rabbi. It was the consensus of opinion that the Chief Rabbi's residence should be centrally located so that it might be easily accessible to all the people of the city.

Represented at the conference were the directors of the organization known as the Central Committee Knesseth Israel, which owned a number of buildings and much land in Jerusalem.

Among the holdings of the Knesseth Israel was a one story building occupying a large plot in the center of the city, facing the Rothschild Hospital.

The President of the organization suggested that the Chief Rabbi's residence be erected on the foundation of this building, which suggestion Mr. Fischel accepted because it seemed to him to insure the quickest and most practical way of carrying out the entire plan.

The cornerstone of the Chief Rabbi's residence was accordingly laid on Monday, August 15th. The ceremony was attended by the High Commissioner and his aides and many other officials, all in full military uniform, as well as by practically every Rabbi and the representatives of all the Jewish institutions in the Holy Land.

The exercises lasted throughout the entire day. On the following day, August 16, having seen this work begun, Mr. Fischel and his party left Palestine.

The return trip was planned so that Mr. Fischel was able to be present at the Zionist Congress at Carlsbad beginning September 4th to which he had been appointed a delegate by the Mizrachi, the religious branch of the Zionist Organization.

Before the Congress convened, Mr. Fischel attended many sessions of the delegates for the purpose of working out the program for the Congress and was named as a member of the Budget Committee, the work of which gave him an intimate knowledge of the scope and aims of the Zionist Organization.

Mr. Fischel, up to this time had not taken any active part in the executive work of the Zionist Organization and this was the first Zionist Congress he had attended. He was greatly impressed by the fact that such a large number of delegates had traveled thousands of miles with the sole purpose of extending their assistance in the upbuilding of Palestine, and he became more than ever anxious to carry out his earlier intention of using all his strength and influence to accomplish this end.

He was determined to assist in every way in helping to provide

a refuge in Palestine for the thousands of Jews of nearly every land who were forced by circumstances to leave their homes and who looked to the Holy Land as their one haven, now that the doors of America were practically closed to them through the immigration restrictions which were imposed following the end of the war.

The final session of the Zionist Congress took place on Wednesday, September 7. The Fischels had already booked their return passage on the "Berengaria," on which vessel they had made the trip to Europe and which was scheduled to leave Southampton on Friday afternoon, September 10.

In order to arrive on time the Fischels left Carlsbad on September 6, reaching Paris on Wednesday the seventh. They were but a few hours ride from Cherbourg, from which port the "Berengaria" was to leave on Saturday afternoon. As embarking on the steamer on Saturday would have necessitated the desecration of the Sabbath, they decided instead of taking a train from Paris to Cherbourg, to go to London, and from there to Southampton, where they were able to board the steamer on Friday afternoon.

They found on reaching the "Berengaria" that the same arrangements which had been made by the Cunard Steamship Company for the observance of the dietary laws on their outward voyage had again been made for their return home.

They arrived at Sandy Hook on Friday morning, September 16th. Mr. Fischel was met at quarantine by a large number of reporters who were anxious to get his impressions of Palestine and particularly to secure his views of the British High Commissioner, Sir Herbert Samuel.

The purport of this interview was published in the Jewish Tribune of September 23rd, when the following article appeared:

SIR HERBERT AND AMERICA

HARRY FISCHEL MAKES INTERESTING DISCLOSURES ON PALESTINE'S HIGH COMMISSIONER

Harry Fischel, prominent Jewish philanthropist, just returned with his wife and daughter from a summer spent in Palestine, is "enthusiastic over the future because of the idealistic spirit of the courageous settlers there and ready to use all my energy and a goodly part of my fortune for the development of the Jewish Homeland. Furthermore, I advise my friends to do the same."

Received shortly after his arrival by the High Commissioner, Mr. Fischel had several long conferences with Sir Herbert Samuel, in which the affairs of Palestine and development plans were discussed thoroughly and frankly. Few men have had such candid discussions with the High Commissioner as Mr. Fischel and with few men has the High Commissioner ever discussed affairs of the country so intimately and frankly. Here are Sir Herbert's views on the future of Palestine, particularly America's part in its making, as he gave them to Mr. Fischel and as Mr. Fischel reported his statement:

"Americans are always coming here and saying what they are going to do, but they never do it.

"With reference to the pogroms in Jaffa and Jerusalem: The Zionist Commission was so enthusiastic about the Balfour Declaration that it forgot a tenant was still occupying the premises. In order to move in, it was necessary either to buy out the tenant or fight. I am against fighting. When the Arabs heard of the Balfour Declaration they were frightened. It was explained how it would benefit them and bring money into the country; how the land would be improved; how work would be made for everyone. Instead, little money came from America, and the labor, which came in from Europe, was unskilled and competed with the Arabs taking their work away from them.

"The only way to prevent a recurrence of the trouble is to take the Arab in as a partner in everything you do in Palestine and show him a genuine friendly spirit. This can only be done, of

course, if America supplies the money to start developing the country. Palestine needs money for business, not for charity. Charity will never build Palestine."

Mr. Fischel informed us that he will soon call a conference of his friends, at which time he will tender a complete report of his findings in Palestine and of his interviews with the High Commissioner, also a complete plan for the formation of a company to help develop Palestine.

CHAPTER XLII

\$5,000,000 BUILDING AND LOAN COMPANY FOR PALESTINE FORMED

THROUGHOUT his homeward voyage Mr. Fischel concentrated his thoughts upon the manner in which the formation of the commercial development company suggested by Sir Herbert Samuel might be accomplished, so that on his arrival, just before the Holy Days, he had already formulated complete plans for this ambitious undertaking.

He lost little time in putting these plans into action and immediately after the holidays issued an invitation to a number of representative men in the real estate field and other branches of industry to meet with him at his residence, 118 East 93rd Street, to discuss the steps to be taken.

This meeting, which was held on October 31, 1921, was largely attended and after Mr. Fischel had related the impressions he had gained from his observations in the Holy Land and had told of his interviews with the High Commissioner and his talks with people in every walk of life, he broached his plan for the organization of a \$5,000,000 Palestinian Building and Loan Company.

The plan was immediately approved and there was not one among those present who did not agree to subscribe to the stock of the proposed corporation.

The plan, in detail, as Mr. Fischel then gave it and as it was later given to the press on November 25, 1921, was as follows:

When the Balfour Declaration was made public, I felt it my duty to help develop Palestine. I called together a number of prominent men in every line of industry and explained to them the advisability of organizing a Palestine Development Corporation.

It took little time to convince them that besides helping to build Palestine, this corporation would pay from a business standpoint. That same evening we decided to organize the Palestine Development Corporation with a capital of \$10,000,000. Several hundred thousand dollars were subscribed by those present.

A committee was appointed to prepare a prospectus. We decided to go slowly until we should get the approval of some of the most influential men in America. We laid the proposition before Judge Julian W. Mack, the late Jacob H. Schiff, Nathan Straus, Henry Morgenthau, Judge Abram I. Elkus, and the American Consul to Jerusalem, Otto A. Glazebrook, who was then in New York. Those gentlemen were all enthusiastic about the proposition and promised their cooperation.

One day Mr. Schiff and Judge Mack, then President of the American Zionist Organization, requested me not to proceed with the organization, because the sale of the stock would interfere with the Palestine Restoration Fund, for which a campaign was then being waged. Knowing the interest Mr. Schiff and Judge Mack had in all matters of this kind, our committee decided to comply with their request and wait for a more opportune time.

NO HOUSING FACILITIES

When Dr. Chaim Weizmann arrived in America, one of the points which he emphasized most strongly was that Palestine had no housing facilities. It could hardly accommodate the present population. Therefore, before any substantial immigration could be started, houses would have to be built on a large scale. The situation touched the inner strings of my heart, I felt that this being in my line, it was up to me to do all in my power to help build Palestine. I immediately decided that as soon as the "Hias" building would be completed, I would make the journey to Palestine and see what I could do.

Realizing that one man alone, with the best of intentions, could not accomplish much, I made every effort to persuade some of our successful builders to join me in that work. Those whom I approached on the subject, were willing to help both morally and financially, but not many were ready to make the trip with me. Finally I succeeded in interesting Jacob Levy of Levy Bros., well-known builders of Brooklyn, Joseph Horowitz, Charles Werbelowsky of Brooklyn, Max Abrahams of New York,

as well as Rabbi Aaron Teitelbaum, representing a proposed Palestine Building Corporation. While on the steamer we met Max Hirschenoff, Abraham Mazer of Brooklyn and Hyman Goldman and his son of Rochester, N. Y., who were also going to Palestine, and they joined our party. After several conferences with these gentlemen on the steamer, we unanimously agreed to unite to help build Palestine.

FEW WANT CHARITY

At Cantarrah, Egypt, we had an opportunity to interview many of the Chaltzim from all over Europe, who were also on their way to Palestine; young men and women from the richest families of Europe with the highest education. By their enthusiasm they reminded me of our Forefathers, who on receiving the Torah at Mt. Sinai said—*Nah-ase Ve Nishma*—"We will first take upon ourselves to do all that is required of us, and we will then hear what we are to do." This same spirit existed among these young men and women. They were ready and willing to make every possible sacrifice to help build up a Jewish Homeland in Palestine.

From the time we arrived until the hour of our leaving Palestine, I had occasion to see and converse with people of every kind, from the poorest unfortunates to the principal business men. All sorts of propositions were brought to me for consideration. What impressed me most was that only a small number wanted charity money, everybody wanted the opportunity to be a producer instead of a consumer.

We arrived in Jerusalem on Friday. On Sunday morning a messenger from the High Commissioner, Sir Herbert Samuel, came with an invitation, asking me to call on him at his residence in the Government House on Monday. Upon my arrival at the Government House I was immediately introduced to the High Commissioner, who made such a great impression upon me that at the moment, I felt it necessary to extend to him the message and blessing of the Jewish people of America, which I did, and for which he was very grateful.

The Government House is the finest building in Palestine, erected by the German Kaiser as his residence, at a cost of at least \$5,000,000. The story goes that in building this residence,

the Kaiser decreed that no Jew should perform any work on it. Is it not remarkable that this residence, in which no Jew was allowed to labor, is now occupied by the Jewish High Commissioner of Palestine? It certainly points the finger of God. It simply shows that the Messiah period is coming near to realization, and that the world at large is recognizing that the time has come for the Jewish people to come back to the land which was originally promised to them, and which they once occupied.

The High Commissioner informed me that Dr. Chaim Weizmann had communicated with him by letter and cable to make every effort to give me all assistance possible, in order to help me realize my desire to improve the housing situation in Palestine. We discussed at length every problem which confronts Palestine.

The next morning our party started out on an automobile tour of the entire country, to acquaint ourselves with all its resources. We visited every city in Palestine, large and small, as well as many of the colonies. We studied Palestine from every angle, the political, industrial and the housing situation.

AMERICAN BUILDING NOT PRACTICABLE

We started our investigation first in Jerusalem, where some building is being done by Jews. In Jaffa, building is projected on a much larger scale, because it is a port city, and also because the building material resources are better than in Jerusalem. In Haifa and Mount Carmel, some building is going on, and there are some factories for the manufacture of building material.

After a thorough and careful investigation everywhere, we came to the conclusion that the building of houses by American builders is not advisable, nor is it practicable. Instead of our building houses, we decided to help others to build, by loaning them from 50 to 60 per cent of the cost of the houses for a long term of years, payable in small installments, but at a fair rate of interest of from 6 per cent to 8 per cent, according to the location. At present, loans on real estate are difficult to obtain, and the interest is from 12 per cent to 18 per cent.

The reasons for our conclusions are as follows:

- 1.—We found several men in each city interested in the building trade and thoroughly capable of carrying on the building of houses on a large scale. It would, therefore, be useless for Amer-

ican builders to go into competition with them, except that I found that the laying out of the plans could be improved upon economically. This I did personally with the approval of the architects.

ARABS PROFITED

2.—We found several groups of men in the different cities, business men, recent immigrants and government officials, who had purchased large plots of ground. These groups are anxious to start building homes for themselves, but the largest majority of them have only half of the amount required for building deposited in the banks. All they need is a loan of the second half, which they will be able to pay off in small installments. Most of these families are now occupying rooms in houses owned by the Arabs, who are taking advantage of the shortage of houses. This shortage has been caused by the influx of about 10,000 Jewish people during the last two years, without any proportionate increase in housing facilities. These Arabs are charging as much as \$20 a month for a two-room apartment with no water, nor even a bathroom. A number of Arabs are adding an additional story to their occupied houses by taking two or three years' rent in advance, and with that money they almost pay for the cost of an additional story.

MORE BUILDING POSSIBLE

3.—The most important reason is that for the same amount of money which would be required to build one house, we would be helping to build nearly three houses, then, too, the investment would be so much safer, and we would be making room for a much larger number of families.

Therefore we decided that if American Jews expect to take advantage of the Balfour Declaration and are willing to help build a Jewish Homeland in Palestine, immediate steps should be taken to organize or to reorganize the several Palestine development companies which have lately been organized, into one large Building Loan Company, with a capital of at least \$5,000,000, for the sole purpose of loaning from 50 to 60 per cent on houses to

be built in and around the cities of Jerusalem, Jaffa, Haifa, Tiberias and Safed. These loans to be made for a long term of years and payable in small installments, at a rate of interest of from 6 to 8 per cent in accordance with the location.

PALESTINIAN JEWS HELP

We have already arranged with several influential men, three in Jerusalem, three in Jaffa and three in Haifa, who have agreed to subscribe personally to the stock of this corporation, and serve on the board of directors. Each group in these cities has volunteered to do all the work required in connection with the making of the loans in their cities gratuitously in order to minimize the expense.

After going over the entire political and economic situation with Sir Herbert Samuel, he explained to me the benefits of the Balfour Declaration to the Jews of the world, also his expectation of the whole-hearted support of the Jewish people. He went on to say that he could not expect financial assistance from the Jews of Europe, on account of the low valuation of their money, but they were doing their share toward the upbuilding of Palestine by sending over strong and healthy men and women, the sinew of the country, full of energy and vigor, and ready to make any sacrifice.

SIR HERBERT DISAPPOINTED

Sir Herbert expressed his disappointment in the American Jewish people. He stated that many Americans are coming to Palestine, laying before him all sorts of plans, but as soon as they leave they forget all about them, whereas the European Jews make no promises, but put their shoulders to the wheel and are making all sorts of sacrifices to help build the country.

I explained to him that the European Jew, upon leaving his country, severs all connections with it. Naturally, upon his arrival in Palestine, he has to make the best of it, as he has no other country to which he can go back. Whereas, the American Jew, upon his return to America, finds every hand outstretched to him, glad to receive him back under the protection of our beloved Stars and Stripes, and before he will extend his assistance to Palestine by investing his capital there, he wants to be assured that his investment will be protected.

APPROVES BUILDING COMPANY

I then laid before him our plan for the Building Loan Company, which met with his entire approval. He emphasized the fact that one of the reasons he was compelled to stop immigration into Palestine, is because there are no houses for the people to live in. To use his own words: "I do not desire to make Palestine a sanatorium, with people living in tents. Houses must be built before I will allow extensive immigration." He also remarked that the Building Loan Company would induce many people to build homes on a large scale, and it would supply occupation for a large number of immigrants in the building trade, skilled labor and unskilled labor. He further assured me that in order to safeguard our investment, he would see to it that the corporation laws of Palestine were modified, so that they might conform with the by-laws of the Building Loan Company.

After many conferences in Palestine with men in every walk of life, and later with several of the leaders at the Zionist Congress in Carlsbad (to which I was a delegate), and above all, after a long conversation with Dr. Weismann on the question of building in Palestine, I came to the following conclusion, which was agreed to by the High Commissioner.

THE ONLY WAY

If we wait for Palestine to be built by Palestinian Jews alone, Palestine will never be built. If we should wait until Palestine be built by European Jews, it will take a very long time. Even if we should wait to build Palestine with money collected in America from a charitable point of view only, Palestine will never be built.

The only way Palestine can be built, and should be built, is by American Jews, with American money invested on a solid business basis. And steps must be taken immediately in this direction, or we may lose this opportunity for which the Jewish people have been waiting for so many years.

One thousand dollars loaned will help build a home for a deserving family. One million dollars will help build homes for 1,000 families, and at the same time will furnish employment for several thousand people. Besides, the money collected from installments on the mortgages will again be invested in new mortgages, making it possible to help build more homes.

So favorable was the reaction to these plans by all those who attended the conference at Mr. Fischel's home, that he proceeded at once to the work of organizing the Corporation and called together at his office a Committee of those who had attended the first meeting. This Committee consisted of Jacob Levy, Joseph Polestein, Henry D. Weil, Joseph Ravitch, and S. A. Israel.

Steps were then taken to secure a charter and Judge Abram I. Elkus, former Ambassador to Turkey, was retained for this purpose.

At about this time the Annual Convention of the American Zionist Organization took place at which a number of prominent members severed their connection with that Organization. Among these was U. S. Supreme Court Justice Louis D. Brandeis, Federal Judge Julian W. Mack, Nathan Straus, the late Sol Rosenbloom, Robert Szold, Jacob DeHaas, Samuel J. Rosensohn, Julius Simon and Mrs. Joseph Fels.

This group then formed a corporation under the name of the Palestine Cooperative Company for the purpose of helping to establish different industries in Palestine. The main feature of this Company's program, however, was to form a Building, Loan and Mortgage Company on practically the same lines as had been decided upon by Mr. Fischel and his Committee.

In November, Jacob DeHaas, who was the Secretary of the new Brandeis faction among the Zionists, called upon Mr. Fischel with the suggestion that his Committee should join with this group with the aim of forming one strong corporation, rather than to have two separate organizations engaged in virtually the same work.

This plan appealed strongly to Mr. Fischel for the reason that he believed much quicker results could be obtained by taking advantage of a corporation already in existence, particularly where such men as Justice Brandeis, Judge Mack and Nathan Straus were interested. He therefore called his Committee together and laid the suggestion before them.

The members of Mr. Fischel's Committee were all real estate

men and favored a corporation they themselves should manage personally but since Mr. Fischel was convinced that the interests of the people of Palestine would be much better served through a merger of the two organizations, he arranged a meeting with Justice Brandeis, Judge Mack and Mr. DeHaas. At this meeting it was agreed that the Palestine Cooperative Company should form a subsidiary Company under the name of the Palestine Building Loan and Savings Association with a capital stock of \$250,000 of which sum the Brandeis group should subscribe for shares to the extent of \$125,000 and the remaining \$125,000 of stock should be subscribed by Mr. Fischel and those working with him.

The Company was accordingly organized and Mr. Fischel was elected as Chairman of the Palestine Building, Loan and Savings Association. He started immediately to secure subscriptions to the stock with the result that the allotment of \$125,000 which he and his Associates were to take was soon made up through Mr. Fischel's personal subscription of \$25,000 and \$100,000 subscribed by a number of his friends.

The late Mr. Sol Rosenbloom of Pittsburgh, one of the organizers of the Palestine Building Loan and Savings Association, at this time volunteered to go to Palestine in order to inaugurate the work of the corporation there. Before his departure he was tendered a dinner by the officers and directors of the Corporation which was held at the Hotel Astor on January 8, 1922.

At this dinner Judge Mack told of the great interest Mr. Fischel had taken in the formation of the Palestine Building, Loan and Savings Association and declared that he had been largely instrumental in the success of the project. Judge Mack expressed the hope that Mr. Fischel, with his wide knowledge of conditions in Palestine, would be able to go there personally to complete the organization of the Association in accordance with American methods and system.

The press gave considerable space to the dinner to Mr. Rosenbloom, the New York Times on January 9, 1922, containing the following account of the function:

SOL ROSENBLOOM ENTERTAINED

Palestine Development Council Entertains Pittsburgh Banker— Receives \$75,000 Cash and Large Pledges

The departure this week of Sol Rosenbloom, Pittsburgh banker, for Palestine, where he will undertake the establishment of the Credit Union Bank, was signalized last night by a dinner in his honor at the Hotel Astor. It was given by the Palestine Development Council, of which Mr. Rosenbloom is Treasurer. A large gathering of noted New York Zionists attended the dinner.

Supreme Court Justice Julian W. Mack, Chairman of the Council, who presided, declared that "if Palestine is to be built up as a Jewish homeland it must be built up in an orderly and businesslike way. Unless business can be conducted there, there can be no future to the land. It is necessary that agriculture, industry and commerce be conducted in Palestine as it is in other lands and Palestine can in that way maintain a self-sustaining and self-respecting people."

Rabbi Stephen S. Wise said that he had finally recuperated from the meetings at Cleveland last June, when the present officers of the Palestine Development Council ceased to remain heads of the Zionist Organization of America.

"This is a peace meeting," he said. "There can be peace only when men or groups have been at war. We have not quarreled. We have dared to insist upon the maintenance of certain moral standards in and for Palestine and we have dared to be insistent in our demands because Palestine is deserving of our best. We believe that the only way to serve and to build up Palestine is to insist upon the highest in the standards and in the conduct of those who are entrusted with leadership."

Subscriptions to the council were announced. Some were contributions and others were the purchase of stock in the organization. Harry Fischel of New York pledged \$100,000 and gave \$25,000 cash. Sol Rosenbloom gave \$50,000 and pledged \$200,-

000 more in the course of ten years. A pledge of \$60,000 from Mrs. Mary Fels was announced. Other pledges of almost fifty thousand dollars were also reported.

Nathan Straus was scheduled to speak but he asked to be excused because he was not feeling well. Other speakers were Miss Ruth Franklin, Julius Simon, Harry Fischel, Louis S. Posner, Captain Alexander Aaronsohn and Mr. Rosenbloom.

CHAPTER XLIII

ADVANCES PLAN FOR HOUSING AMERICAN WORKERS —BUILDS AGAIN ON BROADWAY

At the time that Mr. Fischel was giving a large part of his attention to Palestine and its problems he also was giving considerable thought to the housing situation in New York which had become increasingly difficult for a large part of the population owing to the scarcity of certain types of living accommodations and the high rentals that were being exacted.

This condition affected particularly the working people and others in moderate circumstances. While there was an over-production of the middle class and more expensive apartments, the poor man, able to pay not more than \$8 or \$9 a room, could scarcely find a place in which to live at this price. This condition had existed during and since the war and not only was it impossible to find homes in the city proper at these rentals but even in the suburbs they were not to be had.

Applying himself to this problem as he had previously applied himself to the matter of relieving the financial situation affecting real estate through the amortization of mortgages, Mr. Fischel suggested a solution of the new difficulty. Many proposals for relieving the acute housing situation in New York were made at this time, one of them by Mr. Samuel Untermyer, and Mr. Fischel's plan, differing largely from that of Mr. Untermyer, naturally attracted wide attention.

His thought was, that if those engaged in the building trades were to build for themselves with their own labor, they would be able to save a large part of the cost of construction, thereby not only adding to the housing facilities and bringing a substantial reduction in rentals, but making it possible for the workers, in



THE FISCHEL BUILDING

*A modern mercantile structure on upper Broadway,
at the southeast corner of Broadway
and 37th Street. Erected by Mr. Fischel in 1922.*

time, to become the owners of their homes through such cooperative building.

This proposal was heralded generally as being a practical one that would be productive of most beneficial results. The New York Times, among other papers, in its issue of December 23, 1921, announced the plan, extensively as follows:

HOUSING PLAN FOR BUILDING TRADES

BUILDER WOULD HAVE LABOR ERECT AND OCCUPY OWN HOUSES.

COST REDUCED BY 25%

Workers, Constructing Own Apartment to Cost \$60,000, Would Supply \$20,000 in Day Labor

Workers from the various building trades unions, acting on a co-operative basis, could, with the help of a financial institution, successfully erect their own tenements at a cost reduction of 20 to 25 per cent, according to a plan outlined yesterday by Harry Fischel, the well-known builder.

The reduced cost, Mr. Fischel said, would represent the contribution of the artisans, who would, of course, be working without pay.

Mr. Fischel said he drew up his suggested plan after finding what he said were some fundamental objections to Samuel Untermyer's \$100,000,000 tenement-building project.

An outline of the plan has been sent to Mr. Untermyer and to the President of the Building Trades Council. Discussing the plan, yesterday, Mr. Fischel said:

"I have been watching very carefully the progress made by Mr. Untermyer for increasing the housing facilities in the City of New York. Mr. Untermyer has certainly accomplished a whole lot in getting the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company to agree to loan a large sum of money for the purpose of building cheap houses near New York for a class of people who cannot afford to pay more than \$8 or \$9 a room.

"I believe it is a good, humanitarian act on the part of the officers of the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company to go out of their way to comply with his request. It is also praiseworthy

on the part of the Thompson-Starrett Company to offer to construct a large number of buildings without any profit, and it is certainly praiseworthy of the building trades unions, the members of which are willing to work six hours a week without pay.

OBSTACLE TO UNTERMYER PLAN

"I would like to call to Mr. Untermeyer's attention the fact that no institution will make a loan on a house before said house is nearly finished, even if the institution shall agree to make such loan in the form of a building loan; it will, likewise, not advance any money until the building is at least one or two stories high.

"Under the circumstances, did Mr. Untermeyer stop to think that it is necessary to have some one who is going to buy the land and furnish the necessary capital to bring those houses to such a position that an institution will be able to make a payment on the loan.

"Furthermore, no insurance company, nor any other institution, would loan more than 60 to 65 per cent of the cost of the building. While it is true that the offer of the Thompson-Starrett Company and the offer of six hours a week of labor free would reduce the cost of the building 10 to 15 per cent, which may make it possible for an institution to loan 75 per cent of the cost, and while it may make it somewhat easier, there must be some one who would be willing to take the big initial responsibility in carrying such a project into effect.

"Under the circumstances it is clear that unless such individual or corporation is available, this proposition with all its merits and the generosity of the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company and the Union men could not be accomplished.

"I am personally very much interested in the housing situation. In fact, I am responsible for the amortization of mortgages, which has been adopted by a good many institutions, and which gives people a chance to pay off their mortgages gradually, instead of calling for the entire amount when it is due.

"I have therefore given a great deal of consideration to this housing situation, and would suggest the following proposition, which I believe could be carried out in a very short time.

"Make arrangements with the building trade unions to organize groups of different trades for the purpose of owning and building a house for each group on a cooperative plan.

A 24 PER CENT. REDUCTION

"A house which is to accommodate twenty families should be built by fifteen men from the different building trades. All these men are to furnish the labor for all the houses free of charge. In this way almost the entire labor on the building could be supplied without the necessity of investing any money for same, which will amount approximately to about 20 to 25 per cent of the cost of the building. This would give a chance to each one of those men to own an apartment without putting in any money; furthermore, they would be able to buy the material for such houses at a much lower rate than the prevailing market price.

"When each house will be completed fifteen families will be able to have their own apartment. Having taxes free for the next ten years, all they would have to pay would be the interest on the mortgage, water, taxes and insurance. The five apartments left could be rented and would bring enough to cover the interest charge on the house with all other expenses.

"To take a concrete example, a five-story house, 50 by 100 feet, with four families on a floor, each having four or five rooms and bathroom, would cost approximately \$60,000. Under ordinary circumstances an institution could loan two-thirds, namely \$40,000. The labor on such a house and the deduction of any builders' profit would equal the other \$20,000 necessary for the operation.

"The interest on \$40,000 at 6 per cent would mean \$2400 and together with the insurance, water charges and incidentals would bring the running expenses on the house up to \$3000 a year.

"The five apartments which would be left for renting would pay not alone the necessary expenses of running the house, but would even be sufficient to amortize the mortgage somewhat.

"While to carry out this plan would also require a substantial amount of money, it would not be anywhere near the amount required under the first plan. All that would be necessary is a small sum to pay on the land and some money for incidentals to carry up the foundation.

"For this purpose, I suggest that a call shall be issued to a group of public-spirited men, who shall subscribe to the stock of a corporation which shall be organized for that purpose, with sufficient capital to begin buying land and start building several houses.

"I would also suggest that each one of the apartment owners shall pay from \$20 to \$25 per month for the purpose of paying off the money, advanced by the corporation.

"When that is all paid up, the payment of this nominal rent can be continued until the entire mortgage will be paid up, which would take less than ten years. Under this proposed plan, each workingman in the building trade, by simply sacrificing a few weeks of his time, can own an apartment without paying any money, and have the benefit of free rent forever.

"I am fully convinced that a capital of \$500,000 would be sufficient to buy land and start a number of houses, as demanded by the trades unions, and the number of houses can be increased."

In order to extend the scope of his charities and to meet the many additional calls which came to him with each succeeding year, Mr. Fischel decided at this time to endeavor to increase his worldly possessions so that he might better keep pace with the ever growing demands upon him.

He therefore determined to renew his building operations with another large construction enterprise. On January 15, 1922 he succeeded in obtaining possession of a large parcel of land on the South East corner of Broadway and 37th Street, immediately opposite the site of the building he had erected in 1913, nine years previously, and which he had sold to Mr. Ruben Sadowsky.

When Mr. Fischel erected the Sadowsky Building it was the first mercantile building in this section of Broadway. Since that time the locality had rapidly developed into one of the best neighborhoods for business in the city and he decided to erect on the new site a sixteen story building for use of the best type of merchants.

The acquisition of this property, one of the most expensive locations in New York, with Mr. Fischel's plans for the building he proposed to erect, created a great deal of interest in the real estate world and, as was to have been expected, evoked a considerable amount of comment.

The New York Times on January 18, 1922, contained this announcement of the project:

"BROADWAY CORNER IMPROVEMENT WILL INVOLVE \$7,500,000
Harry Fischel to Pay \$6,000,000 to Hoe Estate For Use of
37th St. Site: To Spend \$1,500,000 on Building

The group of old buildings at the southeast corner of Broadway and Thirty-seventh Street is finally to give way to a big business building, a structure that will cost \$1,500,000 to build. This was decided yesterday after months of negotiations between Harry Fischel, builder, and the Hoe Estate, which has owned the property for the last thirty-five years.

It was reported several weeks ago that Mr. Fischel had secured the corner, but this was denied by Frederick Fox, treasurer of the Robert Hoe Estate Company, the holding concern of the Hoe family. He said that negotiations were pending. These negotiations were concluded yesterday by Frederick Fox & Co., when Mr. Fischel and the Hoe Estate representatives settled the difficulties that had held the deal open. Mr. Fischel takes the property for twenty-one years, with two renewals of twenty-one years, each, at a rental that is estimated will total \$6,000,000.

A sixteen-story building will be erected on the property, which has an area of 14,000 square feet. It will extend along Broadway to the Van Ingren property, on the north side of Thirty-sixth Street from Broadway to Sixth Avenue, which the Greenwich Savings Bank secured last spring as a site for a fine building. The Fischel structure design will be influenced by the bank improvement, for it is the aim of the builder and the bank directors to make the block one of the most attractive on Broadway. The south side of the building, which will tower many stories above the bank quarters, will be finished in the same material and with as much care as the street facades of the structure. When the structure has been completed the bank will take a mortgage on it. The building will not cover the Sixth Avenue and Thirty-seventh Street corner, for the Hoe family has other plans for that property. Joseph Ravitch, who has been associated with Mr. Fischel in other building projects, will erect the building. Som-

merfeld & Steckler will design the structure. It will be planned especially for the millinery trades."

It was at the insistence of Mr. Joseph Ravitch, who continued to be associated with Mr. Fischel, that this new building, one of the largest in the section, was named the Fischel Building.

In less than a year from the time the undertaking was started the building was completed and occupied by some of the most prominent merchants in New York.

CHAPTER XLIV

AN INTERVAL OF RENEWED WAR RELIEF EFFORT

CONTRARY to the hope of all who for four long years had been engaged in the work of raising funds for the relief of the Jewish sufferers through the war, the signing of the Armistice and the cessation of hostilities failed to lessen the need for assistance.

The post-war period, indeed, increased the calls on America for aid for thousands of Jewish refugees and others who continued to face indescribable hardship and suffering, so that even down to the present day it has been impossible at any time to discontinue the efforts in behalf of these unfortunates.

The ending of actual war-fare, on the other hand, had the effect of turning the public mind in America away from the necessities of the situation and made it increasingly difficult to procure funds, with the result that all of the war relief agencies had slackened their efforts.

The Central Committee for the Relief of Jews Suffering through the War, in common with other Committees, had largely lessened its activities but was confronted with urgent pleas from the Jews in the various devastated areas for further assistance. It was finally decided that a new drive should be undertaken to help particularly the Jewish institutions which were without funds and whose survival was absolutely necessary for the continuance of Jewish life. In accordance with this decision campaigns were again conducted throughout the United States in every city and town, large and small.

Mr. Fischel, who had continued as Treasurer of the Central Relief Committee, in January 1922 received an urgent plea from the Chairman of the Central Committee's drive in New Haven, Conn., to attend the most important conference that had yet

been held in that State in relation to aid for European Jewry. This plea, which he felt he could not refuse, was as follows:

SHAPIRO & SHAPIRO
Attorneys and Counselors at Law
SUITE 312 MEIGS BUILDING
BRIDGEPORT, CONN.

Mr. Harry Fischel,
118 East 93rd Street,
New York, N. Y.

January 23, 1922.

Dear Mr. Fischel:

Connecticut is planning the largest and most important conference ever held in our State to precede our new campaign for the war sufferers in Europe, under the auspices of the American Jewish Relief Committee, co-operating with the Central and People's Relief Committee.

Leading co-religionists from twenty-five cities and towns in our State, which has accepted a quota of \$150,000, will be present at this conference, which is to take place at the Hotel Taft, in New Haven, next Sunday, January 29th, at two o'clock in the afternoon.

We would consider it a privilege if you could deliver an address on this occasion, which, if my recollection serves me right, will be your first visit to this State in this cause, and I hope that you may find your engagements such that you will be able to accept our invitation.

Colonel Isaac M. Ullman and Judge Jacob Caplan, who are respectively State Treasurer and Secretary, join in this request as we feel that Connecticut, emerging from the industrial depression, wishes to do its utmost towards the success of this campaign and know that your being with us will prove most opportune and of the greatest assistance.

With kindest personal regards, I am

Very sincerely yours,

CHARLES H. SHAPIRO,
Chairman for Connecticut.

Although Mr. Fischel had not made it a practice to speak at public functions he went to New Haven on the date fixed, at which time he made the following address, which in reality formed a complete history of the work of the Central Jewish Relief Committee throughout its several years of existence:

My friends:

The Central Relief Committee, of which I have the honor to be treasurer, was the first Committee to be organized in aid of our brethren abroad, coming into being on October 8th, 1914, by virtue of the efforts of the Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations of America. We have collected over \$9,000,000 in sums large and small, much of which money could never have been raised, but for the fact that in the early days, every Orthodox Jew throughout the country, as many still do, considered it a holy obligation to constitute himself an active worker of the Central Relief Committee. Our people responded to our call, because they knew that our Committee, in particular, represents Orthodox Jewry abroad and that our pressure would surely be used to the end, that Judaism as such, should not be wiped out because of social and economic changes that might take place, but would be strengthened by the manner in which we would see to it, the funds should be distributed. We have always cooperated in Joint Distribution Committee drives as we are now doing.

You can well understand the amount of work entailed in the handling of small amounts, and what a tremendous task it was for us to be able to get in touch with every city, large or small, throughout the United States and Canada, including a few of the South American countries, to say nothing of places where the number of Jews was represented by only one or two families.

The Central Relief Committee is interested in this Drive, because it realizes that the care of the 300,000 or more orphans, has placed upon us a sacred obligation, not alone of caring for them physically but also of making sure that they are so brought up that they will be an asset to real Judaism.

The medical and sanitary aid rendered to communities abroad and calculated to check disease and lessen the death rate, is a work that requires no apology, but its duration is limited because after we shall have equipped the various hospitals with instruments, modern surgical appliances, etc., and have obtained the co-

operation of the local physicians, as members of the local sanitary boards, they will be able to continue that work of their own accord without further aid from us.

The Credit Associations,—which are being subsidized out of the funds to be raised largely through this campaign—with the change for the better of industrial conditions everywhere, which we all hope for, will naturally afford to our people abroad the opportunity to regain the position of self dependence which they formerly occupied.

There is one work in particular, however, that concerns the Central Relief Committee most. This task is included in our cultural program, which concerns itself with the preservation of Judaism. We feel that the children as they grow up, must continue to respect our holy traditions and practice those religious rites, without which they must prove, in the years to come, a hindrance and not an asset to Judaism. If we care for Judaism in its broader aspect, we must continue to inspire the feeling of pride in the child; we must instill in the little ones that religious spirit which not alone makes them better Jews, but better men and women, and incidentally, assures their respect for either parent and for the memory of their departed. The Central Relief Committee has recognized that the doing away with the Talmud Torahs, Chadorim and Yeshivas in many instances cannot be permitted to continue. Just as soon as we had an opportunity to learn the exact status of affairs in that respect, we took it upon ourselves to subsidize all the schools in the various countries, and have afforded them the assistance, without which, thousands upon thousands of children would today be compelled to forego schooling to which they are entitled.

In Poland alone, our aid has been extended to 328 cities and small towns and 502 Jewish educational institutions are receiving our grants, 103,000 children thus being looked after. These figures are based upon a report received by us some time ago, and by now, I dare say that, with the additional amounts forwarded to our Committee abroad they have been able to further extend their important work. It is claimed that over 400,000 children in Poland alone require support and if only slightly over 100,000 children are able to be reached the reflection is not one aimed at us, but proves that the Orthodox Jews all over the country have failed sufficiently to recognize this particular work, as their holy obligation.

Two-hundred and ninety-five Talmud Torahs, 15 Talmud Torah Yeshivas, 15 Yeshivas and various other types of schools, including kindergartens, high schools and teachers' institutes were enumerated in the report that I quote from.

The following countries have received direct assistance for cultural work from the Central Relief Committee, and the amounts represent a period of fourteen months only.

Austria	\$811.10
Czecho-Slovakia	15150.00
Russo-Carpathia	1850.00
Constantinople	2000.00
Germany	3386.00
Hungary	5400.00
Latvia	11400.00
Lithuania	52320.30
Poland	72869.30
Palestine	118613.30
Roumania	1250.00
Russia & Ukrania	7091.81
Vilna & Vicinity	33250.00
Rabbis	3600.00
	————— \$361,391.81

If I had the figures showing how many children have been thus enabled to receive the care and education, which but for us and I might say but for you, would have been impossible, you would indeed feel proud of what you have done and prouder still of the work that you must pledge yourself to do from now on.

We trust that in consequence of the work of reconstruction, which will be done with the money collected through this drive, many of the parents now unable to pay for their children's education, will be able to do so when they are again on their feet. But until then, and it is going to take some time, you must not forget that Judaism is on trial and must fight for its very existence; for it must fight not alone its outer but its inner enemies. You must not forget that whatever governmental support may have been obtained for the maintenance of Jewish schools, has been withdrawn completely. You must also remember that in the so-called Public Schools, where formerly admissions were limited as to the number of Jews, conditions were seldom as bad as now. Even

the small percentage which was formerly admitted was done away with almost everywhere, except in Hungary where they have been recently reinstated for the first time.

The condition of the refugees is most deplorable. Many of the cities from which they came have been destroyed. Many of the countries from which they came, have nothing to offer to them upon their return. Many of the countries to which they might have gone, no longer extend to them the welcome of former years. In every large city of Europe, in the Jewish quarters, refugees abound from Ukrania. The stories they have to tell are too horrible to listen to, and that is why I will not narrate any of the experiences told to me while abroad last year, because they would provoke your tears, and I am here not to draw upon them for they are useless, excepting insofar as they evince sympathy. What we want you to do is not alone to give of your sympathy but of yourself by rendering service that will tax all of your energy, all of your spare time and of your means to an extent that will truly express sacrifice of the highest type.

When I was in Carlsbad last year, as a delegate to the Zionist Congress, I met the man who truly represented our people in various parts of devastated Europe. They all complained that hard hit as they are, because of conditions, they expected that with the return of those of our people who left in the early stages of the war, conditions would become more trying. They emphasized the over-crowding of the schools, the lack of proper buildings, lack of proper apparel, which hinders the child from attending school during the winter, and a thousand and one instances, reflecting upon the needs of various type and kind.

In the figures enumerated in relation to countries, you will, perhaps, have noticed that we have devoted more money for education in Palestine than in any other country. The reason for that is due to the fact that Palestine has always had the support of the world at large, and now receives aid mainly, or almost exclusively, from America.

When I was in Palestine last year, I had the extreme pleasure of visiting the various schools supported by us, and it would have done your heart good, had you been with me, to see the wonderful progress the children are making. Upon these children we must concentrate, as never before, because they are our only hope for the future of that country.

While I came here to talk to you as the Treasurer of the Central Relief Committee, however, I want to impress upon you that in this drive, we have united all our efforts, and have instructed all our representatives throughout the United States, to put their shoulders to the wheel, and work for this united drive. I therefore feel the right to plead with you, not as a representative of the Central Relief Committee only, but as one who is devoted heart and soul, both morally and financially, to this great and probably the last drive for the rehabilitation of these poor war sufferers, and especially for these poor orphans, whose parents have left them in our charge, and we ought to consider it a great privilege to be in a position to help those who cannot help themselves.

It has fallen to the privilege of American Jewry to lift our people out of their struggle and true to our habit as of old, we have done our best. Doing our best is not enough, we must do better. Yours is the opportunity and yours will be the blessing when you have accomplished this task.

As a result of this and other addresses, the meeting was very successful and resulted in the raising of a large sum of money for the new campaign.

CHAPTER XLV

PALESTINE HOME BUILDING PLANS GO FORWARD— THE RUTENBERG HYDRO-ELECTRIC POWER PLANT FOR JERUSALEM

THE bringing to fruition of the elaborate plans for the financing of the contemplated improvements in Palestine required no end of arduous and exacting detail but Mr. Fischel permitted none of his other activities to interfere with the progress of this work, which he regarded as of primary necessity and importance to the future of the Jewish people.

One of the first steps toward the actual functioning of the Palestine Building Loan and Savings Association, organized as a subsidiary of the Palestine Cooperative Company and both of which were constituents of the Palestine Development Council, was a meeting of the representatives of the three corporations. This joint meeting took place at the office of Nathan Straus on February 22, 1922.

The minutes of this meeting which are of historical interest, herewith follow:

A meeting was held at the office of Nathan Straus on the 22nd day of February, 1922, at which the following were present:

On behalf of the Palestine Development Council: Justice Louis D. Brandeis, Judge Julian W. Mack, Dr. Stephen S. Wise, Mrs. Joseph Fels.

On behalf of the Palestine Cooperative Company: Judge Julian W. Mack, Harry Fischel, Bernard Flexner, Robert Szold, Samuel J. Rosensohn and Emil Weinheim, and Jacob de Haas on behalf of the Central Committee.

The following resolutions were unanimously adopted:

1—That the proper officers of the Palestine Cooperative Company be authorized to set aside from its funds the sum of \$250,-

000 for the purpose of instituting a Building Loan and Savings Association in and about Jerusalem.

2—That the Board of Directors notify the High Commissioner of Palestine that the Palestine Cooperative Company has the capital necessary for the organization and operation of a Building Loan and Savings Association in and about Jerusalem, and is prepared to begin business.

3—That the Board of Directors transmit to the High Commissioner a proposed ordinance permitting the organization of a Building Loan and Savings Association in Palestine, and providing the machinery for its supervision.

4—That the Building Loan Committee of the Palestine Cooperative Company proceed with the preparation of the plans and details for the operation of the Building Loan and Savings Association.

5—That the Committee consist of the following members:

MR. HARRY FISCHEL, *Chairman*

SAMUEL J. ROSENSOHN

ROBERT SZOLD

BERNARD FLEXNER

6—That the committee proceed to give the fullest publicity to the entire plan for the organization and operation of a Building Loan and Savings Association in and about Jerusalem.

It was further resolved that since Mr. Bernard Flexner is shortly to go to Palestine that he and Mr. Rosenbloom are authorized to carry out the plans adopted by the Building Loan Committee, establish suitable offices in Jerusalem, engage the proper manager and begin business as soon as the ordinance is approved by the High Commissioner.

The Board congratulated Mr. Harry Fischel upon his personal achievement not only in completing his immediate task of raising \$100,000 in stock subscriptions, but in his efforts to bring the whole plan to a successful conclusion. Mr. Fischel promised to continue his efforts to develop and enlarge the building loan feature of the Company.

Signed, SAMUEL J. ROSENSOHN,
Secretary.

Following this meeting formal notification was given to Sir Herbert Samuel, that the Company was now ready to function.

The notification was in the form of a letter addressed to the High Commissioner of Palestine by Judge Julian W. Mack and was as follows:

March 9, 1922.

My dear Sir Herbert:

I am sure that you will be interested to know that the Palestine Cooperative Company now has the necessary capital for launching a Savings and Loan Association, formed primarily for the benefit of wage-earners and other persons of limited means, to enable them to accumulate their savings and thus eventually acquire homes.

Such a company will further the association of persons (in the beginning in and about Jerusalem) to whom the obligation of a small monthly contribution would be a stimulus to continue saving. The amount contributed, increased by legitimate interest, will constitute a fund from which mortgage loans will be made to members to aid them in procuring modest homes. It will thus encourage industry, frugality, saving and homebuilding among its members.

To do this effectively, an ordinance will be necessary to permit the incorporation of Savings and Loan Associations in Palestine. We purpose incorporating a company under such ordinance, if enacted, and are prepared to start operations in Jerusalem. Mr. Sol. S. Rosenbloom, treasurer of the Palestine Cooperative Company, is by this time in Palestine, and Mr. Bernard Flexner expects to be there on April 21, 1922. Each is a director of and together represent the Palestine Cooperative Company. They are ready to organize the Company so that it may begin operations.

As a guide for the necessary legislation, which may, perhaps, be of service to your legal secretary, we attach hereto a suggested ordinance, modeled on the New York Statute, in our judgment the best in the United States.

All legislation of this kind in the United States contemplates the possible payment of some amount in excess of legal interest, called a premium, not for the purpose of securing larger profit to the Association, but as a possible means of determining which of the members should have the loan, and provides that the payment of such premiums should not be deemed a violation of any statute against usury. While it is not contemplated that any

premiums will be charged for loans by this company and our proposed by-laws will not provide therefore, the business may so develop that that may be the sole means of determining which of the members should have the loan. For this reason it seems advisable to permit it to be done.

The primary essential to the success of Savings and Loan Associations is proper and effective governmental supervision. In New York, this is secured through examiners under supervision of the Banking Department. We trust that the laws of Palestine will likewise provide for such supervision.

The Palestine Cooperative Company proposes owning stock in the Building and Loan Association to be formed to operate in Jerusalem. Sufficient capital has been secured and set aside specifically for the purpose. A committee of the Palestine Cooperative Company has prepared a general plan of operation and is preparing a detailed set of by-laws. This committee is headed by Mr. Harry Fischel, a very successful real estate operator in New York, who is fully familiar with the operation of Building Loan Associations and with the necessity for buildings in Palestine. Mr. Fischel has been of the greatest assistance in making possible the immediate launching of this venture. I understand from Mr. Fischel that he has conferred with you with reference to such a corporation.

Yours very sincerely,

Sir Herbert Samuel,
High Commissioner,
Jerusalem, Palestine.

JULIAN W. MACK

The significance attached to the enterprise on the part of the press and public is reflected in the following article which appeared in the Hebrew Standard of March 3, 1922, together with an article in the Jewish Tribune on March 17th and an editorial on the same date:

Article from the Hebrew Standard, March 3, 1922.

TO INFORM HIGH COMMISSIONER BUILDING LOAN PLAN READY

A plan whereby interest and loan will be repaid within a period of about ten years without unduly straining the resources of the borrower, is the most striking feature of the plan worked out for the establishment of a Building Loan and Savings Association in Jerusalem which is to be established shortly by the Palestine Co-operative Company. At a meeting of the directors of the Company, held last Wednesday, at which were present Judge Julian W. Mack and Messrs. Harry Fischel, Bernard Flexner, Robert Szold, S. J. Rosensohn, Emil Weinheim and Jacob de Haas, and at which the officers of the Palestine Development Council were also present, including Justice Brandeis, Judge Mack, Dr. Wise and Mrs. Fels, the treasurer of the Palestine Cooperative Company was authorized to set aside from its funds the sum of \$250,000 for the purpose of instituting the Building Loan and Savings Association in and about Jerusalem.

A special committee, consisting of Harry Fischel, chairman; S. J. Rosensohn, Robert Szold and Bernard Flexner was appointed to proceed with the preparation of the plans and details for the operation of this association, and the Board of Directors were authorized to notify Sir Herbert Samuel, the High Commissioner, that the Palestine Cooperative Company has the necessary capital for the organization and operation of a Building Loan and Savings Association, and is preparing to begin business in and about Jerusalem. In order to facilitate the organization of the association on lines that seem advisable to the New York committee, the directors will transmit to the High Commissioner the form of ordinance that they believe to be desirable for the organization and supervision of this association. The actual carrying out of the details of organization in Palestine, devolves upon Mr. Sol. Rosenbloom, the treasurer, who is now in Palestine, and Mr. Bernard Flexner, one of the committee who will shortly proceed to Palestine. They will establish suitable offices in Jerusalem, engage the manager and begin business as soon as the necessary legal formalities have been carried out with the cooperation of the High Commissioner.

At the directors' meeting at which these plans were adopted, Mr. Fischel was complimented on his share in raising the necessary capital and his continued effort in the practical work.

Article from the Jewish Tribune March 17, 1922.

LAUNCH BUILDING AND LOAN

Sir Herbert Samuel Advised of Organization of \$250,000 Association to Operate in Jerusalem

What has been hailed as the first definite, practical step in the constructive work that must be carried out for the realization of the Jewish National Homeland in Palestine, is the organization of a Building Loan and Savings Association in Jerusalem, with a capital of \$250,000, recently announced by the Palestine Co-operative Company.

With the capital already set aside, with Sol. J. Rosenbloom already in Palestine and Bernard Flexner expected there in a month, the directors of the Company who will carry out the details of organization of the Association, which was originated and planned by Harry Fischel as a result of his trip to the Holy Land last summer, will shortly be accepting savings and loaning money to Palestinian settlers so that they can realize their hopes to own their own homes in Palestine.

Announcement of the completion of the Association was forwarded to Sir Herbert Samuel, High Commissioner to Palestine this week by Judge Julian W. Mack, in a letter paying high tribute to Mr. Fischel.

Editorial from the Jewish Tribune March 17, 1922.

MARCH FORWARD IN PALESTINE

On another page we publish a letter from Judge Julian W. Mack to Sir Herbert Samuel, advising the High Commissioner to Palestine of the formation of a Building Loan and Savings Association with a paid-up capital of \$250,000, to operate in and around Jerusalem. Everywhere this achievement of the Palestine Co-operative Company has been hailed with satisfaction, for here is a practical, constructive measure for the upbuilding of the Jewish National Homeland, which satisfies the very fundamentals for progress in Palestine—home building.

In addition to its valuable savings and loan features, there is something of even greater significance to it. This association and those that will follow it in the other cities of Palestine, will grant these same opportunities to the Arabs and all other members of

the population. Here is a real forward step looking toward that comity of racial units in Palestine which is so necessary to effective progress in the country.

This association was originated by Harry Fischel, who saw the needs for building loan and savings associations in Palestine after his visit there last summer. Judge Mack pays high tribute to Mr. Fischel in his letter to the High Commissioner and THE JEWISH TRIBUNE is happy to add its appreciation of the splendid constructive piece of work that is being carried out largely through the tireless energy and initiative of this ardent Jewish worker.

One of the larger projects of the Palestine Development Council was that for the creation, through the Rutenberg plant, of Hydro Electric power in Palestine.

In order to obtain subscriptions for this vast undertaking a conference was called by Judge Julian W. Mack on June 27, 1922, a report of which is contained in the following article which appeared in the Jewish Tribune of June 30, 1922.

LAUNCH RUTENBERG APPEAL

Palestine Development Council Receives Subscriptions of Almost \$900,000

The Palestine Development Council's campaign for the sale of trust certificates for the Rutenberg plan for the creation of hydro-electric power in Palestine, was formally launched last week at a conference at which Judge Julian W. Mack, Chairman of the Council, presided. Addresses were delivered by Dr. L. C. Loewenstein, Pincas Rutenberg, Justice Louis D. Brandeis, Rabbi A. H. Silver and Harry Fischel.

The principal subscriptions announced were:

Palestine Cooperative Company, \$125,000; Sol Rosenbloom, \$50,000; Justice Louis D. Brandeis and Louis Horowitz, \$25,000; Julius Simon, \$10,000; Harry Fischel, Solomon Ulmer, Cleveland; Mrs. J. Guggenheimer, Lynchburg, Va.; Dr. Harry Friedenwald, Baltimore and Sigmund Eisner, Red Bank, N. J., \$5000; Mr. and Mrs. Norvin R. Lindheim, \$4000; George I. Fox and Dr. Julius Friedenwald, Baltimore, \$2000; Dr. Edgar Friedenwald, Baltimore, \$1300; Samuel J. Rosensohn, Dr. Julius

Jarcho, Louis H. Miller, Buffalo; Jacob Rosing, Buffalo; Jacob Ginsburg, Philadelphia, Adolph Ginsburg, Baltimore; Benno Kohn, Baltimore; Michael Schloss, Baltimore; Louis S. Posner and Samuel B. Waxman, Baltimore, \$1000.

The following state and city pledges, totaling \$570,000 were announced:

Brooklyn, Cleveland and Philadelphia, \$100,000; Minnesota, \$80,000; Baltimore, \$75,000; Buffalo and Boston, \$50,000; Central New York, \$15,000.

In earlier chapters of this biography the marriage of three of Mr. Fischel's daughters was chronicled. Mr. Fischel naturally looked eagerly forward to the marriage of his youngest daughter, Rose, and derived intense pleasure and satisfaction when she informed him of her engagement to Mr. Albert Wald. This betrothal was received with equal satisfaction by Mrs. Fischel and the others of the family.

The formal announcement of the engagement was made on October 20, 1922, the New York Times containing the following item:

"Miss Rose Fischel, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Harry Fischel, of 118 West 93rd Street, and Mr. Albert Wald, are betrothed. Miss Fischel is a graduate of Barnard College. During the war she rendered service in a canteen of the Jewish Welfare Board. At present she is assisting in the Americanization work of the Council of Jewish Women by teaching English to bonded immigrants.

"Mr. Wald is a lawyer. During the war he had charge of the welfare work connected with the Housing and Transportation Departments of the United States Shipping Board. Mr. Wald belongs to the New York County Lawyers' Association and the American Institute of Electrical Engineers."

A formal engagement party was held at the Fischel residence on November 12th and was attended by several hundred of the friends of the Fischel and Wald families as well as representatives of many of the institutions with which Mr. Fischel was so actively identified.

CHAPTER XLVI

GROWTH OF BETH ISRAEL HOSPITAL

THE war, with its diversion of funds from local needs, together with the scarcity of labor and high cost of building material, had caused many of the city's philanthropic institutions to forego the construction of new edifices, although imperatively needed.

One of the institutions which, for many years, had required additional facilities for the care of its wards was the Beth Israel Hospital, one of the first institutions with which Mr. Fischel had become identified after entering upon communal work. He had been chairman of the building committee which had purchased ground for the erection of the first hospital at Jefferson and Cherry Streets and for which he had lain the cornerstone on May 1, 1900.

With the passing of the years, this institution had come to be regarded as a model of its kind and had been of ever increasing usefulness to the community. The fact that the hospital had proved of such tremendous service was a source of much gratification to Mr. Fischel, and, as early as December 22, 1913, a meeting had been held at his home, 118 E. 93rd Street, when the question of securing a new site and erecting a larger building had been considered. At this meeting Mr. Fischel had subscribed \$10,000 toward a new building fund and a substantial sum had later been raised for this purpose.

At subsequent meetings the project had been held in abeyance for a more advantageous time. Finally the Directors succeeded in purchasing the entire block on Livingston Place, from Sixteenth to Seventeenth Streets, a most desirable and central location, as a site for a new building.

The ground for this building was broken on October 9, 1921, and the cornerstone was laid on November 5, 1922. This great

new hospital is now practically completed at a cost of \$5,000,000 and will, when opened, be one of the most modern and best equipped in New York.

On November 3, 1922, the American Hebrew published the following article concerning Beth Israel and its work:

THE MAINTENANCE OF A GREAT INSTITUTION

"Detailed plans for financing the new \$5,000,000 Beth Israel Hospital, to be constructed at Livingston Place and Seventeenth Street, New York City, were announced recently by Harry Fischel, chairman of the Finance Committee of the Hospital.

"One million dollars has been raised through the Federated Building Drive of the Jewish Federation. The plan for raising the balance is to endow each one of the free rooms of the hospital for \$5000. The hospital will have more than 500 individual rooms. Four hundred of these rooms will be assigned to free patients. Many have already been endowed, according to Mr. Fischel, each director being responsible for the endowment of a certain number of rooms. The directors, according to Mr. Fischel, have already underwritten the amount needed for the completion of the building. The endowment of \$5000 for each room will be paid in four annual payments at the option of the endower.

" 'Beth Israel Hospital is fortunate in having on its Board of Directors some of the most influential men in every industry,' said Mr. Fischel. 'The directors have contributed large sums of money individually and they will raise the balance through their business friends. The hospital never stops at expense when the welfare of a patient is at stake. The Board of Directors has just made up a deficit of \$100,000 for the last two years. This was done through individual contributions made by the directors themselves.

" 'We consider each patient, not as a case but as an individual. We give each patient special care, the poor the same as the rich. Once a patient comes into our hospital he is no longer poor. He receives the same treatment as one who pays \$100 a week for a room.'

"Mr. Fischel has been a director of Beth Israel ever since the

organization of the Board of Directors of the hospital in 1888. He was chairman of the building committee of the present hospital on Jefferson Street and he is a member of the present building committee. He donated the present laboratory to the hospital and he will supply funds to enable the institution to maintain its present high scientific standard. Mr. Fischel, according to an announcement made by Louis J. Frank, superintendent of the hospital, will dedicate the new laboratory, which will cost \$100,000.

"'Before 1910 all laboratory work was sent to the Board of Health or to an outside doctor,' said Mr. Fischel in telling of his interest in the laboratory. 'The directors thought there was no use in equipping a laboratory since even at that time they had begun to discuss plans for building a new hospital. Mr. Frank, the superintendent, convinced me of the need and it was at his instance that I installed a laboratory, which has been enlarged continually. We now have one of the ablest men in the country at its head, Dr. Max Kahn. Under him are several assistants. A complete test is taken of every patient. These tests have been the means of saving many lives.'

"The following is inscribed on a tablet which is placed on the wall of the laboratory:

THIS PHYSIOLOGICAL-CHEMICAL LABORATORY WAS ERECTED AND
EQUIPPED BY MR. HARRY FISCHEL FOR THE BENEFIT OF SUFFERING
MANKIND FOR ALL GENERATIONS. 1912.

"Mr. Fischel has always emphasized the religious side of Beth Israel Hospital. The observance of Jewish dietary laws helps greatly in the return to health of the patients, according to Mr. Fischel. In Beth Israel the Orthodox Jew is given food prepared in the way to which he is accustomed.

"In speaking of the location of the new hospital Mr. Fischel said: 'We are filling a long felt want on the central East Side. There is no other Jewish hospital from One Hundredth Street south to the river. Many come to visit the sick on Saturday, the Jewish Sabbath. Under the Jewish law it is a desecration of the Sabbath to ride on a street car or subway. The new location in the heart of the densely populated East Side will permit friends and relatives of patients to walk to and from the hospital.'"

CHAPTER XLVII

PROGRESS OF WORK IN PALESTINE

MENTION was made in an earlier chapter of the fact that Mr. Sol Rosenbloom went to Palestine in the early part of 1922 to organize and to start the work of the Palestine Building Loan and Savings Association.

After nearly a year of effort, during which he had continuously communicated the results of his labors to the Board of Directors of the Association, he returned to New York for the purpose of making a report on the work which had been accomplished in this period.

His return was marked by a dinner tendered him at the Hotel Astor on January 14, 1923, on which occasion Mr. Fischel delivered the following address:

At the dinner tendered to Mr. Rosenbloom a year ago, before he departed for Palestine, the theme assigned to me was "A Land to Build." Tonight I will take for my theme, "A Land We Are Building."

I believe that most of you assembled this evening, are stockholders in the Palestine Co-operative Company, and are responsible for the Palestine Building Loan and Savings Association, of which I have the honor to be the Chairman.

Those of you who were present at the dinner a year ago, may recollect that at that time, I outlined my plan to help the people of Jerusalem build houses, by loaning them 60% of the cost of their proposed homes on easy payments. I will take this occasion to explain to you why we selected Jerusalem to give the first aid through building loans.

If we had organized our Company for the purpose of making a profit, we would certainly have selected Jaffe or Haifa, as both these cities have a port and business is more prosperous there. Jerusalem, being a city without a port, naturally has less business and a smaller income from real estate. It is therefore much harder to get money on mortgages. Under the circumstances, the

people in Jerusalem are more entitled to aid, especially as Jerusalem is a universal city, and is considered the most holy spot in all of Palestine. When our resources will permit, we will extend our loans to other cities as well.

It gives me great pleasure to report to you that at this time, over 100 houses are being built in the City of Jerusalem with our loans, which means your money, since you are the stockholders of the company.

I will take this occasion to explain to you how we have accomplished this. As soon as Mr. Rosenbloom left for Palestine, our building loan committee worked out a complete plan and By-Laws for the Building Loan and Savings Association on the same basis as the Building Loan and Savings Associations in New York State only making such changes as would apply to the Palestinian conditions.

This plan was sent by our President, Judge Mack, to the High Commissioner of Palestine, Sir Herbert Samuel, who gave it his entire approval and had the plan made a part of the laws of Palestine in order to protect our American investments, as he promised me he would do, when I saw him in August, 1921.

As soon as Mr. Rosenbloom reached Palestine, he engaged a manager, opened an office and started to take applications for loans. He organized a local Advisory Committee in accordance with our By-Laws.

Mr. Rosenbloom could not carry out the entire plan of the Building Loan and Savings Association, which included a much broader plan than simply the making of loans. Part of the plan was to give an opportunity to every borrower to become a depositor, by buying a share in the Building Loan Company for \$5.00. For every additional \$5.00 he could buy another share, and as soon as he should have enough to make up the amount of 40% of the cost of his proposed building, The Building Loan Company would loan him the additional 60%.

Our idea was, that in this way, we would give the people a chance to save money and increase the loaning capacity of the Association. Mr. Rosenbloom with the best of intentions, however, could not carry out this savings proposition at that time, for the reason that he arrived when the mandate was declared and there was a great deal of unrest in the country. In order to show the people that the Americans are ready to invest money in

Palestine, he decided to make loans immediately, without waiting for the Savings Association to be established.

Our Committee never expected that there would be so many people who would have the necessary 40%, entitling them to the loan of the balance of 60% toward their homes. However, to our surprise, applications came in, in great numbers, and our manager had all he could do to select the ones who were most deserving.

While we only set aside the sum of \$250,000 to start the Building Loan and Savings Association, deserving applications reached the sum of \$350,000 which is \$100,000 more than we are able at this time to meet. Under the circumstances, it is necessary for us to put our shoulders to the wheel and sell additional stock for the sum of \$100,000 within the next three or four months.

Last spring our Committee completed plans to raise a large sum of money by selling stock in this Company, enough to supply all the demands, not alone in Jerusalem, but in Jaffe, Haifa, and Tiberias. However, we were advised by our leader, Judge Mack, to delay our campaign to a later date, and use all our efforts to obtain subscriptions for the Rutenberg Hydro-Electric project.

Our Committee feels that this electric proposition is of such importance, that it is advisable for us to be contented with what we have already done, until the stock for the Hydro-Electric Corporation is entirely subscribed for.

While I am personally interested in the Building Loan and Savings Association, however, I strongly advise all my friends to invest as much money as they can spare in this electric proposition, for the reason that electricity is what makes a new country. We need electricity in the houses. With electricity we can build the houses much cheaper, through the manufacturing of the material. We need electricity for a quarry to cut stones, and above all, we need electricity for the manufacture of all products.

All those who have come from Palestine lately, have reported that our Building Loan proposition is the only practical work which has so far accomplished anything in Palestine with American money. It has brought remarkable results, by supplying employment for several hundreds of people. The money remains in Palestine, and through its circulation, it has produced a great volume of business. It has supplied living quarters for hundreds

of families, and above all, it has done a great deal in cementing the breach between the Arabs and the Jews, for the reason that many Arabs are employed in the building of houses. They do such work as cannot be done by our Jewish people.

In addition, we have made several loans to Arabs on their incompleated houses, which have been standing unfinished since before the war. I have the greatest confidence in this Building Loan and Savings Association for the reason that the money invested in these mortgages is just as safe as money invested in first mortgages in the City of New York, and probably safer. As a real estate man, I know that sometimes in the City of New York, there can be an overproduction in a certain class of houses, reducing the value of the property, which automatically reduces the value of the mortgages, whereas, in the City of Jerusalem, no such thing can happen. There will be no over production for many years to come, and as the City grows, the property will always increase in value, thereby making our mortgages always safer. Furthermore, these mortgages will be amortized, so that within a few years, they will be only 30% of the value, instead of 60% which we are loaning at present.

In order to see with my own eyes how these houses are progressing, to help improve and enlarge this Building Loan and Savings Association, I have engaged passage for Palestine on April 24 for Mrs. Fischel and myself.

I hope with the Will of the Almighty and with your assistance that we shall be able to increase our Building Loan Corporation to such an extent that we will be able to establish branches in every city in Palestine.

CHAPTER XLVIII

WEDDING OF MR. FISCHEL'S YOUNGEST DAUGHTER

MR. FISCHEL's youngest daughter Rose was married to Mr. Albert Wald on February 18, 1923. The marriage of the youngest child is always a happy and significant event in the lives of their parents. In this case it was particularly so, for Mr. Fischel felt confident that through the union of his daughter and Mr. Wald the family's spiritual heritage would be handed down to the next generation intact.

The ceremony, which took place at the Synagogue of the Congregation Kehillath Jeshurun was performed by Rabbis M. S. Margolies, Henry S. Morais, Herbert S. Goldstein, and the late Dr. Philip Klein. A dinner for the family and friends followed at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Fischel, 118 East 93rd Street. As on all previous happy occasions in the life of Mr. Fischel, he made liberal donations to charities.

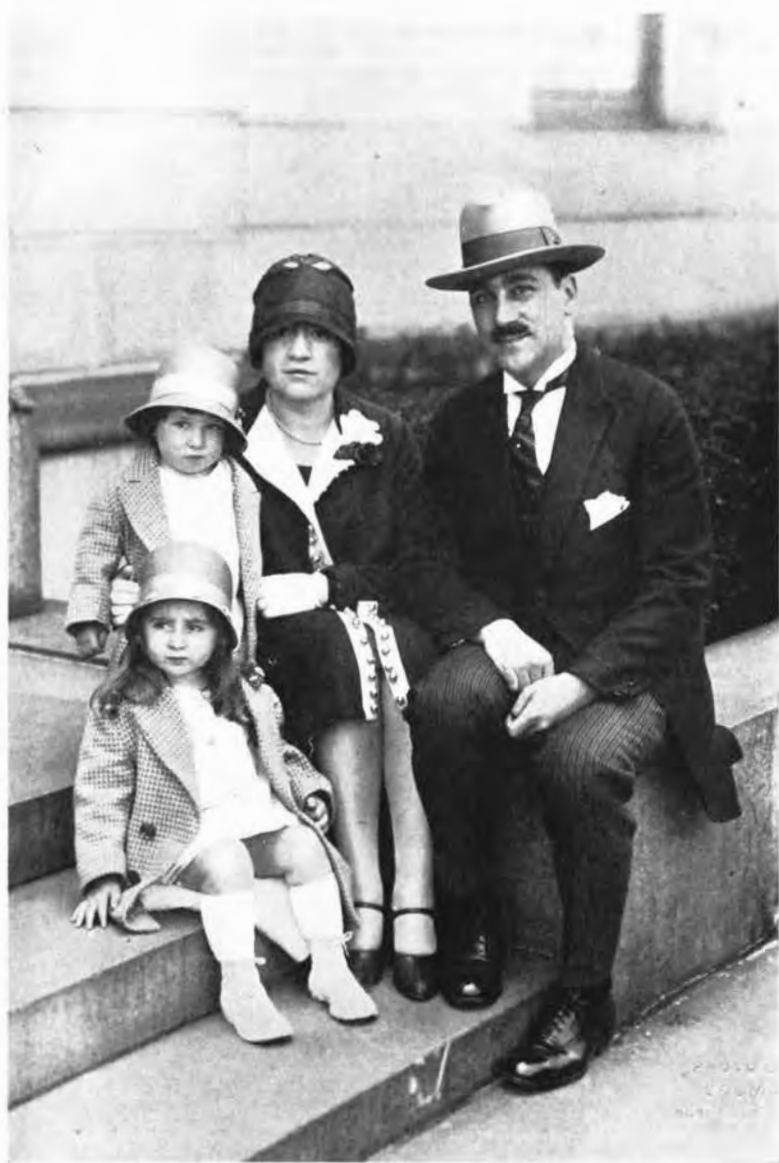
Already there has been discerned in the lives of the young couple a strong communal effort along religious lines. The children of Mr. and Mrs. Fischel were reared in an atmosphere permeated by the twofold desire to serve humanity and to carry on the faith. Mr. Fischel is very happy in the thought that his youngest daughter and son-in-law are trying to emulate his example.

Rose Fischel Wald is on the Committee of Religion and Religious Schools of the Council of Jewish Women, on the Women's Committee of the Yeshivah Dormitory Fund, a directress of the Women's Auxiliary of the Central Jewish Institute and is Vice President of the West End Group of the Hadassah.

When visiting in Palestine with her parents just prior to her marriage, she was strongly impressed by the work of the Hadas-

sah Medical Organization and has been actively interested in the organization since that time.

Mr. Wald is President of the Permanent Organization of his Law School Class. Besides his professional and political activities, he is also deeply interested in things Jewish. He is a junior trustee of the Congregation Kehillath Jeshurun. As Counsel for the Yeshivah Rabbi Isaac Elchanan, of which he is a life member, he was eminently successful in procuring from the N. Y. State Education Department, the Yeshivah's right to confer the Degree of Doctor of Hebrew Literature (L.H.D.) He is a member of the Executive Committee of the Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations of America and participated in the campaign of the Union to prosecute violators of the New York Kosher Law, having acted as the Union's Counsel in the first conviction secured under this law.



MR. FISCHEL'S YOUNGEST SON-IN-LAW,
Mr. and Mrs. Albert Wald and their children.

CHAPTER XLIX

A THIRD VISIT TO PALESTINE

ON his third visit to the Holy Land, now to take place, Mr. Fischel had a dual object, acceleration of the work of the Palestine Building Loan and Savings Association and the dedication of the home of Chief Rabbi Kook, for which Mr. Fischel had provided the funds and laid the cornerstone on his previous visit, two years earlier, and which was now practically completed.

Before leaving Palestine on that occasion, Mr. Fischel had deposited the entire amount of money that it was estimated would be required with the Anglo Palestine Bank and had signed a contract for the prosecution of the work, at the same time naming a Committee with power to draw on the money as needed to pay the contractors.

On his arrival home, several weeks later, he received word that the entire sum deposited had been expended but that the work had been only half completed. Although he had not expected any such eventuality, Mr. Fischel at once cabled additional money and ordered the Committee to proceed with the work as speedily as possible.

Building construction, however, is not accomplished in Palestine with the alacrity with which it is done in America and the work proceeded particularly slowly. Thus it was not until the early part of January, 1923, that Mr. Fischel was finally notified that the Chief Rabbi's residence had been finished. At the same time he was informed that the work upon the synagogue, which was a part of the undertaking, had not even been started and that an additional sum of money was still needed for this purpose.

Determined that the work should not halt, despite the much greater expenditure than he had anticipated, Mr. Fischel immediately notified the Committee to proceed on the synagogue,

so that it might be dedicated not later than May and before the hot weather should set in, and made his own arrangements to sail for Palestine on April 24.

Accompanying him on this trip, in addition to Mrs. Fischel, were his daughter and son-in-law, Rabbi and Mrs. Herbert S. Goldstein. Rabbi Goldstein, as President of the Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations of America, had long wished for the opportunity to visit the Holy Land, as does every Orthodox Jew, and Mr. Fischel felt it was most appropriate that to him should be accorded the privilege of formally presenting, in his behalf, the home of the Chief Rabbi to the people of Palestine.

It was Mr. Fischel's good fortune, through his acquaintance with United States Supreme Court Justice Brandeis and through the latter's kind offices, to secure a letter from the then Secretary of State, Charles E. Hughes, introducing him to the American Ambassadors and diplomatic officers in the countries he proposed to visit.

This letter was as follows:

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Washington

March 26, 1923.

To the Diplomatic and Consular Officers of the United States of America.

Gentlemen:

At the instance of the Honorable William M. Calder, formerly Senator of the United States from the State of New York, I take pleasure in introducing to you Mr. Harry Fischel of New York City, who, accompanied by his wife (Jane Fischel), is about to proceed abroad.

I cordially bespeak for Mr. Fischel and his wife such courtesies and assistance as you may be able to render consistently with your official duties.

I am, Gentlemen,

Your obedient servant,

CHARLES E. HUGHES

The Fischels once more embarked on the S. S. Berengaria on April 24th and, as on their former voyages, the Cunard Steamship Company carried out every request made of them, so that the members of the party might strictly observe the Jewish dietary laws.

Mr. Ballin, the Chief Steward of the Cunard line, had also again arranged for the use of the Captain's private reception room as a synagogue and where, during the entire voyage, services were held three times daily.

On Mr. Fischel's departure, the following article explaining the purpose of his trip appeared in the New York Times:

NEW YORKER GIVES CHIEF RABBI HOME

Harry Fischel Will Sail to Dedicate Palatial Building in Jerusalem

When the "Berengaria" sails from New York tomorrow she will have on board Harry Fischel, donor of a palatial home for the Chief Rabbi of Palestine. He is a multi-millionaire, of 276 Fifth Avenue, Manhattan, conspicuous in numerous philanthropies, and is going abroad especially for the dedication of the building to which he has given so generously of his time and care and money. Mr. Fischel will be accompanied on his journey by his wife, daughter and son-in-law, Rabbi Herbert S. Goldstein, of the Institutional Synagogue, Manhattan, who is President of the Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations of America.

The Chief Rabbi of Palestine is a picturesque figure to the millions of his faith, and the present holder of this distinction, Rabbi Abraham Kook, endeared himself to Mr. Fischel when the latter visited Jerusalem a few years ago. Mr. Fischel then took up the matter of erecting a permanent chief rabbi's home for the district, with Sir Herbert Samuel, High Commissioner of Palestine.

The result is a monument to Jerusalem, located on the principal square at the intersection of three streets. It is a one-story edifice of Moorish design, built of stone, fronting 150 feet on one street, extending 100 feet on another, measuring 90 feet in width in the rear. It is probably the only house in the city having every modern convenience, and besides living rooms, it also contains

a large meeting room and a synagogue. It was started August 29, 1921, and has just been completed. Mr. Fischel's party will arrive in Palestine May 10 and the date of dedication will be fixed immediately afterwards.

Besides his interest in the dedication Mr. Fischel intends to increase the home building activities of his people in Palestine, and which were inaugurated on his previous visit through the Palestine Cooperative Company, a building and loan concern fashioned after American ideas, which has already erected 165 new homes for Jews in Jerusalem.

This also is in the nature of a philanthropy, being conducted by the Palestine Development Council in which the following are associated with Mr. Fischel: Supreme Court Justice Louis D. Brandeis, Federal Judge Julian W. Mack, Nathan Straus, Sol. S. Rosenbloom, Robert Szold, Leo Wolman, C. Lipman and others. Mr. Fischel is chairman of the loan committee.

The party arrived in Paris on May 2nd and on May 4th reached Marseilles, where they boarded the Mediterranean steamer Morea. Again Mr. Fischel had the pleasant experience of being informed by the Chief Steward of that vessel that through the instrumentality of the Cunard Company, facilities had been provided for the party whereby the dietary laws might be observed by them on this part of their voyage.

The party reached Port Said on May 9th and on May 10th arrived at Lud, the station before Jerusalem, where they were met by a delegation of Rabbis sent forward by Chief Rabbi Kook to welcome them and bearing the request that on their arrival in Jerusalem their first stop should be at the new home of the Chief Rabbi, which he was already occupying.

On his arrival at the Chief Rabbi's residence Mr. Fischel was greeted in a manner that left no doubt in his mind as to the appreciation and gratitude his deed had evoked. The Chief Rabbi came forward and, although he did not express his feelings in many words, showed his affection for his benefactor by the warmth with which he embraced and finally kissed him.

The party was then escorted by Rabbi Kook through the entire

residence, which had been constructed exactly as Mr. Fischel had planned and of which every part was completed except the synagogue. This still required about two week's work to finish, including the setting up of its furniture, equipment and its holy appurtenances. It was therefore arranged that the dedication of the building should take place on May 27th.

In the intervening period the Fischel party took the opportunity to travel throughout Palestine, Mr. Fischel himself remaining in Jerusalem, however, to give all his time to help completing the synagogue. Mr. Fischel also embraced the opportunity again to visit the various institutions in Jerusalem, including several that had not been in existence on the occasion of his previous stay in the Holy Land.

Among these was the New Diskind Orphan Asylum, and the new Bikur Holim Hospital, in each of which institutions Mr. Fischel dedicated a room.

The electric power plant built by the Rutenberg Hydro-Electric Power Company, which was to supply electricity to Jerusalem, was also completed at this time and Mr. Rutenberg, having been informed of Mr. Fischel's arrival, extended to him an invitation to participate in the ceremony attending the first turning of the large shaft which marked the actual beginning of the operation of the plant.

At this function Mr. Fischel had the honor of helping to turn the gigantic wheel which, once it was set in motion, immediately illuminated all the streets of the city.

This unusual and epoch-making experience, that of helping to flood this ancient city with modern illumination, forms one of the outstanding recollections in Mr. Fischel's life.

During the period when the synagogue was being completed Mr. Fischel spent such time as he could spare in the offices of the Palestine Building Loan and Savings Association and with Mr. Emanuel N. Mohl, the manager, traveled to various outlying districts where the Company, through its loans, had helped to build entire communities.

Mr. Fischel found gratification in the fact that through the Company's assistance several hundred houses had been constructed in the suburbs of Jerusalem. In one such suburb, about three miles outside the city, namely Bone Bayit, which was built entirely with loans made by the Association, an elaborate celebration was held in honor of Mr. Fischel on May 25.

While Mr. Fischel was thus occupying himself, the synagogue was completed and invitations issued for the dedication on May 27.

A copy of this invitation, together with the program arranged for the dedication are herewith reproduced.

We have the honor to invite you to be present
at the ceremony
OF THE CONSECRATION OF THE SYNAGOGUE
AND THE HOUSE WARMING OF THE "BETH HARAV"
which were built with funds contributed by
Mr. and Mrs. Harry Fischel of New York
Ceremony to take place at the Colony Beth David,
on Sunday 27th, May 1923, at 3:30 P. M. sharp.
His Excellency, the High Commissioner has kindly consented
to honour the Ceremony by his presence.

Respectfully yours,
CENTRAL COMMITTEE KNESSETH ISRAEL
Jerusalem

CONSECRATION OF THE SYNAGOGUE
AND WARMING OF RABBI'S HOUSEby the Central Committee Knesseth Israel, Jerusalem
Order of Program

1. Blind orchestra (directed by Mr. Mizrahy) receives the guests.
2. The Chairman Mr. M. L. Slutzkin opens the meeting on arrival of His Excellency, the High Commissioner.
3. Song of "Beruchim Habaim" sung by the children of the Etz Haim Talmud Torah schools.
4. Sefardic Chief Rabbi Jacob Meir blesses the meeting.
5. Rabbi Abramovitz, representing Central Committee Knesseth Israel, hands over silver key of Rabbi's House to Mr. Harry Fischel.
6. Mr. Fischel hands same over to His Excellency the High Commissioner.
7. Acceptance of key by the High Commissioner.
8. Mismor Shir Chanukath, by Chazan Rivlin's chorus.
9. Address by Rabbi Herbert S. Goldstein.
10. Address by the American Consul.
11. Address by His Excellency the Acting Governor.
12. Address by Dr. Joseph Klausner.
13. Address by Mr. Davis Yefin.
14. Address by Rabbi Glazner, Chief Rabbi of Klausenburg.
15. Address by Rabbi J. M. Charlap.
16. Sermon by Chief Rabbi A. I. Kook.
17. Key of Synagogue is handed over to Mr. Harry Fischel by Central Committee Knesseth Israel.
18. Opening of the Synagogue by Mr. Harry Fischel.
19. "Seu Shearim Rosheichem," sung by the chorus.
20. Minha Service by Chazan Bardaky.
21. Ten minutes interval. Refreshments partaken of.
22. Address by Rabbi Rubin Braz.
23. Address by Rabbi E. M. Tikazinsky.
24. Address by Rabbi M. N. Auerbach.
25. Address by Rabbi J. G. Hurvitz.
26. Address by Rabbi Z. Epstein.
27. Address by Rabbi S. A. Polansky.
28. Address by Rabbi Ch. L. Auerbach.
29. Address by Rabbi Isaac Levy on behalf of "Merkaz Harav."
30. Speech by a pupil of Etz Haim Talmud Torah.
31. "Yigdal" sung by the Chorus.
32. Evening Service.
33. "Hillula Derabannan."

CHAPTER L

CEREMONIES ATTENDING THE DEDICATION OF THE HOME OF THE CHIEF RABBI OF PALESTINE

THE Ceremony attending the dedication of the Chief Rabbi's home, was one to which not only every Jewish resident of Jerusalem had long looked forward but was of paramount interest to all of Palestine and to Orthodox Jews in every land. It served to emphasize the great importance of the position of the Chief Rabbi and to focus world wide attention upon the religious as well as the material significance attached to the Jewish Homeland.

Preparations for the event, which was regarded as a national holiday, engaged the attention of the populace for many days preceding the celebration. The whole city of Jerusalem was decorated for the occasion. In practically every window appeared the Zionist flag, that was merged in the decorations with the American colors.

The Chief Rabbi's residence, together with the synagogue, occupies practically an entire block, in the center of which is a large courtyard where upwards of a thousand people may be comfortably seated.

This entire courtyard was decorated with banners explaining the full purport of the occasion. On the surrounding walls had been erected large canvasses on which were inscribed suitable prayers and a great platform was placed in the center.

When the great day came this platform was occupied by the highest officials of Palestine, together with the guests of honor and the most prominent rabbis. Among these were Chief Rabbi Kook, for whom the residence had been built, together with the Sefardic Chief Rabbi, the High Commissioner, Sir Herbert

Samuel, the Consular officials representing the different governments, the Governor of Jerusalem, the Mayor of Jerusalem and the Rabbis who were scheduled to be the speakers.

The hour set for the exercises was 3:30 in the afternoon, but long before the appointed time, every seat was filled and thousands of persons who could not possibly be accommodated within, remained on the streets outside the enclosure. In order to keep this tremendous throng in order, military officers were stationed on all sides.

At precisely 4 o'clock, the High Commissioner, Sir Herbert Samuel with Lady Samuel, together with the members of their party and military aides, arrived on the scene. The British and American National Anthems were sung by the immense throng, followed by an impressive rendition of the Zionist Anthem, the Hatikvah.

Since this biography is largely intended as a record to be preserved for the benefit of those interested in the outstanding Jewish events occurring during Mr. Fischel's life, there is herewith given the account of the entire proceedings as prepared by an official government reporter.

CONSECRATION CEREMONY OF THE BETH HARAV AND SYNAGOGUE, SUNDAY, MAY 27TH, 1923

On SUNDAY, SIVAN 12, 5683 (May 27th, 1923), an impressive consecration ceremony took place at Jerusalem when the Beth Harav and Synagogue especially constructed by Mr. and Mrs. Harry Fischel at their own expense for Chief Rabbi Kook, was consecrated.

The ceremony was a most brilliant event and will remain a red letter day in the annals of Jerusalem.

There were present the elite of the Jewish and non-Jewish communities and also a number of American visitors who then happened to be in Jerusalem. The gathering was graced by the attendance of His Excellency, The High Commissioner and Lady Samuel. That day will long be remembered as it afforded joy and honor to Mr. and Mrs. Fischel and rendered spiritual pleasure to the whole of Orthodox Judaism in Jerusalem.

THE DECORATIONS

The spacious courtyard of the Central Committee Knesseth Israel (Vadd Hakloli) was gaily decorated. At the entrance gate there hung a bluish-white banner bearing the inscription "Beruchim Haboim" (Welcome to the Visitors). On the outside balcony, one observed a signboard in gilt letters "Beth Harav and Synagogue built by Mr. (Israel Aron) Harry and Mrs. Fischel." The interior walls of the courtyard were covered by blue and white colored bunting and banners having inscribed thereon such Biblical verses as "This day hath the Eternal appointed, let us be glad and rejoice thereon." "Bless the Lord O House of Israel; bless the Lord O House of Aron." On the wall facing the gathering there hung two pictures, one of King George V, and the other of the High Commissioner. Immediately beneath these pictures were thirteen tablets in the form of Mogen Dovids (Shields of David) with the lettering of the donor's name—ISRAEL ARON FISCHEL.

About 3:30 P. M. the courtyard was filled to overflowing. The gathering was representative of every class and phase of Jerusalem Jewry—Ashkenazim, Sefardim, Rabbis, Talmud scholars, business men, journalists, teachers—who had all been invited by the Central Committee Knesseth Israel to participate in the consecration ceremony. The stairs and balconies were packed with the women of Jerusalem who had also come to participate in the day's festivity.

THE DISTINGUISHED VISITORS

On a specially arranged platform, there sat on plush armchairs the two Chief Rabbis, Rabbis Kook and Jacob Meir. The first row of chairs was occupied by the American Consul, Mr. Cobb; the Italian Consul, who is a neighbor of the Beth Harav; the American visitors now in Jerusalem, Messrs. Solomon Lamport, Margareten, Horowitz, Levin, Silversweig, and others. Of rabbis there sat on the platform Rabbi Schapiro of Dohbrowitz; the veteran Rabbi Moses Samuel Glasner of Klausenburg; Rabbi Reuben Braz, brother-in-law of Mr. Fischel, Rabbi Joseph Gerson Horowitz, Rabbi Harlap; Rabbi Zorah Epstein; Rabbi M. Tibotzinsky; Rabbi Meir Auerbach; the Wardens of the Central Committee Knesseth Israel; the Mizrachi Rabbis M. Ostrowski and Asof, and others. Among other notables present were Mr.

Sultzkin of Melbourne, Australia, who was chairman of the proceedings; Dr. Judah L. Magnes of New York; Colonel Kisch of the Zionist Executive; David Yellin; Dr. Mazie; Professor Pick; Dr. Wallach; Dr. Salkind; Mr. Joseph Meyuhas and Mr. Kesselman. The organization of the meeting was under the supervision of Mr. J. Amdursky.

At 4 P. M. punctually, Mr. and Mrs. Harry Fischel arrived accompanied by their son-in-law and daughter, Rabbi Herbert S. Goldstein and Mrs. Goldstein. They were followed by the Acting Governor of Jerusalem, Commander Luke and Mr. Edwin Samuel. The guests were received with musical honors.

Soon after, His Excellency, the High Commissioner and Lady Samuel entered the courtyard accompanied by aide-de-camp Mr. Cust and Miss Franklin. The band of the Blind Institution struck up the National Anthem and the whole gathering rose as a mark of respect. The Choir under the direction of Cantor Zalmon Rivlin then sang Beruchim Haboim. The High Commissioner took his seat between the Chief Rabbis and near Mr. Harry Fischel. The proceedings then began.

THE SPEECHES

Mr. Slutzkin, who presided, opened the consecration ceremony by delivering a warm-hearted address. He congratulated Rabbi Kook and Mr. and Mrs. Harry Fischel on this auspicious occasion. He expressed the hope that the Beth Harav would unite all the forces of the Torah and create an impetus for further study and spiritual loftiness.

Chief Rabbi Jacob Meir then rose and in a learned and interesting address, dwelt on the Biblical verses "Honor the Lord out of your wealth" and "Read not thy sons but thy builders." "Hitherto," said Rabbi Meir, "Rabbi Kook had to move from place to place and house to house, involving many difficulties and inconveniences. By Mr. and Mrs. Harry Fischel's munificence, however, Rabbi Kook and his family would now be able to live at ease and comfort in the Beth Harav, which had been erected for them. In connection with the Beth Harav, a House of Learning had also been built for study and worship which would bring honor to the Ashkenazic community." Rabbi Meir warmly shook hands with Rabbi Kook and wished him prosperity. He also congratulated Mr. and Mrs. Fischel, terminating his speech, with

the wish that "we should all be privileged to witness the reconstruction of our National Home, which could be attained only by the combination of all forces through union and organization."

Rabbi Duber Abramowitz of St. Louis, spoke on behalf of the Administration of the Vaud Hakloli (Central Committee). He invited Mr. and Mrs. Fischel to become inhabitants and citizens of Jerusalem. "Mr. Harry Fischel," he said, "is a great communal worker in New York and he is also treasurer of the Central Relief Committee which subvents all the Yeshiboth, Talmud Torahs and Talmudic scholars in Palestine. The reconstruction of Palestine is part and parcel of his life and the erection of the Beth Harav merits much praise. Other institutions looked forward to Mr. Fischel's help, one of these was the new building of the Bicur Holim Hospital which was still roofless and required completion." Rabbi Abramowitz then handed the gold key of the Beth Harav and Synagogue to Mr. Fischel.

Mr. Fischel, on rising to speak was received with cheers. He seemed profoundly touched and speaking from notes in Hebrew, he said:

הוד מעלתו, הרב קוק, הרב מאיר, אורחים נכבדים, גבירות ואדונים נכבדים.

אין די מילים בפי ברגע זה להביע את הודתי לאלקי ישראל על שזכני לבנות את בית הרב ואת בית המדרש. יכול אני להביע את רגשותי על צד היותר טוב רק בברכי את "ברכת שהחנינו" הידועה לנו: ברוך אתה ה' אלהינו מלך העולם שהחנינו וקימנו והגיענו לזמן הזה.

"לבי במזרח ואנכי בסוף מערב". ביתי באמריקה. והיה עלי לעבר ערך ששת אלפים מיל כדי להשתתף בחגיגה קדושה זו. הבאתי עמי את אשתי הטובה. את בתי, את חתני את הרב גאלדשטיין ואת אחי אשתי הרב ראובן בראז. שיקחו חלק עמי יחד בשמחת היום הזה.

ועד הכנין ככדני במפתח בית זה והעיד בזה שהכנין נגמר עתה מהמסד ועד המפתחות. ואחר שהבית ובית המדרש מיועד לשמש לטובת תושבי ארץ-ישראל ושהוד מעלתו הוא ראש הממשלה בארץ הזאת, אני חושב לנכון ולטוב לכבד את הוד מעלתו במפתח וליעד אותו בתור מפקח על הכנין הכפול הזה. רשאי אני לבקש את הוד מעלתו שיקבל את מפתח לזהב הזה וישמרהו בתור זכר ומזכרת למאורע השוב זה.

רוצה אני להשתמש בהזדמנות גם כדי להודות להוד מעלתו בקהל-עם על הכבוד שהנחיל לנו בכבדו את חנוכת הבית הזה בנוכחותו. יהי נועם ה' על הוד מעלתו על שלמונו ועל תושבי ארץ-ישראל ויברך אותו ואותם בשלות השקט בכמחון גמור ובשלום כל ימנו. אמן.

Mr. Fischel then translated his speech into English for the benefit of those who could not understand the Hebrew. It was as follows:

"Your Excellency, Rabbi Kook, Rabbi Meir, distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen:

"Words fail me at this moment to express my gratitude to the Almighty for granting me the privilege of building this Beth Harav and Synagogue. I can best express my feelings on this occasion by pronouncing the well-known Schecheyanoo prayer 'Blessed art thou O Lord, only King of the Universe, who hast kept us in life and hast preserved us and enabled us to reach this time.'

"While my heart always beats for Palestine, yet my home is in America. I have, therefore, had to travel nearly 6,000 miles to participate in this holy celebration. I brought with me my good wife, daughter and son-in-law Rabbi and Mrs. Herbert Goldstein, and my wife's brother, Rabbi Rubin Braz, to share with me the joy of this day.

"The Building Committee has just presented me with the key of this house certifying thereby that this building is now completed. In view of the fact that this residence and synagogue are to be used for the benefit of the people of Palestine, and that Your Excellency, is the Chief Executive of the land, I therefore deem it fitting and proper to present you with the key, and designate you as custodian of this combined edifice. May I ask you, please, to accept this golden key and keep it as a souvenir and memento of this occasion? I want to take this means also of publicly thanking you for the honor you have bestowed upon us. May God grant you, your administration and the people of Palestine continued security and peace."

The High Commissioner followed and delivered an address, which was regarded by the assembly as of great political importance. He said in effect:

"I congratulate the Chief Rabbinate, Mr. and Mrs. Fischel and the Jewish Community at large on this auspicious day. Among the many problems with which the Civil Administration had to deal on its establishment was the adoption of measures to place the Jewish Community both on its secular and on its ecclesiastical side, upon a permanent and regular basis. The question of the organization of the secular side was not yet fully settled. But the government had been able to establish, on an

electorial basis, the Chief Rabbinate, and for the first time after an interval of many centuries, a Jewish Ecclesiastical Authority had been founded upon a permanent footing, based upon the desires of the community itself. It was fortunate that the choice of the community had fallen upon Chief Rabbi Kook and Chief Rabbi Meir, who upheld the dignity of the other religious communities in Palestine. His Excellency expressed the gratitude that was universally felt to Mr. and Mrs. Fischel for the most generous gift of the spacious buildings that they were dedicating on that day.

They were all aware what was the purpose of the policy of the British Government in Palestine in relation to the Jews. That policy had been, was now and would remain, the promotion of the establishment of a Jewish National Home in Palestine. To that end political action must largely contribute. Not less important was the work and sacrifices of the Jews themselves. The erection of buildings such as these was but an instance of that work. More necessary even than bricks and mortar were the numbers of the Jewish population and even more important than numbers was their character. Upon the character of those who already lived in Palestine and those who came from other countries to live there, upon the loftiness of their ideals and the soundness of their principles, depended more than on any other factor the success of the Jewish National Home. That was the key to Palestine.

The High Commissioner's declaration was greeted with applause. The Choir with Cantor Rivlin then sang the Psalm of the Dedication, accompanied by the band.

Rabbi Herbert S. Goldstein, then inspiringly expressed his sentiments in English and his address was translated into Hebrew by Mr. Isaac Abadi. Rabbi Goldstein in the course of his remarks said that it was customary in America for members of the family and relatives participating in such celebrations to speak as briefly as possible. He touched on the past of the Jewish people and pointed out that its future existence depended on the Torah and its loftiness. He mentioned the fact that his father-in-law, Mr. Fischel, had crossed the ocean three times in his endeavors to help in the re-building of the country both materially and spiritually. He concluded his speech with a blessing for Chief Rabbi Kook.

Commander Luke, Acting Governor of Jerusalem, whose remarks were translated into Hebrew by Mr. Abadi, said:

"Permit me to thank the organizers of this celebration for inviting me and to congratulate Rabbi Kook. I hope he will be privileged to enjoy health in this new and beautiful house. I have also the honor of thanking the donors for their wisdom in choosing such a gift. I cannot imagine a finer and more appropriate form of philanthropy for Mr. and Mrs. Fischel, in this city, where the demand for decent residences is so great. It is undignified for persons occupying prominent positions and playing an active role in the people's life, to be troubled year in and year out with the housing problem. I hope that Mr. and Mrs. Fischel's example will be copied by others. I have no doubt that there will arise a Sefardic philanthropist who will also build a house for his Chief Rabbi. It is also possible to hope that the government will also follow suit and provide fine dwellings for its officials."

Mr. Cobb, the American Consul, was then called upon to address the gathering. He said, "It is for me a great and special pleasure that one of our citizens has done something great for Jerusalem. Two years ago Mr. Fischel told me that he contemplated doing great things for the benefit of this country, and his smallest deed is the erection of this house and making it an endowment for the Jewish Community in Jerusalem.

"Since I have been in Jerusalem, and in the course of my work, I have had the honor of coming in touch with Rabbis Kook and Meir. I know the value of the great work they are doing and I also know that many American citizens have been benefited therefrom. I trust that they will be spared for many years to carry on this good work."

At this stage the guests were served with tea and refreshments, and the band played selections.

Dr. Joseph Klausner then congratulated Mr. Fischel. He spoke on the importance of the Beth Harav and other such buildings which tend to strengthen our position in Eretz Israel. Dr. Klausner pointed out the necessity of acquiring more land, as the importance of the National Home the Jews have obtained centered around the forty years' labor to this end and the land already acquired.

Mr. David Yellin congratulated Mr. and Mrs. Fischel and Rabbi Kook on the occasion of the opening of the Beth Harav.

He said that such spacious buildings should also be erected for the Council of the Jerusalem Jews and the Jewish National Council.

The eminent Rabbi of Klausenburg, Rabbi Moses Samuel Glasner, spoke in a quivering and affected voice. He tearfully thanked the Almighty for having privileged him to come to Jerusalem to spend the remaining days of his life. The Beth Harav, which Mr. Fischel erected, would be a pride and an honor to the Jewish Community. He praisingly spoke of Rabbi Kook whom he had known in the Diaspora. He warmly shook hands with Rabbi Kook and also blessed the donors. Rabbi Harlap followed and delivered a learned address spiced with Rabbinical lore.

Rabbi Kook, who was received with great enthusiasm, opened with the Biblical text "What doth the Lord demand of thee but to do good, etc." With his usual profoundness he explained how Jerusalem was the source of joy. "The Key," he said, "that was handed to the High Commissioner, will also be a key to the inner soul of His Excellency wherewith to open up the gates of our Jewish National Home."

THE OFFICIAL OPENING

After the speeches, the High Commissioner and Lady Samuel, Chief Rabbis Kook and Jacob Meir, Mr. and Mrs. Fischel and their family and other prominent guests mounted the stairs leading to the Synagogue of the Beth Harav. The High Commissioner personally handed the golden key to Mr. Fischel who opened the doors of the Beth Hamedrash, throwing it open to the visitors. The Choir sang "Lift up your heads ye gates, and be ye lifted up, ye everlasting doors." That moment was indeed an auspicious and impressive one. The distinguished guests then inspected the beautiful house of the Beth Harav of Chief Rabbi Kook. Around servietted tables the visitors regaled themselves with excellent refreshments and the High Commissioner drank to the health of the Chief Rabbi, to Mr. Fischel and the other rabbis. He then took a friendly leave of the whole company.

In the meantime Mincha was prayed in the Beth Harav by Rabbi Goldstein, after which the festivities were renewed in accordance with the programme. Rabbi Rubin Braz delivered a fine address in Hebrew. He touched on the suffering of our brethren in Poland and the Ukraine, and said that their only hope



DEDICATION OF THE HOME OF THE CHIEF RABBI OF PALESTINE,
Mr. Fischel's gift to the Jewish Homeland, May 27, 1923.

*Mr. Fischel presenting the key of the building
 to Sir Herbert Samuel, British High Commissioner for Palestine.*

was Palestine. His speech was very inspiring and created a deep impression on the gathering. He was followed by Rabbi J. M. Tikotchinsky; Rabbi Menaham Auerbach; Rabbi Joseph Gerson Horowitz; Rabbi Polanski; and a young Talmudic student, Isaac Levi, who spoke on behalf of the students in the Beth Harav Centre. All praised the good efforts of Mr. and Mrs. Harry Fischel. The speeches were concluded by two boys of the Etz Haim Yeshivah who pointed out that they were the most interested parties at the celebration, since they were the future carriers of the Torah.

The evening service was then read, after which the company gave themselves up to festivity. It was late in the night that the beautiful ceremony of the consecration of the Beth Harav was concluded and it made a deep impression on all who had the pleasure of being present. This day was indeed an auspicious one in the life of Jerusalem.

CHAPTER LI

LUNCHEON WITH SIR HERBERT SAMUEL

PRIOR to the departure of the High Commissioner and Lady Samuel, from the dedication ceremonies, an invitation was extended by Sir Herbert to Mr. and Mrs. Fischel, and Rabbi and Mrs. Goldstein to attend a formal luncheon at the Government House at a date to be fixed later. Sir Herbert also extended an invitation to Mr. Fischel to meet him at the Government House for a conference the following day at 2 o'clock.

This conference occupied nearly an hour and a half, during which the two discussed the entire work that had been undertaken by the Palestine Building, Loan and Savings Association. Sir Herbert explained to Mr. Fischel the difficult position in which he was placed as the chief official of the British government and as a Jew, in explaining to the population that his duty necessitated consideration for the needs of all the people, Arabs and Christians, as well as those of his own faith.

The next day the invitation to luncheon with Sir Herbert was delivered to Mr. Fischel by a representative of the High Commissioner. The invitation follows:

"His Excellency, the High Commissioner Sir Herbert Samuel and Lady Samuel extend an invitation to Mr. and Mrs. Fischel and Rabbi and Mrs. Herbert S. Goldstein, for a Luncheon which will be given in their honor at the Government House on Friday, June 1 at 12.45 precisely."

On the day set a Government automobile arrived at the hotel and conveyed the party to the Government House. Upon entering the salon where the High Commissioner received his official guests, the members were introduced to Sir Clayton, Sir and Lady Richmond and a Miss Franklin, a relative of Lady Samuel. The next half hour was taken up in very pleasant conversation.

At 1:30 the High Commissioner, acting as the escort of Mrs. Fischel, Sir Clayton escorting Mrs. Goldstein, Lady Samuel escorting Mr. Fischel and Miss Franklin acting as Rabbi Goldstein's escort, entered the dining room, whereupon Lady Samuel made the following statement before the party was seated: "I wish to inform you that while the Government House is conducted at all times in accordance with the Jewish dietary laws, on this occasion, with Rabbi Goldstein present as the head of the Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations of America, we have made special preparations and the repast has been prepared under the supervision of a personal representative of Chief Rabbi Kook."

The party while at the table engaged in a general discussion of the great improvements which had taken place for the benefit of the Jewish people in Palestine since the Balfour Declaration and particularly under the administration of Sir Herbert. The High Commissioner took special pains to praise the work done by the Palestine Building, Loan and Savings Association, and took occasion to refer to information he had received from United States Supreme Court Justice Brandeis and Judge Mack as to the part Mr. Fischel had taken in initiating this enterprise.

Following the repast, the members of the party proceeded to the gardens of the Government House, and then were escorted through each apartment, with either Sir Herbert or Lady Samuel giving some incident or anecdote related about each room that proved extremely interesting. It was not until 3 o'clock that the assemblage broke up, after there had been a free discussion of practically every problem connected with Palestine and American participation in the work of upbuilding the country for the benefit of the Jewish people.

Throughout this visit to the Holy Land, Mr. Fischel took every opportunity to travel about the country and to visit the various towns and cities, and on every hand he was greatly impressed with the strides which had been made in the two years since he had previously been there. He was particularly impressed with the

zeal which marked the individual attitude of every Jew helping to constitute Palestine as the newly created Jewish Home Land.

The magnetic influence exerted upon every visitor to the Holy Land, and the strong desire of all who have once made the journey to make it again, emphasizes Palestine's peculiar attraction to every Jew. The Fischels left Jerusalem on June 7, hoping that the Almighty might soon again grant them the opportunity to return.

Mr. and Mrs. Fischel had not planned to return until August 25, and so, with ten weeks to spare, they decided once again to visit the places of their birth—Mrs. Fischel to visit Eishishok, where she first saw the light of day, and Mr. Fischel to return to his native town of Meretz.

Although these two towns were only twenty miles apart, a distance that could be easily covered in two hours, Eishishok was at this time a Polish possession and Meretz was a part of Lithuania.

In order to reach this locality it was necessary for the Fischels first to journey to Warsaw. The party, including Rabbi and Mrs. Goldstein, arrived in Alexandria on June 8, where they embarked on the steamer *Diana* for Italy. They reached Brindisi on June 10, and from there proceeded at once to Rome.

On arriving in Rome they visited the Vatican, where due to the office held by Rabbi Goldstein as president of the Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations of America, an audience had been arranged for him with the Pope. The Pope, however, was unable to grant the audience because of the absence of his Secretary of State, Cardinal Gasparri, unless Rabbi Goldstein should remain in Rome for a week longer, when the Cardinal was expected to return. As the itinerary had already been previously arranged, this was impossible.

The party left Rome on June 12, proceeded to Venice and then to Vienna. After a tour of that city they continued to Warsaw, where they arrived on June 18.

As Treasurer of the Hebrew Sheltering and Immigrant Aid Society, Mr. Fischel was here afforded the opportunity of observing the work the Society was doing in that city, then the busiest

spot in all Europe as regards emigration activities. On June 20 the party was invited to the home of Mr. Farbstein, President of the Mizrachi Organization of Poland as well as a deputy in the Polish "Sejm".

By a fortunate coincidence, a conference of all the rabbis of Poland was fixed for the following day, June 21, for the purpose of preparing plans for participation in the next Zionist Congress to be held at Carlsbad. Mr. Farbstein, as President of the Mizrachi, invited Mr. Fischel to attend this conference of the Rabbis, a meeting he will never forget, attended as it was by more than seventy-five rabbis, the leaders of Orthodox Jewry from every part of Poland.

In the evening a banquet was arranged by the Mizrachi, with Mr. Fischel as the guest of honor. In his dual capacity as Treasurer, not only of the H.I.A.S. but of the Central Committee for the Relief of Jews Suffering Through the War, Mr. Fischel was requested to give a report covering the work of war relief and of the H.I.A.S. as well as his impressions of his visit to Palestine, and his recommendations as a result thereof.

With three such vitally important subjects to discuss, Mr. Fischel's report occupied nearly two hours. The rabbis expressed their appreciation of and gratitude for the opportunity to receive at first hand information on these three subjects, each of great import to the Jewish population of Poland.

It was Mr. Fischel's privilege at this time to personally meet the most famous of all rabbis, the venerable Israel Meyer Cagan, a sage of international renown, who bears the title of "Chofetz Chaim." Although Mr. Fischel had been in frequent communication with this celebrated figure for many years, it was his first opportunity to meet him in person.

On June 23, the party separated, Rabbi and Mrs. Goldstein going to Germany and England from which latter country they embarked for America, while Mr. and Mrs. Fischel left for Vilna, preparatory to going to their respective birth places.

CHAPTER LII

MR. FISCHEL RETURNS TO HIS BIRTHPLACE

AFTER an absence of thirty-eight years, Mr. Fischel was now to return to the little town of Meretz where he had first seen the light of day and from which he had departed as a youth for a strange land, almost penniless, unfamiliar with the language of the country toward which his face was set and with only his boundless ambition and the teachings of his parents to sustain him.

He was now returning in middle life blessed with an abundance of this world's goods, his name virtually a household word to the Jewish people of every land. His thoughts comprised a mingling of gratitude for what he had been privileged to achieve in the passing of the years and of sadness because his beloved parents would not be a part of the familiar scene to greet him.

Arriving in Vilna on June 26, it was the plan of Mr. Fischel to proceed at once to Meretz, and Mrs. Fischel to go to her birth place, Eishishok. As they had, however, but one passport between them, it was necessary to secure individual passports in order to reach their respective birth places, which were now under the control of two different governments. Mr. Fischel soon learned that in Poland, where a new government had only recently been set up, the obtaining of a duplicate or individual passport would ordinarily require at least a month's time before it received the approval of the various departments that had to pass upon it.

He accordingly determined to seek out some friend who could help him out of the difficulty, and it occurred to him that while in Carlsbad in 1921 attending the Zionist Congress, he had made the acquaintance of Rabbi Rubenstein, who was now a Senator in the Polish Parliament. Mr. Fischel therefore called upon Rabbi Rubenstein and much to his surprise was greeted with a kiss.

He explained his difficulties, and Rabbi Rubenstein at once exerted all his influence to assist him, with the result that on the same day he received the necessary passport.

Before proceeding on his journey, Mr. Fischel went with Mrs. Fischel to a monument maker in Vilna to obtain a suitable tombstone for the grave of Mrs. Fischel's mother, who was buried in the town of Eishishok. This stone was later put in place in their presence. On the day following, Mr. and Mrs. Fischel separated, the former leaving for Meretz, now a part of Lithuania, and the latter for Eishishok, that was under Polish rule.

Arriving at the frontier at about noon, Mr. Fischel was required to show the sum of money he had taken out of Poland, it then being a rule of the Government that no one should depart from its borders with more than 500,000 marks, amounting to only about \$5 in American currency. This law was due to the impoverished condition of the country. As Mr. Fischel had 850,000 marks in his possession, the officials retained the excess of 350,000 marks until he returned at a later date.

Mr. Fischel arrived in Riga at about 10 o'clock in the evening, leaving for Kovno, the capital of Lithuania, the same night and arriving there the following morning.

On reaching Kovno Mr. Fischel went at once to the office of the Hebrew Sheltering and Immigrant Aid Society, where he deposited his belongings. He spent the entire day in reviewing the work of this local branch that was enabled to extend its aid to thousands of emigrants and in the evening was called upon by a committee headed by Mr. Rosenbloom, Minister of Jewish Affairs in the Lithuanian Cabinet, and who only that day had been appointed to this high office.

The purpose of the committee's call was to secure from Mr. Fischel a report on conditions in Palestine and on the work of the Hebrew Sheltering and Immigrant Aid Society in America and it was one o'clock in the morning when they departed.

The next day, June 29, at 9:00 A.M., Mr. Fischel left by automobile for the town of Meretz, upon which he had not laid eyes

since his memorable departure thirty-eight years before. As he passed through the various nearby towns, Rumshishok, Yesna, Pren and finally Alita, all of which reminded him of his boyhood days and when his thoughts naturally turned to the memory of his parents, he counted the moments when he should again at last gaze upon the scenes of his youth.

Finally, the chauffeur told him that he was only twenty-five miles from Meretz. It was but a short time later when his conveyance reached the first house on the outskirts of the town, one of a row of entirely new homes that had been built by the Joint Distribution Committee upon the ruins of those devastated during the war. A moment more and he was at Mark Place, a landmark of the ancient town, which seemed strangely unfamiliar to him, as it appeared much smaller than the picture he had retained in his memory.

At this point he was greeted by a committee made up of the most representative men of the place who were accompanied by a large number of the townspeople. He was escorted to the home of Chaim Izchok Lukenizky, the wealthiest man in Meretz. Mr. Fischel was met at the threshold by Mr. Lukenizky, whom he recognized immediately, as well as by the latter's wife and son, who extended a most cordial welcome. A large crowd had followed Mr. Fischel to the door of the residence, and Mr. Lukenizky pleaded in vain with this throng to remain at a distance until Mr. Fischel should have been entertained at lunch.

His host was finally compelled to close the doors in order that privacy might be obtained. Following luncheon, the doors were opened, and one by one the townsmen extended the "Shalom Aleichem" greetings. This reception lasted for several hours. A committee was then organized to act as Mr. Fischel's bodyguard during his stay in Meretz. Mr. Fischel advised his former neighbors of the purpose of his visit, which was to unveil a tombstone which he had previously ordered erected over the graves of his father and mother.

Some time later, Mr. Fischel was escorted to the cemetery,

about half a mile distant, and the road to which lay upon a steep hill. This walk, together with the excitement attending his mission, all but exhausted Mr. Fischel, but when he arrived at the graves of his parents he forgot his physical weariness, which was supplanted by a great peace and contentment.

In his imagination, it seemed his parents were still living and that he was able once again to talk with them. He finally realized, however, that he was, after all, only standing beside their graves. Uttering a prayer that their souls might rest in peace, Mr. Fischel returned to the town, announcing that the unveiling of the tombstone would take place the following Sunday morning.

As Mr. Fischel returned to Meretz and passed the different homes and other landmarks, the memories of his youth came back with full force and he even recalled the names of nearly all the families that had occupied these houses at the time he had left for far off America.

Although most of these friends of his boyhood had since died and a new generation had grown up, the houses nevertheless remained much the same, except for those which had been destroyed during the war, and Meretz, as a whole, was little different than it had been for hundreds of years.

Escorted by the Committee, Mr. Fischel walked through every street and was greeted by the residents who called to him from the windows or welcomed him from their small stoops. Finally he reached the house that had been occupied by his parents at the time he had left Meretz for America. He was greatly touched when an aged woman shouted to him at the top of her voice "Archick, (his pet name as a boy), is it you? Do you remember me?"

While the woman had greatly changed in appearance and her hair was now almost white, Mr. Fischel immediately recognized her, and replied, "Yes, Dobke" (the pet name by which he had known her in his youth). As a girl, this now elderly woman had been a close neighbor of the Fischels, and Mr. Fischel had been

strongly attracted to her. It was not improbable had he remained in Meretz that they would have been married.

On leaving his old home, the party was met by the Shamas, who cried out, "In Shool Erein," which meant that it was an hour before sunset and time to light the candles and repair to the synagogue. The men were thus informed that they had half an hour to close their places of business and get ready for the Sabbath. Before the thirty minutes had elapsed, however, every Jewish man in the town and every boy from the age of six years up was on his way to synagogue. Mr. Fischel forthwith fell into line.

When he had reached the synagogue, he was escorted to the seat which had been occupied by his father from the time the synagogue was erected until the latter's death. Following the services, the congregation filed past Mr. Fischel's seat, one by one extending to him the customary greeting of "Good Shabbos."

After the Shabbos supper at the home of Mr. Lukenizky a number of townsfolk whom he had not previously seen, some of whom had been absent on his arrival, called upon him and extended their welcome. Mr. Fischel then conferred at length with Mr. Lukenizky as to the needs of the town, it being his desire to make some substantial contribution in memory of his father and mother. Mr. Lukenizky informed Mr. Fischel that what the town most needed was a Talmud Torah building. There were, he stated, more than two hundred children in Meretz who were compelled to receive religious instruction in scattered and out of the way buildings and in rooms unsuited to the purpose.

On Saturday morning Mr. Fischel went again to the synagogue where he once more occupied the seat his father had had before him and, after chanting "Maftir," announced his decision to build a Talmud Torah on the site of what had been the largest synagogue in Meretz, and which had been destroyed during the war.

Tremendous enthusiasm greeted this announcement and Mr. Fischel received expressions of gratitude from all present. Fol-

lowing the services, the line again formed towards his seat, with more expressions of "Good Shabbos," and additional thanks for the building he had pledged.

Following dinner, the Committee from the Talmud Torah called upon Mr. Fischel and invited him to review the work of the children in the various religious schools. Mr. Fischel was greatly impressed with the scholarship shown by the children as in each class he was greeted by one boy who addressed to him a poem, delivered in Hebrew, after which copies of the several poems were presented to him.

Mr. Fischel enjoyed every moment of this day, and indeed, all the time he spent in Meretz. On Saturday afternoon he abandoned his usual custom of taking a nap and took advantage of the opportunity to walk through the town by himself. On his return to the residence of his host, he intended to take a short rest, but found a committee awaiting him from the Keren Hayesod, which requested him to come with them to the Synagogue to give them a report on Palestine.

On reaching the synagogue he found the building crowded to the doors. He spoke for about an hour. Following this address, "Mincha" services were held, after which the congregation went to Sholesh Sudas. Before this repast was finished, a committee from the Folk Shule called upon Mr. Fischel for assistance.

After a conference, during which the committee explained the sort of education that was given to the children, Mr. Fischel pointed out his dissatisfaction with their course of instruction and suggested that the Shule should combine with the Talmud Torah, to which program the committee gave virtual assent. Mr. Fischel then named a committee of six persons, four from the Talmud Torah and two from the Folk Shule, with the Rabbi as Chairman, which was to enter upon the task of working out a suitable program for combining the two activities.

The following day, Sunday, Mr. Fischel arose at 5:30 and went to the first services in the synagogue which began at 6 A. M. As he left his room he had a most unusual experience. He noticed

a small woman nearly ninety years of age, feeble and wizened, standing near his door. As she saw him emerge the woman struck her thin hands together, in kind and motherly fashion, crying out "Is this you Artchick, my child?"

At first thought Mr. Fischel conceived the idea in his already excited mind that it was his mother. Again he recalled, his mother was dead.

Turning to the woman he asked, "Who are you?"

She answered, "I nursed you for a time when your mother was unable to do so."

Seeing before him the woman who had given to him of her life blood, Mr. Fischel was overcome. He could hardly express his feelings in words.

Standing before him was, in a sense, his foster mother and all he could think of was "Does she need my aid?"

When he asked if she required anything she at first replied "No." Then on his insistence that he be told if he might do something for her she answered that the only thing she needed was "ausrichting," meaning in translation, a shroud for her burial. Mr. Fischel at once gave her the sum required for this purpose whereupon she thanked and repeatedly blessed him. He left her sitting near his room, declaring that he would find her upon his return, but he never saw her again.

It so happened that this Sunday, the 17th of Tamuz, was Mr. Fischel's 58th birthday.

Following the Synagogue services and accompanied by a large gathering, Mr. Fischel proceeded to the cemetery to unveil the monument dedicated in memory of his father and mother.

These services, in which virtually the entire town took part, were most impressive and formed a fitting requiem for a man and woman who, throughout all their lives, had been noted for their piety and charitable deeds and for their personal service and sacrifice in behalf of all their neighbors, although they themselves had not been endowed with a large share of this world's goods.

Indeed, for the more than sixty years Mr. Fischel's parents



MR. FISCHEL PRAYING AT THE GRAVES OF HIS PARENTS
*Tombstones marking the last resting place of his Father and Mother
 in their native town, Meretz.*

were married, no element of schism or discord ever arose between them and they set an example to all Meretz in the way of love, respect and sacrifice for each other until the day they finally parted. May their souls indeed rest in peace.

As Mr. Fischel did not expect soon to visit this hallowed spot again he had a photograph taken of the monument so that he might have it always before him.

From the cemetery he went once more to the Rabbi's house to perfect the details for the building of the new Talmud Torah. On the advice of the Rabbi he appointed a Committee with power to arrange the plans for the new building and also to let the contracts and to proceed with the work.

This Committee was given authority to draw on the money that Mr. Fischel deposited for the purpose with the local branch of the Hebrew Sheltering and Immigrant Aid Society in Kovno. Mr. Fischel before leaving Meretz, laid the cornerstone of the new building in the presence of a large audience that assembled without special invitations or other notice.

When Mr. Fischel returned to the United States he was notified by the Committee appointed to carry out the work that the cost would be almost three times the amount which he had pledged. Although he was naturally surprised at this information, Mr. Fischel, determined that, as the structure was intended as a memorial to his parents, no deficit should interfere with the progress of construction. Accordingly he at once cabled the additional sum to the Committee, instructing it to proceed with the building. Not even this sum, however, proved to be sufficient for the needs as they arose and before the project was completed another check was required.

When, however, Mr. Fischel later received in America a photograph of the completed building he felt the money had been well expended and he was thankful for the opportunity that had been afforded him to thus commemorate the holy, sacred and devoted lives of his father and mother, in his native town.

When the time came for his departure from Meretz an automobile awaited him and he left carrying with him the cheers, blessings and Godspeed, of all the inhabitants.

In addition, Mr. Fischel received on his return home, a great many letters of gratitude and was particularly proud of one received from the Meretz Relief Association in New York. This letter was as follows:

MERETZ RELIEF ASSOCIATION

Mr. Harry Fischel,
118 East 93rd Street,
New York City.

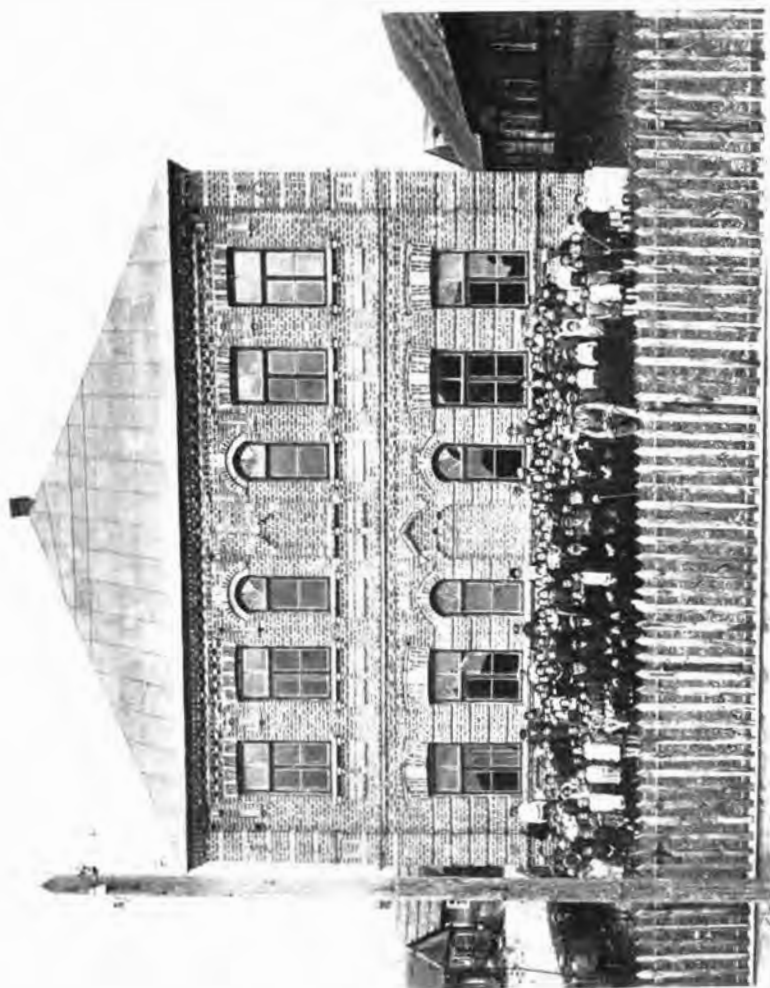
New York, May 24, 1924.

Dear Sir and Brother:

It gives us great pleasure to remit this, the united congratulations and thanks of all our members at their last meeting, May 18, 1924, at 79 Delancey Street, New York.

Taking great pride in your inestimable philanthropy in this country, in your inexhaustible energy in work devoted solely for the benefit of the needy and poor, weak and helpless, young and old; your participation actively in educational enterprises for our own Holy Faith and for the furthering and steady advancement of Americanization of our people; for the incessant stream of funds, for the masterly organization of many co-workers and millions of contributors for our starving brothers in Europe, we feel joyful to have you as one of ours, and pronounce and hail you as King of Industry, Prince of Charity and Father to millions of helpless here and abroad.

What prompts us to express, (hardly enough) our long cherished opinion of your noble deeds, is this. We have learned from our home town, Meretz, that on your recent visit you have erected an eternal statue to your credit by organizing and financing the erection of a new fireproof, up-to-date Talmud Torah in Meretz; a building which will accommodate hundreds of students, who will be trained under modern Orthodox instructors to *respect, know and cherish* our Torah, Bible and all of Hebrew Literature. Not only have you given them the entire sum of money to build,



TALMUD TORAH AT MERETZ

Presented by Mr. Fischel to his birthplace in memory of his parents.

complete and furnish the building, but you have even pledged partial support of maintenance.

It is our united wish that in compensation of your untiring efforts for Meretz and the Jewish community in general, that our Great God bless you with everlasting health, happiness to the extent of your own wishes, great joy for you and yours now and ever.

Very truly yours,

MERETZ RELIEF ASSOCIATION

SIMON HORWITZ, Pres.

SEAL

A. S. BLOCK, Secy.

Leaving Meretz, Mr. Fischel arrived in Kovno on July 2, on his return trip. He was received at once at the home of the famous Rabbi Abraham Shapiro, Chief Rabbi of Lithuania, in whose company he had the privilege of visiting practically every Jewish institution in the capital of that country, taking especial pleasure in his visit to the Yeshiva in Slobodka.

Returning from Kovno to Riga, Mr. Fischel had an unusual experience indicative of the obstacles placed in the path of travelers who sought to go from one country to another.

While on the train he was awakened at 3 A. M. by an official of Latvia who told him that his passport was only vized to leave Latvia and not to enter it. According to this interpretation of the law, Mr. Fischel was made to understand that all that could be done was to allow him to leave the train at the next station.

Understanding conditions as he did, however, he parleyed with this official, finally asking how much money would be required to cause him to change his mind. Mr. Fischel was told that a sum equal to \$10 in American money would solve the problem. Paying this amount and again retiring he was awakened in another half hour by another official who stated that the \$10 he had given to the previous dignitary was only for the purpose of permitting him to remain on the train and that when he reached Riga he would be placed in the custody of the authorities.

Mr. Fischel then asked what sum would finally clear him of his heinous crime and was advised that if he would part with an amount equal to \$25 in American money, all would be well. He gladly paid this sum.

When Riga was reached, however, he found two officials awaiting him at the station who escorted him to the Police Commissioner. Fortunately, Mr. Fischel had upon his person the letter from Secretary of State Hughes. Upon perusing this document, the mien of the police officers changed at once and the Commissioner began to apologize. He then wasted no time in vizeing Mr. Fischel's passport without further ado.

From Riga Mr. Fischel returned to Vilna and from that city went via automobile to Eishishok, his wife's birthplace.

Eishishok is located but a few miles from the town of Radin, where the foremost sage, Rabbi Israel Meyer Cagan, (the Chofetz Chaim) lives in the celebrated Talmudical college of that place, known the world over.

Mr. Fischel had been only a few hours in Eishishok when Rabbi Cagan was informed of his presence and at once sent an automobile bus used for the purpose of conveying students from the station at Radin to the Yeshiva, to take him there. Accompanying the bus was a Committee of students.

Mr. Fischel was met at a considerable distance from the Yeshiva by the Rabbi, then 86 years of age, who personally escorted him to his home and then through the Talmudical college. Although Mr. Fischel had met Rabbi Cagan before in Warsaw, a deep impression was created upon him through his visit to his home and to the Yeshiva where the Rabbi had spent virtually his entire life in preparing his many writings which had exercised so great an influence upon Jewish religious culture and thought.

Mr. Fischel was particularly impressed with the fact that so eminent a man and one who had contributed so much to the thought of his time, should live in such a modest environment.

From Eishishok, Mr. and Mrs. Fischel returned to Warsaw

where they remained until July 15th. There was still six weeks or thereabouts remaining before August 25, the date fixed for their sailing for home, and Mr. and Mrs. Fischel decided to go to Carlsbad, where they might be able to attend the Zionist Congress of that year, to which Mr. Fischel had been elected a delegate by the Mizrachi Zionist organization in Warsaw.

While Mr. Fischel had attended the Zionist Congress in 1921, the Congress of 1923, nevertheless, proved a most impressive event to him.

CHAPTER LIII

MEMORIAL TO PRESIDENT HARDING IN CARLSBAD

ON August 3rd, the sad news was received in Carlsbad of the death of the President of the United States, Warren G. Harding. This tragic information caused every American great grief and in order that their sentiment might be properly expressed, a memorial meeting was at once arranged at one of the large hotels.

The invitation to this meeting was issued by Morris Engelman, Financial Secretary of the Central Jewish Relief Committee, who happened to be in Carlsbad at the time and a notice was posted in every hotel, so that on August 5th a large assemblage of Americans met in the Hotel Kroh for the purpose of giving voice to the great loss sustained by the nation.

The Committee that arranged the meeting was headed by Morris Engelman and included Charles Garfiel, Adolph Kulptman, Samuel Markowitz, Louis Roggen, Cantor Josef Rosenblatt, Morris Rothenberg, Jacob W. Wertheimer and Mr. Fischel of New York; Henry Spira of Cleveland and Louis Topkis of Wilmington, Delaware.

The minutes of the memorial meeting are given herewith:

Minutes of the Memorial Meeting held by American Citizens, pursuant to the call hereto annexed, at Hotel Kroh, Carlsbad, Czecho-Slovakia, on August fifth, Nineteen Hundred and Twenty-three, at three o'clock in the afternoon.

The meeting was opened by Mr. Morris Engelman, who suggested that Judge Samuel Strassburger of New York, act as chairman of the occasion. Judge Strassburger addressing the assemblage said in part:

"Ladies and Gentlemen; Fellow Americans, residents of Czecho-Slovakia and representatives of the different nations present: It is with deep sorrow that we are gathered here today to express our heartfelt sympathy and sadness caused by the terrible

shock of the unexpected death of our dearly beloved President of the United States, Warren G. Harding. It is not for me to make any extended remarks at this time. We have present a number of representative men and women who will address you and I will call upon them to express the sorrow we all feel so keenly."

The following then spoke: Mr. Samuel Markewich of New York, Mr. M. V. Joseph of Birmingham, Ala., Mr. Henry Spiro of Cleveland, O., Mr. Harry Fischel of New York, Dr. Bernard Kaufman of San Francisco, Cal., Mr. S. B. Kamaiko of Chicago, Ill., Dr. Armand Kaminka of Vienna.

The eulogies were eloquent, heartfelt and sincere. The gathering was largely attended and fitting resolutions were adopted and ordered to be cabled to Washington and a copy of same forwarded to the family.

At the suggestion of one of the young American women present, the audience rose and with bowed heads remained silent and in prayer.

The following prayer was then uttered by Chief Rabbi Samuel Reich:

Warren G. Harding, President of the United States of America is dead. We, prostrate in prayer, Almighty God, beseech Thee to receive him in grace in Thy Heavenly regions. Thou art called in the Holy Scriptures, the father of the orphans and the oppressed. We pray to you to look down and see how America has proved itself the kindhearted mother of the unfortunate victims of the late World War. We praise Thee every morning for that. Thou clothest the naked, Thou liberatest the fettered, Thou comfortest the oppressed and broken-hearted and Thou helpst the destitute. All these virtues have America's great and noble people exercised in Europe under the administration of the departed President. America has stars in its National flag. When Europe was enveloped in darkness and despair, the American star of charity spread forth its shining light of hope and relief. Thy homeless and expelled children of the old country have been received with love and kindness in America and now that the soul of the deceased President flies from this world into Thy Heavenly domains, we unite in prayer to Thee to take him up into Thy grace and love and grant him eternal peace and rest. Father in Heaven, give Thy blessings to this great nation, unequalled in human history, which is the hope for the future of the entire world. May

the many tears the American people have helped dry in Europe fall as mild dew on the work of President Coolidge and his advisors, so that America may continue with glory to flourish and to prosper. Amen.

At the conclusion of the meeting it was voted unanimously to send a cable to the Secretary of State in Washington, conveying the resolutions that were passed unanimously, and the Committee defrayed the cost of this cable which was as follows:

TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE,
WASHINGTON, D. C.

At a meeting of American citizens, held on August fifth, Nineteen Hundred Twenty Three, at Hotel Kroh, Carlsbad, Czecho-Slovakia, the following was unanimously adopted:

RESOLVED, That we, citizens of the United States, deeply mourn the loss of our beloved President Warren G. Harding and join with our fellow citizens at home in the nation's sorrow.

The sudden death of our beloved President is not only a severe blow to our nation, but, as we believe, an irretrievable loss to all humanity throughout the entire world.

Our heartfelt and deepest sympathy is herewith extended to Mrs. Harding, Dr. Harding, the father, and to all the members of the family of our late lamented President.

A large number of newspapers both in Europe and America commented at length upon this meeting, which was one of the first memorial meetings held in Europe in honor of the late President of the United States.

Among these articles was the following appearing in the London Chronicle of August 10th:

HARDING MEMORIAL MEETING

Carlsbad, August 6th.

A memorial meeting to the late President Harding was held here yesterday. Judge Strassburger presided. The portrait of President Harding, framed in oak leaves, was prominently displayed.

Rabbi Reich referred to the gigantic relief activity which has been organized by the United States, under President Harding's administration, on behalf of stricken Europe. The Rabbi concluded with a prayer to God to be gracious to the soul of President Harding who had sought to bring about world peace.

Mr. Markewich spoke of the liberty and prosperity enjoyed by all American citizens without any distinction of race. The whole world, he said, mourned the loss of the American nation.

Mr. Harry Fischel said that they had lost not only a President but a friend of humanity and of the whole world. President Harding had more than once personally ordered that immigrants who were refused admission to the United States, because the quota figures were exhausted, should be allowed to land. He had taken immense interest in the welfare of the immigrants. On one occasion he had allowed himself to be photographed together with members of the Hebrew Sheltering and Immigrant Aid Society. Mr. Fischel proposed that a telegram of condolence should be addressed by the meeting to Mr. Secretary Hughes, and through him to the whole American nation and to Mr. Harding's family.

Mr. S. B. Kamaiko, of the American-Lithuanian Chamber of Commerce, related that a few weeks ago, just before he had set out on his visit to Lithuania, he had met President Harding who had spoken to him of his hope that the new States of Europe would learn the lesson of liberty from the United States. In the same way, when Professor Masaryk, the President of Czecho-Slovakia, was on his visit to America President Harding had spoken with him of his hope that Czecho-Slovakia would always pursue the paths of humanity and of right, and would accord full protection to her minority nationalities.

Other speakers were Dr. Kaufman, President of the American Medical men in Vienna; Mr. Joseph Birmingham, a non-Jew; Mr. Spiro and Miss Engelman, on behalf of the American women.

In the proposal of Mr. Spiro, a telegram of condolence has been sent to Marion, President Harding's native town.

While Mr. and Mrs. Fischel had only to take a train from Carlsbad to Paris and then go a short distance to Cherbourg to board the steamer on which they were leaving for the United States, they were confronted once again, however, with the prob-

lem that faced them on their previous visit to Europe in 1921, namely, that they would be compelled to desecrate the Sabbath were they to board the vessel at that port, as the steamer was to arrive in Cherbourg on Saturday morning and to leave on Saturday afternoon.

They took advantage, accordingly, of their previous experience and journeyed to London so that they might reach Southampton and board the vessel on Friday afternoon.

While on the way from Carlsbad to London they visited Holland. Going from Amsterdam to the Hague, they particularly enjoyed the opportunity of visiting the World Peace Tribunal. To do this they had to secure special permission from the American Legation. Mr. Fischel here again presented his letter from Secretary Hughes which secured for him a great degree of courtesy and attention. They were escorted by the Secretary of the Legation through every part of the building, and formed the conclusion that the structure was one of the most impressive and most beautiful in the world.

From the Hague they went to Rotterdam and from Rotterdam to Antwerp. Leaving Antwerp by boat, they went to Harwich, England, from there to London and then to Southampton, where they reached their steamer on Friday, August 24, again finding that arrangements had been made by the Cunard Line to enable them to observe the dietary laws on their return voyage.

CHAPTER LIV

REPORTS ON JEWISH HOMELAND BUILDING

ARRIVING back in America once more, Mr. Fischel found the Jewish public eagerly awaiting a report on the progress that had been made in the upbuilding of the Jewish homeland in Palestine. The Fischels reached port on Saturday, September 1, but in order not to desecrate the Sabbath did not land until the evening of that day.

Mr. Fischel was visited on ship-board by many newspaper representatives who requested an interview on his impressions gained while in Europe and Palestine but he refused an extended statement at that time, because of his intention later to prepare a complete and detailed report for submission to the stockholders of the Palestine Cooperative Company and the Palestine Building Loan and Savings Association, as constituents of the Palestine Development Council.

Several months later, on October 21, these organizations arranged a reception for Judge Julian W. Mack, Emanuel N. Mohl, and Mr. Fischel, that was held in the Hotel Pennsylvania and on which occasion Mr. Fischel delivered the following report:

TWO YEARS OF GREAT PROGRESS IN PALESTINE

In order to show the progress in Palestine, I will review briefly the situation as I found it two years ago as compared with its present condition.

My interest in Palestine, as far as the economic side is concerned, dates back to 1910 when I made my first pilgrimage to the Holy Land, and purchased a grove for oranges, esrogim, lemons, almonds, etc. Immediately after the promulgation of the Balfour Declaration, together with some friends, I planned a Palestine Development Corporation, to include in its scope every form of

commercial and industrial enterprise. We were advised at that time to defer action.

Disturbed that it was not my privilege to do something concrete for the upbuilding of our Holy Land, I determined two years ago, to make a second trip, to examine the situation and see what could be done. Together with Mrs. Fischel and some friends, I left for Palestine prayerfully hoping that the Holy One, Blessed Be He, would show us the path of duty.

We left on Independence Day, 1921, and arrived in Jerusalem on July 21. A few days later I received an invitation from His Excellency the High Commissioner to visit him. Upon inquiry he advised that we first make a tour through Palestine, and then decide what ought to be taken up immediately. We heeded his advice and spared no pains to thoroughly investigate the possibilities of the country. Needless to say, we visited the large and small cities, the old and new colonies. Being for so many years a real estate operator and builder, I was naturally more interested along these lines.

Upon investigation I found frightful conditions. From the close of the war to the date of our arrival, about 20,000 Jews had migrated to Palestine. No provisions, whatsoever, had been made to house them. The people in the larger cities, especially in Jerusalem, were in danger of contracting disease due to overcrowding. Not a single house had been built from the beginning of the war up to that time, 1921. The old houses, owned largely by the Arabs, contained no sanitary improvements whatsoever. The newcomers had to pay a very high rental, and were forced in many instances to deposit in advance rental for three years, which money was used by the owner for constructing an additional story to his house. All this was due to the lack of room and to the more important fact that little or no money could be obtained on mortgages on real estate, in spite of the fact that the owners were ready to pay from 18 per cent to 25 per cent interest. Naturally under such conditions no houses could be built or even attempted.

Upon my return to New York, I called a conference of many of the most successful real estate men and builders in New York. I laid the proposition before them. We then formed a company for the purpose of making building loans in Palestine. It was to be known as the Palestine Development Corporation.

It so happened, at the same time, that the eminent Jurists, Justices Louis D. Brandeis and Julian W. Mack and Mr. Sol Rosenbloom of Pittsburgh, Mr. Jacob deHaas, the well known Zionist worker and many others had withdrawn from the Zionist Organization of America, in order to do practical work in Palestine. As luck would have it, they were informed of our plans and invited us to join with them and work together in the same direction. Since our motive and sole purpose was to help relieve the terrible congestion in Jerusalem and its outlying districts, we accepted the proposition and amalgamated. Half of our initial capital was furnished by the Palestine Cooperative Company, known as the Brandeis-Mack Company and half by my associates and myself. Then Mr. Sol Rosenbloom went to Palestine and organized the Palestine Building Loan and Savings Association. We were fortunate to obtain the services of Mr. E. N. Mohl, an able and most enthusiastic worker in the building line, to act as our Palestine manager. No time was wasted and applications for loans were received immediately.

While the general opinion always prevailed that all the Jews of Palestine are dependent upon charity, this was entirely disproved by the fact that in a very short time the applications for loans from a very large number of Jewish home seekers amounted to over \$400,000. This represented 60 per cent. of the cost of construction for new houses. Almost every one of these borrowers was ready to furnish the additional 40 per cent. of the cost of the building, in accordance with our requirements. Since our capital was limited, only the most deserving applications for loans were accepted, and these amounted to over \$300,000 which amount we were then able to supply. In a short time we were deluged with applications from every part of Palestine. Since the amount we appropriated had been exhausted, the only thing for us to do was to sell more stock in our Company in order to grant more loans.

As Chairman of the Building Loan Committee I felt that before we made an effort to sell more of our stock, it would be advisable for me to go to Palestine and see with my own eyes what had been accomplished; what the immediate and future requirements were; how many of the new applicants were able to furnish the 40 per cent. of the building cost; how many were ready to start building; whether enough material was obtainable, whether the

houses which were being erected could be improved upon by American methods; whether the cost of the buildings could be reduced; in short, I wanted to make a general survey of the entire housing situation so as to make my first report of our progress and needs.

Accordingly, accompanied by Mrs. Fischel, I left New York on this April 24, for Palestine, arrived in Jerusalem on May 9, and started to work immediately. I will not at this time speak of the general beauty of Palestine nor of its magnetic power to attract people to come again once they have visited the Holy Land, nor will I dwell on the benefits from the Balfour Declaration, or the duty of every Jew in America to help build a homeland for the hundreds of thousands of Jewish sufferers from devastated Europe. I will limit my report to a picture of the Building Loan and Savings Association, which the Almighty has given me the privilege of helping to organize, and the Association's accomplishments for Palestine; the effect it has had on the housing situation; on general business; in furnishing employment; in lowering the prevailing interest rate and in cementing the ties of friendship between the Arabs and the Jewish people.

MY IMPRESSIONS

The office of our Company, namely the Palestine Building Loan and Savings Association, occupies two rooms in a so-called office building in Jerusalem. I spent several days going through all the books, the form of mortgages, the form of building loans, the contracts, plans and specifications of buildings in course of construction, as well as the general work of the Company. As one who has had 37 years experience in the real estate and building business, I was very pleasantly surprised and satisfied to find the entire system in such splendid working order. As Mr. Mohl, who introduced American methods in a country where such things were unknown, is giving all his time to this work gratis, there is practically no expense except that of a stenographer and an office boy.

After examining all this work in the office, Mr. Mohl took me to the several districts where the houses are being built with our loans, namely, Boni Baith, Talpiot, Romamo and several houses scattered throughout the city of Jerusalem, as well as Bath Galim

in Haifa, none of which locations are more than thirty minutes walk from the city of Jerusalem or from the city of Haifa and about ten minutes ride by a bus line which has already been established for the benefit of the settlers.

Words fail me to express my amazement and pleasure at what our building loans have accomplished in such a short time and with the small amount of capital invested by our Company. Mountains of rocks have been transformed into cities, wildernesses into beautiful gardens.

We first reached Romamo, the settlement nearest to the city of Jerusalem. I did not believe my own eyes when I saw this beautiful piece of land, developed where had been nothing but heaps of stones, probably since the destruction of Jerusalem, now made into wide streets, divided into large building plots, upon some of which beautiful residences have been erected by the so-called Bal-ha-Batim or the richer class of Jerusalem. While not all of the homes are being built with our loans, however, this section has been started through the impetus given by our organization. General Allenby, when he entered Jerusalem, had stopped at that part of the city and for that reason a beautiful boulevard was laid out and a splendid monument is being erected at the entrance to the boulevard.

We then proceeded to Talpiot, which is a beautiful piece of land on the road to Hebron. Its position is most glorious, with a view of the entire city of Jerusalem as well as of the Dead Sea. This land was bought by a group of business men several years ago, but they were unable to start building until our Company was ready to make building loans. Almost every house in that section, with the exception of probably four or five, are being built with our loans and a large number of persons are waiting to commence operations as soon as we are ready to grant more loans.

We then proceeded to a district which I consider the most beautiful and picturesque place near Jerusalem, namely Boni Baith. If I had the ability of Rabbi Jehuda Halevi, I would be able to adequately express the pleasurable emotions which I experienced on that spot. A large mountain of rocks in the shape of a horse shoe had been transformed in less than six months into a most beautiful town. Fifty-nine houses were being constructed, many of which are now completed. Every one without exception is being erected with our loans and there are three times that

number ready to be built if we could only make more loans. The mountain has been converted into large terraces with houses built in such a way that the houses on the upper terraces overlook the tops of those on the lower. There are fine entrances with beautiful gardens in front of every house and each house has a remarkable view of Jerusalem and the entire Judean mountains.

Although these houses are not of the very expensive kind, the architectural designs displayed are very picturesque and are beyond my limited power of description. No two houses look alike. The owners of these houses, all of whom are of the intellectual class, namely teachers, bank clerks and Government employees, exercised their own love of beauty in preparing the plans. They paid special attention to the laying out of the lawns, gardens and flower beds. They quit their work in the offices at about 3 in the afternoon, for they begin work at 7 in the morning. When they reach home, they spend the rest of the day, to as late as 9 at night, working to help finish their homes, especially the lawns and gardens. It would do your heart good, as it did mine, to see the pleasure they derive in doing this work.

They sing the most melodious Hebrew songs and appear to be very happy. They enjoy their little homes much more than many a multi-millionaire in America enjoys his mansion. I asked several of them how they can stand the strain of so many hours additional work after finishing their regular daily tasks and the answer was unanimous—"I am now realizing the dream of my life which is to have my own home. Besides, I am not only building my own house, I am also helping to build Palestine, the home of the Jewish people."

A feeling of this kind prevails, not only in this settlement of Boni Baith, but in every section where houses are being erected. The joy in the thought that they will soon move from the old dilapidated houses without any sanitary facilities, situated in the narrow streets of the congested city, into their own modern homes with beautiful gardens, open spaces, large grass plots and plenty of sunshine, gives them the courage and strength to carry on until the completion of their new abodes. The beautiful verandas in the new homes are used as dining rooms by those who have already moved in and where, through the enjoyment of the fresh air, they forget the scantiness of their meals for which they spend very little, using every dollar to improve their homes. Anticipat-

ing all this, it is no wonder that they overlook the great hardships until the joyous moment arrives when they may actually take possession of these homes.

In forming our Building Loan Company, we decided that we would first confine our activities to the city of Jerusalem and its surroundings, having in mind that this universal city is the most overcrowded, being the first place in which foreigners settle. However, we could not refuse the cry for loans from a group of business men who had bought a large plot of land in Haifa, near beautiful Mount Carmel, which land faces the beach of the Mediterranean Sea. This place is called Bath Galim, meaning the Daughter of the Waves. We made loans on only thirty houses in this settlement, but through our impetus, twice this number of houses are being built and many more are ready to be built if we will extend loans to them.

The same condition prevails in every settlement. There were many people who were ready to start building with their own money, but were unable to proceed individually for the following reason: To start a building proposition in a new district requires the combined effort of a large number of people and an outlay of a large sum of money in order to provide roads, water and transportation facilities for material and labor and many other necessities, the cost of which is prohibitive to the individual. When we formed our Company we foresaw these conditions and accordingly made loans in large numbers for each section. Consequently the cost of providing all the preliminary needs were apportioned among all the borrowers and the expense to each individual was nominal. As soon as all the preparations were made and work started on these buildings, many individuals took advantage of this activity and also started building homes in these sections but without our assistance.

It gives me pleasure to point out that besides the four settlements above mentioned, our company, at the suggestion of the High Commissioner and the Governor of Jerusalem, made many loans to the influential Arabs on their homes in the City of Jerusalem. These houses were started before the war but could not be finished due to the lack of funds.

Justice Brandeis has stated on many occasions that I am the Mother of this child, namely the Building Loan and Savings Association. And as such, I will endeavor briefly to express my

joy and pleasure in finding that this young child was able in a very short time and with comparatively small capital to accomplish this great practical and useful assistance in Palestine in the following manner:

1. Every dollar which we loaned on these buildings remains in Palestine. Thousands of people in every business and industry are benefited by this money. It circulates from the laborer to the merchant and from the merchant back to the colonist who produces the food and sells it to the laborer.

2. Our Company made employment possible for a large number of men in the building line, both mechanics and unskilled laborers.

3. Our Company helped build several hundred houses, thereby enabling a large number of the Jewish population to move from the overcrowded and unsanitary houses in the city to beautiful country homes. As a result of relieving some of the congestion, the rents in the city were automatically reduced to less than one half.

4. Our Company, by bringing \$300,000 into Palestine and placing same on long term mortgages, caused the prevailing high rates of interest on real estate loans, ranging from 18 per cent. to 25 per cent. to be reduced to as low as 10 per cent. This was a great achievement. I believe it is in place for me to mention at this time that our present interest charge is 8 per cent., six per cent. to meet our dividend obligations and two per cent. for expenses incurred in Palestine. At the same time I would like to impress on you that the expenses of selling stock and other charges in America are defrayed by individual donations. Therefore, every dollar of stock which you buy in our company is invested in mortgages and will bring six per cent. interest.

5. Our Company was instrumental in creating a better feeling between the Arabs and the Jewish people in two ways: First, by making a number of loans to the better class Arabs who have a large following and are the owners of the houses in the city. Second, by giving them employment, as the cutting of stones in the quarry and the delivery of building material is done by Arabs.

An interesting incident happened while I was in our Jerusalem office. An influential Arab of a well known family came in to pay the interest due on his mortgage. Mr. Mohl introduced me as one of the organizers of the Palestine Building Loan and Sav-

ings Association. The Arab fell to his knees and prayed to Allah for my health and the success of our Company. He expressed his appreciation and that of his friends, for the good our Company has done for them. Our Building loans were their only chance to complete their houses.

The day before I left Palestine, this Arab called at the office with a friend to extend an invitation to my family for a dinner which he had arranged in our honor. In his speech of invitation, he expressed his brotherly love for our Jewish people, as we, together with them, said he, are the children of Abraham, and therefore ought to dwell together in peace. I informed him that it would be impossible for us to accept his invitation because we were to leave Palestine the next day. He was sorely disappointed because he was deprived of the opportunity of showing his appreciation and that of his friends in the form which they had arranged. It took me some time to convince him that it was impossible to change our plans and could not accept his invitation. He was finally contented with my promise and hope to return soon again, and the hope that our Company will soon have sufficient funds to grant all deserving loans for which applications are made.

The amortization enables the borrowers to pay off the whole loan in about 15 years, when they will own their property free and clear, yet we have so arranged this detail as to provide us with a certain amount of new money for loans every six months. I stress this point. Not only does the owner's equity increase annually by his payments, which adds to our security, but the extension of operations conducted conservatively, should improve the value of the equity so we will be helping people to save as well as to build homes by our simple system. I believe that everyone here will agree with me that we should set our faces sternly against all artificial increases in values. We want no land booms in Palestine. Therefore, when I speak of increased values I mean only those which are the natural result of better facilities, the demand for better living conditions and the natural increase of population.

There is no doubt in my mind and I am authorized to express the opinion of the High Commissioner, Sir Herbert Samuel, as well as that of many other influential men in Palestine, that the work of our Building Loan and Savings Association has aided

the development of Palestine in a marked degree. But we will be of far greater assistance as soon as we shall be able to grant more loans for which applications have been filed.

In order to raise additional money, required for the many applications, it is our intention to invite those men and women whom God has blessed with wealth and the Jewish heart which beats for Palestine, to invest part of their spare cash in stock of our Company. For that reason I deem it my duty to acquaint our future stockholders with the methods adopted in making our building loans, so that they will be able to see for themselves the safety of their investment.

SAFETY OF INVESTMENT

Our main object is to help establish new settlements near the city of Jerusalem where a number of people desire to build homes. We are loaning them 60 per cent. of the cost of their home, not including the land for which they have already paid. The largest amount loaned on one house is L600 amounting to about \$3,000. The cost of the building of these houses is no less than \$5,000 and in many cases as high as \$8,000. They are to pay about 12 per cent. of the loan annually, which amount includes interest and the installments and amortization of the mortgage. In no case is the amount of the payment more than the rent which they are compelled to pay for three rooms in an old house in the congested part of the city without any improvements. Not alone have they the benefit of the improved conditions, but they are, at the same time, paying off the mortgage on their home in about 15 years.

While we loan 60 per cent. of the cost of the building, however, our loan becomes a smaller percentage of the collateral every year as the borrowers pay off a portion of the loan semi-annually. In addition, thereto, every new house which is erected in that section makes those houses more valuable, so that our loans do not average more than 40 per cent. of the actual value of the house on which the loan is made.

I believe it is known to every one familiar with real estate that savings banks in the small towns, loan 60 per cent. of the value on real estate. This amount is considered by them as perfectly safe. Our Company is loaning in and around Jerusalem on the

average less than 40 per cent of the value and this is being reduced from time to time. Isn't that a perfectly safe investment?

The work of the Palestine Building Loan and Savings Association is felt all through Palestine and is almost the only practical and productive work there. Considering the international reputation of the men who represent our Company, it should have accomplished much more even in the short period of its existence. These men should have no difficulty in raising the money necessary to meet all the loans applied for. This condition has been called to my attention by some of the leaders of the world's Jewry, including the High Commissioner. My answer was that our Company was organized to do practical work on a business basis. Before we could recommend to the public that it invest its money, we wanted to make reasonably sure that the investment was safe. It is for this reason also, that I went to Palestine to see whether these building loans made by our company are safe and whether the company will be in a position to pay the 6 per cent. dividend to its stockholders.

Although, I had every confidence in this enterprise from its inception, I am convinced now more than ever of the soundness of our proposition. Every dollar invested in the Building Loan is just as safe as any loan made on real estate in the City of New York. It is, therefore, the duty of the influential men connected with our Company as well as everyone who can help, to put his shoulder to the wheel and buy stock of our Company for himself and also sell stock to his friends thereby enabling us to raise sufficient funds to carry the work so nobly commenced to complete success. There are a great number of Jewish people in America who have money lying idle or even deposited in Savings Banks upon which they receive $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. or 4 per cent. Can they find a safer and better paying investment than by buying stock in our company, either for cash or in four installments of 25 per cent. each?

In conclusion, let me say that returning to Palestine after an interval of two years, I was happy to see the great changes which have taken place in every branch of industry as well as in agriculture. Many fields in the colonies and around the city, which had been uncultivated and covered with stones, are now cultivated and covered with vegetation. Many new homes are also

being built in the colonies, thus making more room for immigrants and more facilities for employment.

The opportunities for success in every industry are great no matter what business one will start, provided that he knows his business and is familiar with local conditions. There were several men who started industries and did not succeed. This was not the fault of Palestine, as the High Commissioner expressed it, but it was the fault of themselves, because they came to Palestine unqualified to manage the industries started by them. Besides they began on a scale, much larger than the capital they possessed warranted.

All that is necessary is, that our American brethren should have a little more confidence in Palestine. They should invest part of their capital on a business basis. Not alone will they receive a good income on their capital, but they will also help to prepare a haven of refuge for the thousands of Jewish people of Europe who cannot come to our beloved United States of America, but who ought to be relieved of the oppression and pressure they meet with in some of the European countries.

I appeal to the conscience of every Jew and Jewess in America to help us further the good work of providing homes for worthy Jewish families in Palestine. The sooner the money is invested, the sooner will we be able to direct our Jerusalem manager to extend further loans and thus we hope that the foundation will have been permanently laid for the home of our Brethren in the Holy Land.

While in Palestine and Europe, largely as a result of the strain under which he had labored for many years, together with the excitement incident to the journey to his former home, Mr. Fischel's health, already far from robust, suffered further inroads.

He went to Carlsbad hoping to obtain a complete rest and upon arriving there was examined by a physician who informed him that he was a victim of diabetes, a disease then regarded as almost incurable. While he took the treatment prescribed in Carlsbad, he received only temporary relief so that on his return to America he determined to make every effort to care for his health. He was ordered by his physician to take things easy and not to unduly exert himself and was advised that it was essential that

he move to a corner apartment where he would receive the benefit of as much sunlight as possible and at the same time avoid the necessity of climbing stairs. Although Mr. and Mrs. Fischel were both greatly attached to their home at 118 East 93rd Street which they had occupied for twenty-two years, after a family conference they reluctantly agreed to part with it and secure another residence.

On June 10, 1924, Mr. Fischel purchased a plot of land on the southwest corner of Park Avenue and 80th Street, one of the finest corners on that exclusive Avenue, where he planned to erect a fourteen story apartment in keeping with the standards of the locality and having its main entrance on Park Avenue.

It was in this structure he arranged to have his own home, occupying the second story, with a separate entrance on Eightieth Street, giving him virtually a private house with all the sunlight and ventilation possible, and at the same time affording him the convenience of an apartment.

In the meantime, Mr. Fischel was in the care of the late Dr. Max Kahn, specialist in diabetes and was ordered to the Battle Creek, Michigan, Sanitarium for complete rest and treatment. He was, however, so far from well upon his departure that his son-in-law Dr. Henry A. Rafsky, would not permit him to make the trip alone.

Upon Mr. Fischel's and Dr. Rafsky's arrival at the institution they were met by Dr. John W. Harvey Kellogg, head of the Sanitarium and a personal friend of Dr. Max Einhorn, with whom Dr. Rafsky is associated.

Mr. Fischel's stay in Battle Creek, lasted five weeks, the vegetarian diet upon which he was placed causing his condition to greatly improve. This was also largely due to the personal care of Dr. Kellogg.

During the five weeks spent in Battle Creek, Mr. Fischel's health was largely restored, so that he was enabled, on taking up his residence in a temporary home at 68 East 86th Street, to enter upon the great task of building the new Yeshiva College of which an account will be given in another chapter.

CHAPTER LV

CHIEF RABBI KOOK OF PALESTINE VISITS AMERICA

AN outstanding event in the annals of American Jewry was the visit to the United States, early in 1925, of Chief Rabbi Abraham I. Kook of Palestine. This visit was brought about through the efforts of the Central Committee for the Relief of Jews Suffering Through the War, of which Mr. Fischel was the treasurer and had as its primary purpose the stimulating of collections in behalf of the hundreds of thousands of the Jews of Europe whom the war had left destitute and whose institutions were without funds to function properly.

Following the armistice, the task of securing contributions for this cause had grown increasingly difficult, so that it finally became necessary, in order to stimulate giving anew, to bring here some commanding personality who should be able to re-vitalize the enthusiasm of Orthodox Jewry toward the continuance of the obligation resting upon it.

In order to accomplish this purpose it was decided to endeavor to induce Rabbi Kook to come to America.

This effort, in view of the urgency of the situation, was successful and Rabbi Kook arrived here on March 19, 1925.

Mr. Fischel enjoyed the great honor of meeting the Chief Rabbi of Palestine at the steamer and headed a welcoming throng of at least 10,000 persons who came both on foot and in automobile to escort the Chief Rabbi from the steamer to the City Hall, where he was officially received by the then Mayor, John F. Hylan.

Rabbi Kook remained in America from March 19 to November 12th of that year, during which time he visited the principal cities of the country and through his appeals to Orthodox Jewry at large, the additional sum of nearly \$400,000 was raised for the

specific purpose of helping to maintain the Yeshivas and Talmud Torahs of Europe.

Mr. Fischel gave a farewell dinner at his residence for Rabbi Kook, prior to the latter's departure for Palestine.

This dinner was held on October 28, 1925, and was attended by the most prominent Orthodox Rabbis of America and the leaders of the Jewish institutions in New York.

On November 12th, Mr. Fischel, accompanied by a large number of prominent Jews, escorted Rabbi Kook to his steamer, where the assemblage wished the latter Bon Voyage and God-speed.

CHAPTER LVI

GREAT YESHIVA COLLEGE HAS ITS BEGINNING

OF all the many and diversified interests, communal and business, which had engaged Mr. Fischel's attention throughout the years, that of Jewish religious education had, perhaps, remained uppermost in his thoughts.

There still remained in this field of endeavor the largest and most ambitious undertaking of his career, the effort to establish the great Yeshiva College, that was to insure the preservation of Orthodox Judaism in America for all time and to which task he now gave himself with all his strength.

For twenty-seven years Mr. Fischel had been active in the work connected with the Yeshiva Rabbi Issac Elchanan Theological Seminary and the Yeshiva Etz Chaim, his interest dating back to 1900, almost to the birth of these institutions.

In this period, the institutions had merged and had moved at various times from 1 Canal Street to 85 Henry Street, thence to 9-11 Montgomery Street and finally to 301-302-303 East Broadway.

In each instance Mr. Fischel had served as the chairman of the Building Committee which had secured for the Yeshiva its several homes and he had also taken a very great interest and part in framing the educational program.

The institution was the only one in America with a complete High School course, conducted in conjunction with its facilities for a Talmudic education and which had received the approval of the State Board of Education, so that it had come to be classified by the authorities as a Parochial Institution.

The school was recognized not only for its high standards of religious instruction but as one of the finest High Schools in secular learning in the State.

As a result of these facilities, the school was enabled to graduate its students at a much lower age than any other High School, as the students found that in acquiring Talmudic knowledge they also obtained a much more ready insight into their secular studies.

The school finally became so favored that it was impossible to accommodate anywhere near the number of students who applied for entrance. With a capacity of only 400 students an effort was made to provide room for 550. The consequent congestion had grown from bad to worse and it finally became imperative that some way be found to increase the accommodations.

The problem was accentuated by the fact that following the armistice many of the European Yeshivas, which had been fountains of Talmudic knowledge and had produced large numbers of scholars of merit, had been compelled to close and their students had immigrated to America with their parents.

These young men naturally sought to complete their studies here and as their previous training gave them the capacity quickly to acquire the English language they at once came to this institution to obtain the opportunity to graduate as Rabbis or religious teachers or even to pursue other professions.

With this situation in mind the Directors of the Yeshiva Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary determined that the High School course of the institution was not sufficiently broad, especially for those desiring later to enter the Rabbinate and that it would be necessary to provide additional courses.

The problem was one which troubled the Directors acutely for some time, until finally the President of the Faculty, Dr. Bernard Revel, suggested at a meeting of the Board that there was only one way out of the dilemma and that was either to allow the future generation of Jewish youth to be brought up in ignorance of Talmudic law or to establish a college where they might receive both a Talmudic and secular education under one roof, and under the same environment.

It seemed exceedingly difficult to accomplish this objective as the resources of the institution were limited. It was, however,

impossible to conceive of permitting the future generations of Jewish young men to remain in ignorance of their faith and it was determined that a parochial college must be established, even though the institution at the start should be a small one in accordance with the means available.

At this meeting of the Board of Directors, a campaign was launched to raise enough money to purchase four lots in a central location for the purpose of erecting a college thereon and a Committee to secure such a site was appointed. The late Samuel Greenstein, who had been a worker in the institution for many years, was appointed chairman of this Committee, the first meeting of which was held on October 21, 1923.

At this meeting the question of a suitable campaign for funds was discussed. Some of the conservative members of the committee were of the opinion that a million dollars was the full sum that should be asked of the public. Others, who saw further into the future, claimed that if the undertaking were to be entered upon at all \$2,000,000 should be asked.

While this debate was in progress, Mr. Fischel reminded himself of an incident which occurred earlier in his career when the Hebrew Sheltering and Immigrant Aid Society purchased the site of the old Astor Library on Lafayette Street, with the object of transforming it into an Immigrant Home.

It will be remembered that at that time, the Committee, of which Mr. Fischel was one of the members, called upon Jacob H. Schiff, for his advice and cooperation and that Mr. Schiff suggested that the investment, involving half a million dollars, was too large to enter upon.

On that occasion, Mr. Fischel said to Mr. Schiff: "If the Congress may burden the people of the United States with a debt of twenty billion dollars for war purposes, our Board of Directors has the right to mortgage our people for the sum required to accomplish our purpose."

Mr. Fischel felt that the Yeshiva, like the Immigrant Home, was not purely a local object, but one affecting the entire Jewish

people of the United States and that the Directors had the right to appeal to the Jews of America for a fund sufficient to build a Yeshiva College that should, when completed, be an honor and credit to all the Jews of America.

He, therefore, then and there, suggested that the sum of \$5,000,000 rather than one or two millions, should be the goal. Some of the directors took the view that he had gone out of his mind in suggesting such a sum. Mr. Fischel, however, insisted that five million dollars was none too large an amount to accomplish the purpose in view and in order to start the ball rolling he subscribed at once \$10,000 with the pledge of an additional subscription of \$5,000 for each million dollars collected, making his total pledge \$30,000 if the full amount were secured.

This offer created a large degree of enthusiasm among those present with the result that Mr. Greenstein immediately followed with a pledge of the same sum and several other members fell in with subscriptions of \$10,000, so that a total of \$155,000 was subscribed among the few men present at this initial meeting.

Having such excellent success at the first meeting the Committee decided to acquire for the proposed college a plot comprising ten city lots and some of the members even went so far as to propose that twenty city lots be secured.

A long time was expended in searching for a site in a suitable location and in the meantime, on Sunday, December 4, the annual graduation exercises of the Yeshiva Rabbi Elchanan Theological Seminary took place in the Congregation Kehilath Jeshurun, 117 E. 85th Street.

At these exercises Rabbi Herbert S. Goldstein made the announcement that it was the Committee's intention to build a college in connection with the Yeshiva and that the sum of \$5,000,000 would be sought from the public.

This announcement, coupled with the news that subscriptions of \$155,000 had already been secured, was seized upon by the press as of large public interest and the New York Times, the next day, published the following article:

PLAN JEWISH COLLEGE HERE
TO BE INCLUDED IN SEMINARY FOR WHICH \$5,000,000
CAMPAIGN IS NOW IN PROGRESS

With a total of \$155,000 already subscribed in the \$5,000,000 campaign for the Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary, Rabbi Herbert S. Goldstein, president of the Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations of America announced the seminary will include a Jewish college, the first institution of its kind in this country.

The list of subscribers is headed by two \$30,000 contributions from Harry Fischel and Samuel Greenstein. Other contributors are Morris Glaser, Mendel Gottesman, S. A. Israel, Nathan Lamport, Joseph Polstein, and Gustave S. Roth \$10,000 each; Nathan Roggen, Leon Kamaiky, Samuel Bayer and Roggen Brothers, \$5,000 each; Mark Hurewitz, M. W. Levine, Abraham Levy, Abraham Cohen, J. Siegel and Arthur Lamport, \$2,500 each.

START IMMEDIATELY

"The campaign will be launched at once," Dr. Goldstein declared, "so that the seminary with its modern high school and college buildings, dormitories and gymnasium, as well as with its completely equipped buildings for Jewish learning, can open in the fall of 1928 and take care of the large waiting list.

"This list includes a considerable number of European students, whose lot is precarious in those benighted countries, where persecution is now rampant and whose facilities for study have in many cases been wiped out by the war and post-war conditions.

"Orthodox Jewry in America has always depended upon Europe for its spiritual leaders. Whatever of Jewish learning we have in America is of European origin. American Jewry has not produced a single great rabbi or great Jewish scholar in the true sense of greatness.

NEED AMERICAN RABBIS

"We can no longer depend upon Europe for our rabbis for it is no longer possible to secure them from abroad, as it will be years before our higher institutions of learning there will again function properly.

"Furthermore, the present generation of American born Jews requires leaders who have lived and been educated in this country, who understand the life and methods of America.

"The Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary the oldest and largest Orthodox Jewish institution of its kind, in America, plans to fill this want by making Jewish learning self-sustaining in America."

The realization this would be the first Jewish college in America that should prepare young Jewish men for spiritual leadership served to create tremendous enthusiasm, so that the committee determined to seek a site that should occupy an entire city block of twenty lots.

For nearly a year the committee continued its efforts to find a suitable location, during which time the chairman, Mr. Samuel Greenstein, who had for many years devoted his life to the cause of the Yeshiva, unfortunately passed away. Upon his death, Mr. Fischel was elected in his place as chairman of the Committee on Site.

With his ability to envision the needs of the future as well as of the present, Mr. Fischel decided that the plans for this great enterprise should be of a most comprehensive character. The Committee accordingly went vigorously to work in preparation for a much larger undertaking than the originators of the project had conceived. After several months of additional search, during which time the Committee visited what appeared to them every desirable location throughout the confines of Greater New York, it finally succeeded in purchasing two square blocks on the east side of Amsterdam Avenue, reaching from 186th to 188th Streets, and comprising not twenty but approximately sixty ordinary city building lots.

From every viewpoint this location seemed highly desirable for the erection of a great educational institution. Many strategic advantages were attached to the situation finally decided upon, among which was the fact that it was in the center of a group of large educational institutions including Columbia University, The College of the City of New York and New York University. Furthermore, the site chosen was situated upon an elevation 300 feet above the Harlem River and affording a magnificent view of this body of water and at the same time surrounded by city parks on two sides. The site of no educational institution in New York surpassed it, and leading educators as well as the press were quick to praise the selection as the finest that could possibly have been made.

CHAPTER LVII

NATHAN LAMPORT FAMILY AND MR. FISCHEL

SUBSCRIBE \$100,000 EACH

FOLLOWING the signing of the contract for the purchase of the property for the new Yeshiva College on December 15, 1924, a Building Committee, comprised of many of the most prominent Jewish builders of New York, was organized, of which Mr. Fischel had the honor of being chosen the chairman. The appointment of this committee, with its noted membership, was generally hailed as insuring the success of this great project, possibly the greatest single educational undertaking that had ever been attempted by American Jewry. Among the many newspaper articles which appeared at the time is the following from the New York Tribune of December 16, 1924:

MANY BUILDERS WILL ASSIST IN ERECTION OF JEWISH SEMINARY

Religious Education Center on Washington Heights Will Put Up a Great Combination Building

Construction of the \$5,000,000 Jewish seminary and college—the Yeshiva of America—which will be built on Amsterdam Avenue between 186th and 188th Streets, will be in charge of a committee of leading real estate operators and builders, Samuel Levy, chairman of the executive committee of the building fund announces.

Harry Fischel has been chosen chairman of the building committee; Jacob Levy, Louis Gold and Leon Fleischmann, vice chairmen; Joseph Polstein, secretary and Abraham Levy, honorary secretary. The other members include Congressman Sol Bloom, Henry Friedman, Benjamin Winter, Joseph Golding, Philip Meyrowitz, Joseph Ravitch, Harry Schiff, Samuel Mins-

koff, Jacob Leitner, A. Bricken, Conrad Glazer, Max N. Nathanson, Jacob Goell, Samuel Levy, G. S. Roth, Meyer Vessell, Leon Sobel, Nathan Lamport, Nathan Wilson, Pincus Glickman, Ben Benenson and Isaac Polstein.

The officers of the committee, together with Messrs. Sobel, Benenson, Wilson, Glickman and Isaac Polstein, will make a survey of educational facilities for the institution of higher Jewish learning, whose construction will start in the spring.

To provide the initial funds so that the building operations can be started this spring, a dinner will be held at the Hotel Astor, at which a campaign to raise \$1,000,000 among the Jews of New York, will be launched. The \$5,000,000 is to be raised over a five-year period. The dinner, which is to be given by the site committee, will celebrate the taking of title to the three city blocks.

The five buildings of the institution, to be known as the Yeshiva of America, will be built in the style of architecture in vogue during the reign of King Solomon 3,000 years ago in the Holy Land. The principal building, the Seminary and Teachers' College, is designed in part after King Solomon's Temple. When completed, the institution will provide for over 2000 students. The present institution, known as the Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary and located at 301 East Broadway, is taxed to capacity with an enrollment of 500 students and it is to provide for its large waiting list that the new institution is being built. When completed, it will be one of the greatest Jewish institutions of higher learning in the world.

On December 18, almost immediately after the purchase, title was taken to the property, and in order to fittingly commemorate this great event, generally recognized as by far the most significant undertaking in the history of Orthodox Jewry, the Committee on Site, under Mr. Fischel's chairmanship, completed plans for a campaign dinner. This function, which was held at the Hotel Astor on Sunday, December 21, the first day of Chanukah, commemorating the lighting of the Menorah, a ceremony which signaled the re-dedication of the Temple in Jerusalem by the Macabbeans, was attended by more than 300 persons.

This was in every respect the most notable day in Mr. Fischel's entire life, for the reason that he saw about to be realized his dream of a great Jewish college, the equal of any institution of learning in America. He was able to visualize the scene that was later to be witnessed, when thousands of Jewish young men would enter this institution and would leave it prepared to bear aloft the banner of Orthodox Judaism, carrying its message to every part of America.

Mr. Fischel, however, realized that it was one thing to have an ambition, and another to see it carried out and, as he was seated at the guest table and surveyed the audience, he began to wonder how the great sum that would be needed would be obtained. He decided that it would be necessary to undertake much intensive personal effort in order to secure the funds with which a real beginning might be made. Accordingly, he took it upon himself to talk to Mr. Samuel C. Lamport, a son of Nathan Lamport, the President of the Yeshiva Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary, a most enthusiastic and active communal worker, in order to enlist his interest and support. This he did together with Judge Otto A. Rosalsky.

Mr. Fischel frankly told Mr. Lamport that the result of the campaign for the Yeshiva College would largely depend upon the elder Lamport and himself, and that the entire Jewish community looked to them to make contributions of sufficient size to be an inspiration to others.

The fact that Mr. Lamport, Senior, was president of the institution and Mr. Fischel was Vice-President and chairman of the Building Committee, was an additional reason why their example would be looked up to and followed by others. He further told Mr. Lamport that, as it was generally known that both his father and Mr. Fischel were blessed by the Almighty with the means to give, that upon their action depended the entire future of the campaign. They could either make or break it by the example they set.

Although Mr. Fischel already had subscribed the sum of \$30,000 he declared himself ready to match any sum that the entire Lamport family, all of whom were wealthy, might be ready to give. Mr. Fischel further told Mr. Lamport the latter's family need have no fear as to the amount it might decide to contribute, as the total sum would not be required at once.

Under these circumstances, he explained, it was only necessary to draw a check upon the Bank of Heaven and to have confidence in the Almighty that He would see to it that they would be enabled to make good their pledge; in other words, that the Almighty would bless them with health and strength and the ability to pay the obligation contracted in His name, and to fulfill His purpose.

Mr. Lamport was tremendously impressed with this strong argument and asked only that he be given five minutes to consider the question. He then conferred with his father while still at the dinner, and in a few moments returned to Mr. Fischel saying, "Harry, I am going to surprise you. We are ready to subscribe a much larger sum than you have in your mind." Mr. Fischel replied, "No amount will be too large for me. I will match anything you do." Mr. Lamport then revealed that the Lamport family had decided to subscribe the sum of \$100,000.

Without any further consideration and even without consulting the members of his family who were also present, Mr. Fischel at once accepted this challenge and declared that he, too, would contribute \$100,000, assured in his own mind that his wife and all of his children not only would agree to this act but that it would be more than a source of gratification to them.

Mr. Lamport and Mr. Fischel then immediately conveyed their intentions to Judge Rosalsky, the principal speaker who was to make the appeal of the evening.

No sooner was the announcement made than the entire room was in an uproar. So great was the enthusiasm evoked that in a few moments the sum of nearly \$800,000 was subscribed by

those present, by far the largest sum any Orthodox movement in America had ever been successful in raising at one time.

An intermission was then called, when Mr. Lamport, surrounded by his family, assembled at a table and the Lamport pledge of \$100,000 was signed. This act was at once followed by a similar ceremony attaching to the subscription of Mr. Fischel and his family.

After Mr. Fischel had signed his name to the document, which marked his largest single gift to a religious and philanthropic cause, he offered a silent prayer to the Almighty, expressing his gratitude that he was in a position to give so large a sum, and asked that he be blessed with the health and strength to continue his labors in behalf of so noble and inspiring a cause. He also prayed that, as chairman of the Building Committee, he might be granted the privilege of seeing the building of this greatest of Jewish religious institutions finished. He was convinced the institution would produce the necessary incentive for hundreds of young men to continue to bear aloft the insignia of Orthodox Judaism, so that it would for all time wield a commanding influence upon the thoughts and lives of the Jewish people of America, and so, do lasting honor and credit to those who had conceived the noble and holy work.

Few events in the history of Jewry in America have commanded more public attention than this auspicious launching of the campaign for the Yeshiva College. Hundreds of columns of newspaper space were occupied by the announcements of the project and an account of the unusual collection which was taken up at the dinner.

An article in the American Hebrew of December 26, an editorial in the New York Times on the same day and an account appearing in the Jewish Monitor of Fort Worth, Texas, on January 16, 1925 are herewith given:

From the American Hebrew

NATHAN LAMPORT AND HARRY FISCHEL CONTRIBUTE \$100,000
EACH TO YESHIVA COLLEGE CAMPAIGN

The dinner given by the Site Committee of the Yeshiva College Building Fund, Sunday, at the Hotel Astor, to celebrate the taking of title to the two city blocks upon which the Yeshiva Seminary and College will be built, turned out to be the greatest surprise in the history of Orthodox Judaism in America.

The dinner was given as a joint celebration of the acquisition of the site for the proposed Yeshiva Seminary and College and also to launch a campaign to raise one million dollars by February 1 so that building operations could be started in the spring.

The committee expected that several hundred thousand dollars of this amount would be realized from the two hundred loyal workers of the Yeshiva present. But when Nathan Lamport, venerable president of the Yeshiva and one of its most ardent workers, in accepting the deed for the site from Harry Fischel, chairman of the Site Committee, announced that he would make a contribution of \$100,000 toward the Building Fund, the audience was electrified.

"The Yeshiva is my life," Mr. Lamport declared, "and if necessary I will mortgage my life in order to make this \$100,000 contribution toward the great institution of learning which is our hope and our dream."

Then Mr. Fischel, another of the Yeshiva's indefatigable workers, jumped to his feet and fired the group to an even higher pitch of enthusiasm by announcing that his contribution would likewise be \$100,000.

The two hundred workers present, fired by the examples of Mr. Lamport and Mr. Fischel, began doubling and trebling their original contributions until the first million dollars was practically assured. Almost \$800,000, it was announced, was raised at this initial meeting, the largest sum ever raised at a single meeting for a Jewish educational project and the greatest single contribution Orthodox Jewry itself had ever made.

Samuel Levy, chairman of the Campaign Executive Committee with his father-in-law, Meyer Vesell, made a contribution of \$50,000. Other of the large contributions follow:

\$25,000—Joseph Polstein, Louis Gold, Jacob and Nathan Levy, S. A. Israel, Philip Meyrowitz, Samuel Greenstein estate; \$12,000—Mendel Gottesman & Sons; \$10,000, A. Bricken, Elias A. Cohen, Morris Glazer, Samuel Kaufman, Bernard Reich, Nathan Roggen & Sons, G. S. Roth, Joseph Ravitch, Leon Sobel, Pincus Glickman, Morris Greenstein, H. B. Rubin, and one anonymous from a friend; \$5,000—Samuel Bayer, Henry Friedman, Morris Friedman, Paul Herring, Albert Herskowitz, Leon Kamaiky, Harris Mandelbaum, Isaac Polstein, Harry Schiff, Ben Shapiro, Israel Sapiro, Albert and Harris Sokolski, Philip Weinstein, M. W. Levine, Joseph Horowitz, Jacob Richman and Abraham Levy; \$3,000—Julius and Bernard Bernstein, Samuel Kamlet.

The speakers of the dinner included Samuel Levy, who presided; Judge Otto A. Rosalsky, Samuel C. Lamport, Rabbi Herbert S. Goldstein, Rabbi M. S. Margolies, Dr. Bernard Revel, president of the Yeshiva Faculty and Harris L. Selig, director of the campaign.

Editorial from the New York Times

FOR JEWISH EDUCATION

American Jewry seems to have been skeptical of the ability of Orthodox Jewry to raise the millions necessary to build the proposed Yeshiva and College on three city blocks in New York. Orthodox Jews had never before raised such an amount for so stupendous an undertaking and no such ambitious project had ever before been attempted on behalf of any educational institution.

We did not think it possible to squeeze another thrill out of a drive for funds, but at the dinner held last Sunday to launch a campaign for one million dollars by February first, things happened.

When Nathan Lamport, venerable president of the Yeshiva, announced that he would contribute \$100,000 toward the Building Fund, the audience of 200 workers was electrified.

"The Yeshiva is my life," declared Mr. Lamport, "and if necessary I will mortgage my life in order to make this \$100,000 contribution toward the great institution of learning which is our hope and dream."

Harry Fischel, another of the Yeshiva's indefatigable workers, matched the first gift of \$100,000 and before the banquet was over almost \$800,000 was announced.

This is the largest sum ever raised at any single meeting for a Jewish educational project and the greatest single contribution Orthodox Jewry itself has ever made. The committee rightly feels that it has effectively answered the doubts of American Jewry.

From the Jewish Monitor, Forth Worth, Texas

\$100,000 YESHIVA CONTRIBUTIONS OF HARRY FISCHEL AND
NATHAN LAMPORT MARK REALIZATION OF DREAM
BORN 40 YEARS AGO IN POGROM-SWEPT RUSSIA

When Nathan Lamport and Harry Fischel, leaders in New York communal life and prominent real estate operators, each contributed \$100,000 at the opening of the building fund campaign of the Yeshiva of America, a hope which was born in the Ghettos of Russia during its bloody days over forty years ago was turned into reality.

Messrs. Lamport and Fischel were then students in two famous Yeshivoths in widely separated Ghettos in Russia, Lamport at Navaradok, and Fischel at Meretz. Then came the anti-Jewish reign of terror which swept over Russia and Lamport and Fischel, with thousands of other hopeless victims of the Russian excesses, were uprooted from their homes and escaped to America. Here, after the usual years of vicissitudes, they prospered in business, but their first love, the sacred Torah, was never neglected.

Those Yeshivoth days were vivid in the lives of young Fischel and Lamport and when they were established in New York, they dedicated themselves to the one purpose of founding in this country a model Yeshiva, where the Jewish youth who wished to become learned in the law, might study under ideal conditions, so different from the dismal and fearsome days in the pale of blackest Russia.

When the Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary was established forty years ago on the Lower East Side, Fischel and Lamport, then just recent arrivals in America, aided it as best they could. The Seminary was founded along the lines of the

Ancient Yeshiva, which for three thousand years has been the center of Orthodox Jewish life throughout the world. As the Seminary's fame grew and more and more students were attracted to it, it became greatly overcrowded and its waiting list began to grow from year to year.

Still fired by the dream of their boyhood, Lampert and Fischel continued as ardent workers for the Yeshiva, and have been among its chief financial supporters for many years. They were the pioneers in launching this year the movement to establish a great Orthodox Jewish Center of higher learning in America as an outgrowth of the Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary at a cost of \$5,000,000 to be raised over a five year period. When the campaign was launched they practically assured its success by their contributions of \$100,000 each, an unprecedented sum in the history of Orthodox Judaism in this country. So inspired were the supporters of the Seminary by their gifts, that at the opening banquet, given to only the workers in the campaign, a sum of \$800,000 was realized, being the largest sum of money ever raised at one time for any Jewish educational project in America or elsewhere.

The \$5,000,000 Yeshiva of America will be built on two city blocks on Amsterdam Avenue between 186th to 188th Streets, New York. Its five buildings are modelled after the style of architecture which prevailed in the Holy Land three thousand years ago during the reign of King Solomon, and the main building is designed in part after Solomon's Temple. The plans for the institution include a college, giving degrees and courses similar to other American institutions and which will be the first Jewish college established in America. When completed the Seminary and College will be one of the world's foremost institutions of higher Jewish learning.

It is doubtful if any event in Mr. Fischel's life created a greater impression upon him than this dinner in behalf of the Yeshiva College. Upon looking over the faces of the people assembled, he was thoroughly convinced that the Jews of New York, comprising the largest Jewish population in America and who invariably reflect the sentiment of the Jews of the entire country, would not fail to support this ambitious but greatly needed enter-

prise. He was particularly proud that his recommendation for a \$5,000,000 drive had been accepted without question, and that those present had done more than give their passive assent to the program, having proven by their immediate response to the appeal for contributions that they were not only willing but eager to aid the program to a much larger extent than had ever before been vouched for a Jewish educational purpose.

From this moment on Mr. Fischel determined to dedicate his effort, his time and energy, also a large portion of his wealth, to the carrying out of this vast undertaking. From that day, December 21, 1924, to the present day, Mr. Fischel practically divorced himself from every other activity, both his business and communal interests, to this end, except of course, he continued to attend the meetings of directors of other institutions with which he was affiliated, and he continued also to act as treasurer for the Hias and the Central Committee for the Relief of Jews Suffering Through the War.

CHAPTER LVIII

ADDITIONAL LAND PURCHASED FOR YESHIVA COLLEGE

Considering the magnitude of the enterprise, rapid progress was made on the plans for the Yeshiva College from the time the first land was acquired for the site and, as these plans matured, it was soon determined that the two city blocks that had been purchased would be insufficient to the needs of the great institution that was contemplated.

The first step of the Building Committee was to engage architects. This was a considerable problem, inasmuch as it was determined that the structure should not only be erected in accordance with the most practical plans that might be devised for the purpose for which it was intended, but that the exterior of the building should be unique in character and should reflect the purpose of the institution. The architects to be chosen, it was determined, should be men who not only possessed the greatest possible knowledge of educational requirements, but who should be successful in carrying out the ideas of the committee as to architectural dignity, beauty and impressiveness.

The first meeting of the Building Committee was held on March 5, 1925 at Mr. Fischel's office, 276 Fifth Avenue. At this meeting the committee selected Charles B. Meyers as the architect, with Henry Beaumont Hertz, a specialist in Jewish architecture, as his consultant. In selecting these two men the committee was convinced the combination of their talents would result in buildings that would not only be a credit to the Jewish people who were to give of their means for their construction, but that they would obtain the utmost possible in both utility and beauty.

The architects, upon accepting the commission, informed the

committee that before proceeding they wished to consult with a committee of experts thoroughly familiar with the needs of such an institution who would be able to give them advice and information as to the exact layout required and the space to be occupied by the various departments.

After due deliberation, such a committee was named and comprised Dr. Bernard Revel, President of the faculty of the Yeshiva Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary, Dr. S. Safir, also a member of the faculty, Albert Wald, who was familiar with the requirements of the State Department of Education, Jacob Levy and Leon Fleischman, members of the Building Committee and Rabbi Herbert S. Goldstein, as president of the Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations of America, with Mr. Fischel as an ex-officio member.

This special committee met at Mr. Fischel's temporary home, 68 East 86th Street, on March 18th, when the needs of the institution were discussed from every angle, and a consensus of the committee's views was then transmitted to the architects. As a result of extensive conferences, it was the unanimous opinion of the committee that the institution would require even more ground than had already been acquired for it, and Mr. Fischel was entrusted with the task of continuing to act in the dual capacity of chairman of the Building Committee and chairman of the Committee on Site, which latter committee was instructed to secure additional space.

The Site Committee, after considering the needs from all viewpoints, determined to purchase additional land on the west side of Amsterdam Avenue, opposite the site previously chosen, and where three additional plots were secured in due course. The first additional property acquired was the southwest corner of 187th Street and Amsterdam Avenue, a plot, 100 x 107 ft., after which a plot, 175 x 100 ft. on 187th Street, adjoining the corner, was purchased, and finally the northwest corner of 186th Street and Amsterdam Avenue, a plot 100 x 107 ft. These three parcels

gave to the institution seventeen city lots in addition to the original purchase, and the fact that this step was considered necessary increased the confidence of the public in the entire project.

The acquisition of this additional land further resulted in a great deal of public notice.

The New York World of April 26, 1925, contained the following article relative to this decision:

YESHIVA PLANS READY FOR START

Leading Builders to Rush \$5,000,000 Jewish Intellectual Centre on Heights

Harry Fischel, as Chairman of the Building Committee, announced final plans yesterday for the \$5,000,000. Yeshiva of America, Jewish College and Seminary to cover three blocks on Amsterdam Avenue from 186th to 188th Streets.

Construction of five buildings will start at once after ground-breaking exercises on May 24. Charles B. Meyers has been appointed architect, with Henry B. Hertz consulting. A high school will provide for 2,500 students. A dormitory with 175 double rooms, twenty-five single, will house 375. The Yeshiva, or seminary building will take care of 600 students. The college building, with laboratories, class and lecture rooms, is planned for 1,000. The Library is expected to house one of the most extensive collections of Jewish books in the world. Part of the campus overlooking Harlem River, will be utilized for a stadium, playgrounds and athletic field.

"The high school, which is to be completed first because of the overcrowded condition of the Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary on East Broadway, will have four stories," said the Chairman. "It will contain an auditorium seating 2500 to be used as a synagogue on high holidays, thus helping to relieve congestion in other synagogues during these important Jewish events. Designed in most modern style, it will include classrooms limited to thirty-five students each, laboratories, gymnasium, study hall and library for 200.

"The dormitory, built by the Jewish women of America, who

are raising \$250,000, will rise five stories, with a study room on each floor, so that students need not study in their bedrooms; two dining rooms, one with cafeteria for 500 students who are non-residents, the other with regular service for its own students. A small synagogue is planned also for the dormitory as well as an infirmary, club room, laundry, etc.

"In the Seminary Building will be a large study, the Talmud Room, for 400 students, twelve classrooms, seating 50 each, reference library and special administrative offices.

"Yeshiva, college and library buildings will stand on the east side of Amsterdam Avenue, the high school and dormitory on the west side. Nearly all of the leading Jewish metropolitan builders are to take part in the construction."

CHAPTER LIX

AMERICAN COMMITTEE FORMED TO AID JERUSALEM YESHIVA

WHILE Orthodox Jewry was largely concentrating its attention on the plans for the great Jewish college to be established in New York, steps were simultaneously taken, nevertheless, for American aid to be extended to a similar institution of learning that had been started in Jerusalem by Chief Rabbi Abraham I. Kook of Palestine. Mr. Fischel was in the forefront of this movement as well.

Rabbi Kook, during his visit to America for the purpose of stimulating the post-war campaign of the Central Relief Committee, had informed Mr. Fischel that he had established in Palestine a Jewish Theological Seminary.

Before Rabbi Kook's departure from the United States, Mr. Fischel had promised him that so soon as the project of the Yeshiva College here had been properly launched he would make an effort to organize an American Committee to raise funds for the Yeshiva in Palestine.

On Sunday, April 5, 1925, a meeting for this purpose was held at the Congregation Kehilath Jeshurun and at which were present Rabbi M. S. Margolies, Rabbi B. L. Leventhal of Philadelphia, Rabbi Aaron Teitelbaum, Harris Mandelbaum, Meyer Vesell, Joseph Polstein and Mr. Fischel and a Committee was organized with Rabbi Leventhal as chairman and Mr. Vesell as the treasurer.

On this occasion Mr. Fischel had the privilege of contributing the sum of \$10,000 toward the building fund for the Yeshiva to be erected in Jerusalem.

The Jewish Daily Bulletin of the following day, April 6, 1925,

published the following account of the action taken at the meeting.

AMERICAN COMMITTEE FOR TALMUDICAL ACADEMY IN
JERUSALEM FORMED

Founders Intend to Revive Traditions of Sura and Pumbedita

An American committee for a Central Jewish Theological Seminary in Jerusalem, the site for which was recently purchased there, has been formed, according to an announcement made yesterday by the headquarters of the Orthodox Central Relief Committee.

The idea of establishing in Jerusalem a Central Jewish Theological Academy was first broached by Rabbi A. I. Kook, Chief Rabbi of Palestine, at the farewell reception tendered in his honor by the Kehilath Jeshurun Synagogue, of which Rabbi M. S. Margolies is the spiritual leader, shortly before his return to Palestine from his American tour. It was decided that the contribution of the membership of the Kehilath Jeshurun to the Central Theological Academy should be \$50,000, which was pledged by those present as the initial contribution toward the establishment of the seminary. Chief among the donors were Harry Fischel \$10,000; H. Mandelbaum \$5,000; Meyer Vesell \$5,000; Joseph Polstein \$3,000.

Rabbi B. L. Leventhal of Philadelphia was chosen temporary chairman and Meyer Vesell temporary treasurer.

It is the intention of those who are interested in the new seminary in Jerusalem that its curriculum shall be above that of the existing talmudical academies and shall revive the glories of the academies of Sura and Pumbedita.

CHAPTER LX

THE ONE THOUSAND DOLLAR A PLATE DINNER

Every effort was put forth by the campaign committee for the Yeshiva College in New York to have sufficient funds in hand to start the actual work of construction as soon as the architects should have completed their plans for the first of the structures to be erected.

It will be recalled that at the dinner at which this great undertaking was publicly launched, a few men subscribed about \$800,000. While this was a splendid beginning, the campaign committee, of which Mr. Harris Selig was the General Manager, determined that it was necessary at once to enlist the financial support of as many others as might be possible.

It had been the custom in fund raising, especially since the war, to secure subscriptions for philanthropic projects by bringing together a large number of persons at a dinner or other public function, explaining to them the purpose in view and thus enlisting their support and securing their contributions.

Mr. Selig suggested that such a dinner should be held in aid of the Yeshiva. He proposed that not fewer than a thousand persons should be invited, each of whom would be asked to pay \$1,000 a plate, or a total of \$1,000,000 for the privilege of attending.

When this plan was first suggested it appeared impossible of accomplishment. A dinner of such magnitude, for which the public should be taxed so large a sum, had never before been attempted for any public cause.

Mr. Selig explained the plan was not so hopeless as appeared upon the surface, for the reason that the Yeshiva College had already enlisted the enthusiastic support of Orthodox Jewry

throughout the United States and had generally received the commendation of the press, leading educators and that part of the general public which should rightfully be interested.

The Committee was finally induced to accept Mr. Selig's recommendation, fantastic as it at first seemed, and started an intensive effort to sell 1,000 tickets at \$1,000 each, for the proposed dinner.

The very audacity of the undertaking and its novelty attracted widespread attention and secured a tremendous amount of publicity. Coupled with these aids, was the fact that business was exceedingly prosperous at that time and most people were ready and willing to give a portion of their wealth in support of a worthy object.

The date fixed for the function was May 24, and the dinner resulted, as had been hoped, in contributions totalling nearly a million dollars. This, in addition to the \$800,000 subscribed at the first dinner, brought to the Yeshiva College treasury a total of approximately \$1,800,000, a sum sufficient to warrant approval of the plans and an early start on the work of construction.

At a meeting of the Building Committee held on September 15, the architects, who had meanwhile been working constantly, submitted their final plans for the first three buildings, to be known as the Group A buildings. These received the Committee's approval with instructions to prepare for the giving out of contracts.

So deeply engrossed was Mr. Fischel in this work and so great a part of his energy and time did it consume that in that year he was unable to take his usual summer vacation and only interrupted his personal attention to the project for a sojourn of three weeks at Saratoga. During his brief absence, Mr. Jacob Levy, First Vice Chairman of the Building Committee, acted in his stead.

CHAPTER LXI

MR. FISCHEL CONTRIBUTES TO A RELIGIOUS SYM- POSIUM CONDUCTED BY THE AMERICAN HEBREW

"THE American Hebrew" for several months during 1926 conducted a symposium in its columns on the question "Are Jews Losing Their Religion?" Some of the foremost Jews in the country contributed their views to this series of articles and among them Mr. Fischel was asked to express his opinions on this vital topic.

He particularly welcomed this opportunity for the reason that the majority of the readers of the American Hebrew were known to be un-orthodox in their sentiments and he wished to place before them his conception of what constitutes Orthodox Judaism and its bearing upon the life of the Jew in America, today. The article he prepared and which appeared in the American Hebrew of December 17, 1926, is herewith reproduced in full.

"I must first point out that my statement on this subject is concerned with Orthodox historic, traditional, loyal Judaism. This Judaism has withstood the test of inquisition, philosophy, and science. Today, Orthodox or Thora-treu-Judaism is gaining adherents rather than losing them.

"To make clear and convince your readers that I am not arguing from theory but from practical knowledge, I will cite a few examples which I have noticed in my experience in communal work.

"In the ten years between 1880 and 1890, when the religious persecution started in Russia, many families came to this country, who knew no other religion than the Orthodox. Many of them brought with them grown-up sons and daughters, who had been reared to strictly observe the Orthodox religion. Upon ar-

riving here, they found themselves in an entirely different environment. In starting their career and in looking for positions or professions, they found great hardship, as observance of the Sabbath and religious questions interfered.

"The parents, who were unable to support their children, naturally had very little influence over them and instead of trying to find a way to maintain the good will of their children and wait for more opportune times to come, they refused any compromise. They agreed to disagree with them. They allowed their children to drift away from them entirely with the result that the parents went one road and the children another. As time rolled on, they married women of the same views as themselves, with the result that they were lost entirely to Judaism.

"Fortunately this condition did not exist with all those who arrived in America. There were many families who did not separate. The children clung to the religion of their parents and after a great deal of difficulty, they found positions where they were able to keep the Sabbath and the Jewish holidays. And they practiced the Orthodox Jewish religion in every form. These young men and young women have married and live quite a different life. They have combined Americanism with Judaism. Their children eventually came to the age where they had to decide for themselves as to their religious beliefs. Naturally, having been brought up under a religious environment, the parents and the children agreed, with the result that a new generation of observant Jews had arisen.

"These have not desecrated the Sabbath, nor violated any of the dietary laws, but, on the contrary, have beautified religion and have made it a thing to be admired. It appeals to them and they are carrying the religious gospel into the institutions of learning. They are not ashamed to join religious clubs in the colleges, and above all they are patronizing the kosher restaurants, which were established in several colleges under the auspices of the Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations of America.

"We have at this time three generations of Orthodox Jews.

"The first generation represents the Jews who came with their children and who have not changed. They went through their critical periods of suffering, even to near starvation and did not waiver in any shape or form, neither in observing the laws nor any of the customs of their faith. They are the Jews who are

now the standard bearers of hundreds of synagogues in this country.

"The second generation represents the sons and daughters of those who came with their parents and have suffered many hardships together with them, but have remained loyal to our traditions. They acquired American methods. They worked during the day and went to school at night. Later they interested themselves in charitable and communal work, building new synagogues, Talmud Torahs and Yeshivas.

"In the same period between 1880 and 1890, there also arrived another type of young men and women, in which class my wife and myself are included. They came to America alone, without parents to guide them. However, they were imbued with sufficient religious spirit to remain loyal to our faith, in spite of the many hardships they had to endure. Many of these young men married women of the same religious belief, with the result that their offspring are added to the ranks of the observant Jews.

"The third generation represents the children who were born of the first and second generations. They had the full benefit of American education, which their parents missed, and in most cases they enjoyed the benefit of the hard work performed by their parents. They had easy traveling on the wide road laid out for them by their parents, economically and educationally. Having been brought up in a religious environment, which was beautified and moulded in accordance with American life; having found strictly Orthodox synagogues; the beautiful restaurants conducted in strict accordance with the dietary laws; the most important banquets in the large hotels made strictly kosher; Jewish collegiate societies, and other Jewish influences in the colleges, these children did not find it a hardship to remain good Orthodox Jews. Religion was not a burden to them. In fact, it was a source of joy.

"One point which proves quite forcefully that the Jews in America are not losing their religion is the fact that so many Orthodox young men and young women can be found in the synagogues on Sabbath and the holidays. I will admit that there are several synagogues in the Lower East Side, Harlem, Bronx and Brooklyn which are attended only by the older men and women and the young children below the adolescent age. These

synagogues do not attract the young people, simply because they are of the old type, lacking cleanliness, decorum and an English speaking Rabbi.

"The synagogues of the modern type, such as the Institutional Synagogue on 116th Street and all the Young Israel Synagogues, are composed almost entirely of the young men and young women who take a vital interest not only in the service but in every activity which is in any way connected with the synagogue. Many of the young men in these institutions even attend daily services before going to business in the morning. This does not sound as if Judaism is on the decline.

"To prove that Orthodox Jews are not losing their religion, one should observe the number of Talmud Torah and Yeshiva buildings which have been erected during the last ten or fifteen years in the City of New York. These institutions have been built by the second generation. They realize that the methods and conditions under which they received their religious education in Europe cannot be tolerated by their children. Cheders of old will not appeal to their children born in America, who are attending public schools with plenty of fresh air and sunshine. They therefore put their shoulders to the wheel and used all their energy to provide for their children new school buildings with all the latest improvements, light and sanitary classrooms; a new system of education.

"The Hebrew School has been put on a par with the Public School, with the result that these schools have appealed to the children and through the children their influence has spread into the homes of the parents. The effect of the religion has penetrated even the homes of those parents who for economic reasons kept their business houses open on the Sabbath and did not observe the Jewish dietary laws.

"I am personally familiar with many cases where the children have refused to eat at home until all the dishes were thrown out, new ones substituted and Kashruth established. I know of many cases where the parents were compelled to close their business on Saturday, through the influence of the religious training received by the children in the Hebrew Schools. I also know of many cases, where, through the influence of the children, the fathers were compelled to begin to lay the tephilin. The Hebrew Schools have been a great factor in increasing religion not only



MR. FISCHEL'S PRESENT RESIDENCE

*In the apartment building erected by him at the southwest corner
of Park Avenue and 80th Street, showing the private
Succah (Tabernacle) constructed for his own use.
The first such edifice on Park Avenue.*

among the Orthodox Jews, but have also exerted a great influence on the so-called Conservative Jews. What has been accomplished in the City of New York has been followed in all the large cities throughout the United States of America.

"The fact is that there are now more Talmud Torahs and Yeshiva buildings in America, with a Jewish population of about three millions, than there were in all of Europe before the war, with a population of about fourteen millions.

"In conclusion and to prove conclusively that the Orthodox Jews in America are not losing their religion, but have every reason to be optimistic about their religious future in this country, I will mention the fact that we are now erecting on Amsterdam Avenue, from 186th to 188th Streets, the Yeshiva College of America at a cost of over five million dollars. This is being done in order to provide an institution which will give a thorough Jewish education, not only to those who wish to become Rabbis or teachers, but also to enable young men who are entering trades or professions to receive a splendid secular as well as religious training.

"In answer to your question 'Are the Jews in America losing their religion?' I emphatically say 'No'."

CHAPTER LXII

THE FIRST SUCCAH ON PARK AVENUE

It remained for Mr. Fischel, who ever since he had been able to enjoy a home of his own had maintained a tabernacle or succah in his residence, to construct the first such private place of worship to be built on the now fashionable Park Avenue.

In planning his present home in the apartment building at Park Avenue and 80th Street, Mr. Fischel decided that the succah to be installed there, should be the most beautiful that he had yet attempted.

In accordance with the Jewish law, it is required that such a place of worship be built so that a clear view of the sky shall be in no way obstructed; in short that nothing be built over it. The new apartment, was a 14 story building, his residence occupying the second floor. In order, therefore, that the succah should comply with the Jewish law and the roof be exposed to the sky, Mr. Fischel omitted one room on each of the twelve floors of the structure above his own apartment on the second floor, entailing a loss in rentals of about \$12,000 a year. Throughout his life, Mr. Fischel had found, however, that he had never had cause for regret in living up to every tenet of his faith, no matter what financial sacrifice was, at the time, involved.

Mr. Fischel moved into his home on September 8, 1925, immediately prior to the Feast of the Tabernacles, the first evening of which holiday was celebrated by him in his own succah surrounded by all of his children and his grandchildren.

During his long connection with philanthropic and other communal affairs, it was the custom of the various institutions with which Mr. Fischel was affiliated, to hold meetings and entertainments in his home for the raising of funds and in his new Park



AN INTERIOR VIEW OF THE SUCCAH IN MR. FISCHER'S HOME.

Avenue residence, Mr. Fischel constructed a special meeting room for this purpose.

This place of assemblage was finished in the beginning of January, 1926, and in order that it might be properly dedicated he called a meeting of the Building Committee of the Yeshiva College to take place there on January 19, 1926. At this meeting the architects brought with them the completed plans for the Group A. Buildings, as well as a general perspective for all of the buildings eventually to be erected on the campus.

Mr. Fischel also arranged for a religious dedication of his completed home that took place on May 2, 1926. A source of especial gratification to him, was the presence of Chief Rabbi Ezekiel Lifshitz of Poland, who was then on a visit to America and who gave his formal blessing to the household.

On such occasions of family rejoicing it had always been Mr. Fischel's custom to make some special contribution to charity and in this instance he subscribed the sum of \$15,000 to the fund being collected by the United Jewish Campaign for the Relief of Jews suffering Through the War, the largest sum he had ever contributed to this particular cause.

Mr. Fischel's strenuous work in behalf of the Yeshiva College, coupled with the fact that he had taken practically no rest for more than a year, brought about a recurrence of the diabetes from which he had suffered in 1924 and on June 8, 1926, he left for a second period of treatment at the Battle Creek Sanitarium of Dr. Harvey W. Kellogg. He remained only three weeks but in this short period his health was restored.

During his previous stay in the sanitarium, Mr. Fischel had arranged to hold religious services for the Jewish patients in his room each Saturday. These services were greatly appreciated and also commanded the respect of Dr. Kellogg and others who were not of the Jewish faith. On his second visit, Mr. Fischel engaged two rooms, one of which was set aside exclusively for synagogue purposes. Here daily services were attended by all

the Jewish patients, regardless of whether they were Orthodox, Conservative or Reform.

While the patients hailed from different parts of the United States, these services brought them very close together. In this relationship and bound by the afflictions they held in common, they did not hesitate to reveal the history of their lives and the early struggles which had attended their individual efforts to grasp the opportunities afforded in these great and beloved United States.

On June 29, while still in the sanitarium, Mr. Fischel celebrated his 61st birthday, when he was the recipient of telegrams of congratulation from the directors of many of the institutions which he had helped during his long career in communal labor.

This sudden flood of messages, all arriving on the same day, aroused the curiosity of many of the patients who asked Mr. Fischel the occasion for them. When they were informed that it was his birthday, a Committee was organized among those who had attended the religious services Mr. Fischel had made possible, and he was presented with a bouquet of flowers containing 61 roses, one for each year of his life. The committee also requested that Mr. Fischel consent to be photographed with them in a group picture so that each might have the opportunity of taking this memento of the occasion home with him.

The group arranged themselves on several benches for this purpose and while the photographer was focusing his camera, Mr. Harris Salit of Brooklyn, N. Y., one of the patients, handed Mr. Fischel an envelope which he suggested should be shown in the photograph. Mr. Fischel could not quite understand the meaning of this act but after the picture had been taken and he opened the envelope he found enclosed in it a resolution signed by Dr. John Harvey Kellogg, the institution's head, as well as by many of the attending physicians and twenty of the men who had been in constant attendance at the religious services.

Mr. Fischel highly appreciated the sentiment prompting the resolution, a copy of which is herewith appended:

THE BATTLE CREEK SANITARIUM

Battle Creek, Michigan

Tuesday, June 29th, 1926

A Little Expression of Affection

To our dear friend Mr. Harry Fischel of New York:

We, your undersigned friends at the Battle Creek Sanitarium, Mich., wish you many happy returns of this day. Affectionate thoughts and every good wish go to you on this your birthday. May each succeeding year bring to you the satisfaction which we trust life holds in store for you.

Your friends,

Joseph Aaron, Brooklyn, N. Y.	John Harvey Kellogg, MD. LLD
Sam Adler, Youngstown, O.	Samuel J. Littenberg, N. Y.
Jos. Alruninsky, N. Y.	M. Plant, Vancouver, B. C.
R. V. Ashley, M.D.	Oscar Rosenzweig, Akron, O.
Max Bild	Albert Rosenzeig, Akron, O.
H. Cohen, New York City	Harris Salit, Brooklyn, N. Y.
Morris Effron, Topeka, Kansas.	Harry Sandler, New York City
Joseph Frey, Ph.G., St. Louis	H. Siegel, Chicago
Rabbi Isidore Goodman	M. Siegel, Chicago, Ill.
Abe Hubby	I. Sokol, Akron, O.
C. O. Hubby, M.D.	Wm. Telscu, Chicago, Ill.
Harry Katz, Passaic, N. J.	M. A. Turner
M. L. Vitich, Brooklyn, N. Y.	

CHAPTER LXIII

SYSTEM EMPLOYED IN AWARDING YESHIVA CONTRACTS

ON his return to New York, Mr. Fischel again devoted himself largely to pushing the work of the Yeshiva College.

The Building Committee for the Yeshiva at this time consisted of about forty members. When the committee had approved the plans of the architects, the services of so large a number seemed no longer to be required and it was arranged that the contracts should be awarded and the details of construction passed upon by a subcommittee, as it was felt that a small body could accomplish quicker and more effective results than a large group. Mr. Fischel suggested that four vice-chairmen be appointed to assist him in executing the practical part of the undertaking and recommended for the posts Mr. Jacob Levy, Mr. Louis Gold, Mr. Joseph Ravitch and Mr. Henry Friedman, all of whom were engaged in the building business.

The committee accepted this recommendation and from that time until the present day, Mr. Fischel, together, with these vice chairmen, have met regularly, never farther apart than once a month, sometimes every two weeks and, when necessary to take immediate action upon some point, as often as every week. Only when a large and important matter or policy was to be considered, was the larger committee called together.

In proceeding with the work of construction of the Yeshiva College, Mr. Fischel and the committee of vice-chairmen charged with the responsibility of awarding the contracts, proceeded along entirely new lines which resulted in substantial savings.

It is usually the custom in such undertakings to give out either a general contract to a single contractor, covering the project in

its entirety, or else to engage a building firm to let the contracts for various parts of the work to subcontractors. Either procedure involves a considerable overhead expense. In the case of a general contract, a profit of from five to ten per cent is usually charged on the work allotted to each sub-contractor and when a building firm is engaged to give out the contracts an overhead of from six to ten percent on the total sum expended is usually involved. In the case of so costly an enterprise as the Yeshiva College, this profit to a general contractor or overhead to a building firm would have amounted to several hundred thousands of dollars.

Although it necessitated a much larger amount of work on the part of the Building sub-committee this cost was saved by the committee itself awarding the several contracts, just as an individual would do if engaged upon a building operation for himself.

More than this, however, the personal interest taken by the members of the sub-committee, effected not only a money saving, but greater efficiency and a higher quality of workmanship.

The first contract, that for the foundation, was awarded on May 6, 1926. From that time up to the present date, \$1,400,000 worth of contracts have been signed by Mr. Fischel as Chairman of the Building Committee.

In a publication known as the Cornerstone, the following appreciation of the work accomplished by the building committee, appeared on March 4, 1927.

HOW BUILDING COMMITTEE IS ACCOMPLISHING ITS GREAT
TASK OF CONSTRUCTION

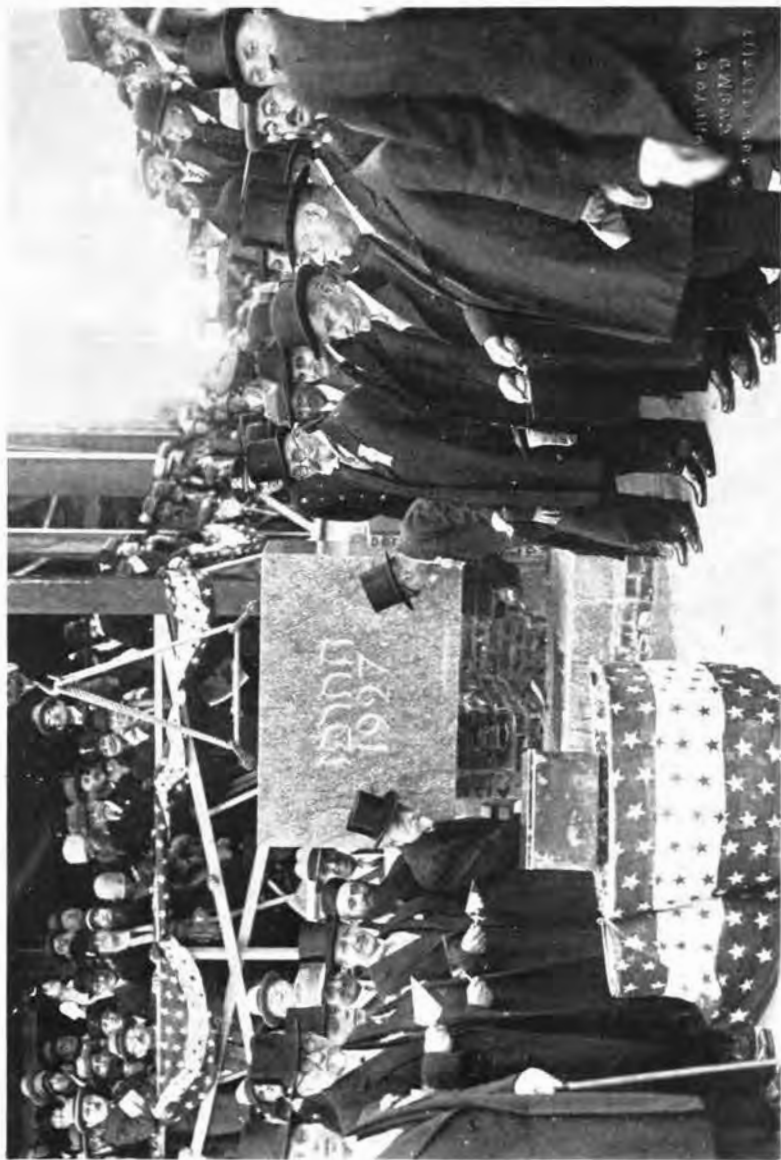
*Men of Vision Who Direct Construction of the Yeshiva College
of America—An Edifice in the Solomonian Style of
Unique Architectural Beauty*

One of the major functions of the Yeshiva College Building Fund during the period of the construction of the Yeshiva College naturally fell to the Building Committee. This committee, composed of men whose high calibre has been proven by long experience in the constructive processes of life, had to deal with the plan, the scope and the character of the edifice which is to house the great institution for higher Jewish learning. It required vision and an actual knowledge of material possibilities to arrive at the plans for the great structure. The raising of a building fund is either a difficult or simple task. All that is necessary is to present the appeal to the man of means, to convince him of the worthiness of the purpose, of the effectiveness of the contribution and, when everything goes well, so many dollars have been placed at the disposition of the Building Committee.

How these funds are to be expended in order to insure the visioned purpose, how best to express the intention of all the contributors, how to pay regard to the actual needs of the Yeshiva College, how to provide for its further expansion, how to devise a plan which would express the soul of the idea and raise the structure in an appropriate style consonant with the character of the Yeshiva and, at the same time, provide for the needs of an institution of learning—these were the tasks with which the building committee of the Yeshiva Building Fund were charged.

It was not enough to purchase the land, to buy the steel, to provide the bricks, to hire the labor, to consult the engineer, to invoke the counsel of the architect. In the case of other buildings the constructors are responsible to themselves and to a limited number of people who have an interest in the building.

The construction of a Yeshiva College for the Jews of America involves a responsibility not only to the contributors, not only to the students and the faculty, but also a great moral debt to the community as a whole. Nay, not only to the Jewish community,



LAYING OF THE CORNERSTONE FOR THE GREAT YESHIVA COLLEGE
of the Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary, Amsterdam
Avenue, 186th to 187th Streets, New York City, May 1, 1927.

but also to the country at large. A country is judged by its public edifices and to raise the Yeshiva College to such a high architectural level of beauty and power of expression, is an undertaking that might well tax the foresight and knowledge of leaders of men.

Harry Fischel, who himself contributed \$100,000 toward the Building Fund, headed the building committee which has considered, weighed and decided upon the plan and its execution. He was aided by Jacob Levy, Louis Gold, Joseph Ravitch and Henry Friedman, vice-chairmen of the Building Committee; Joseph Polstein, secretary; Albert Wald, counsel; Harris L. Selig, director; and Samuel Bayer, A. Bricken, Henry Friedman, Conrad Galzer, Pincus Glickman, Joseph Golding, Mendel Gottesman, Paul Herring, S. A. Israel, Nathan Lamport, Abraham Levy, Rabbi M. S. Margolies, Julius Miller, Samuel Minskoff, Isaac Polstein, Judge Otto A. Rosalsky, Samuel R. Rosoff, G. S. Roth, Harry Schiff, Leon Sobel, Meyer Vesell, Nathan Wilson, Max Wilson and Benjamin Winter; representing the faculty and student body, Dr. Bernard Revel, Rabbi Herbert S. Goldstein, Rabbi N. H. Ebin, Dr. S. Safir, Rabbi J. S. Schwartz; representing the dormitory, Mrs. N. H. Ebin Mrs. Harry Fischel, Mrs. Herbert S. Goldstein, Mrs. A. Levitan, Mrs. Abraham Levy, Mrs. Jacob Levy, Mrs. Elias Surut.

As the first group of buildings of the Yeshiva College of America is emerging, the character of the work accomplished under Mr. Fischel's chairmanship and with the aid of the architects, Charles B. Meyers and Henry B. Hertz, is becoming more and more evident. The public will be able to view and appreciate the beauty of the structure which will be a distinct contribution to American architecture and a notable departure in the construction of Jewish public buildings on this continent.

The buildings were designed in a style resembling that of the Solomonian period. The committee, including experienced realtors, immediately agreed that no endeavor was to be made to erect high buildings of a skyscraper type. For an institution like the Yeshiva College of America something more than a useful type of building is to be sought. Something more than convenient accommodations must be looked for—it must be a building with a soul, a house worthy of the name Yeshiva College of America.

Group A. which is now in the process of construction, consists of three buildings, a high school, an auditorium and a dormitory.

These three buildings will, until that time when the other five buildings are completed, house the Yeshivah in all its departments. It is the hope of the Building Committee that it will be in a position to present the complete Yeshiva College of America to the student body and the faculty in the very near future.



MEMBERS OF THE BUILDING COMMITTEE
Of the Yeshiva College, of which Mr. Fischel is chairman.

CHAPTER LXIV

CORNERSTONE IS LAID FOR YESHIVA COLLEGE BEFORE AUDIENCE OF 30,000

INTEREST in the Yeshiva College grew apace among all sections of Jewry as the time approached for the ceremony of the cornerstone laying for the Group A. buildings. It was generally recognized that this function would mark the most notable step yet taken in America for the advancement of Jewish religious education and for the preservation of Orthodox Judaism.

In view of the fact that the chief burdens of the undertaking had fallen upon the Building Committee, this committee, quite naturally, was entrusted with the honor of arranging the details of the observance, the date for which was finally fixed for Sunday afternoon, May 1, 1927.

It was determined by the Committee that the cornerstone laying should be a ceremony fully befitting the dignity and significance of the occasion and many meetings were held to plan the details and to secure the cooperation and attendance of the most notable figures in the fields of Jewish education and in public life generally.

An invitation was finally prepared and sent to 25,000 prominent Orthodox Jews, not only in New York but throughout the country, as it was held by the committee, the Yeshiva College constituted a national, rather than a local institution, and the occasion was one that should properly be brought to the attention of American Jewry as a whole.

This invitation was as follows:

The Building Committee of the Yeshiva College cordially invites you to attend the laying of the cornerstone of the Group A. buildings which will take place on Sunday afternoon, May 1,

1927, at two o'clock on Amsterdam Avenue and 186th-187th Streets, New York City.

As a leader in your community and a friend of the Yeshiva, we hope you will attend.

HARRY FISCHEL

Chairman of the Building Committee.

BUILDING COMMITTEE

OFFICERS:

Chairman, HARRY FISCHEL

Vice Chairmen: Jacob Levy, Louis Gold, Joseph Ravitch, and Henry Friedman

Secretary, Joseph Polstein

Designing and Supervising Architect, Charles B. Meyers

Consulting Architect, Henry B. Hertz

Counsel, Albert Wald

Director, Harris L. Selig

Samuel Bayer

A. Bricken

Rabbi N. H. Ebin

Conrad Glaser

Pincus Glickman

Joseph Golding

Rabbi Herbert S. Goldstein

Mendel Gottesman

Paul Herring

S. A. Israel

Nathan Lamport

Judge Max S. Levine

Abraham Levy

David Levy

Samuel Levy

Rabbi M. S. Margolies

Philip Meyrowitz

Hon. Julius Miller

Samuel Minskoff

Isaac Polstein

Dr. Bernard Revel

Samuel R. Rosoff

Judge Otto A. Rosalsky

G. S. Roth

Dr. S. Safir

Samuel L. Sar

Harry Schiff

Leon Sobel

Meyer Vesell

Nathan Wilson

Max Wilson

Benj. Winter

REPRESENTING THE DORMITORY

Mrs. N. H. Ebin

Mrs. Harry Fischel

Mrs. Herbert S. Goldstein

Mrs. Abraham Levy

Mrs. Jacob Levy

Mrs. Elias Surut

Mrs. A. Levitan

Acceptances were received from practically every large city in the United States, giving promise of a very large attendance, so that arrangements were made accordingly.

The grandstand for the occasion, with a seating capacity of more than six thousand persons, was erected by the Municipal government through the courtesy of the Hon. Albert Goldman, Commissioner of Plant and Structures, of the City of New York.

Even this provision, thought to be ample, proved inadequate, however, as when the great day came and although the ceremonies were not scheduled to begin until two o'clock in the afternoon, the grandstand was nearly filled as early as eleven o'clock in the morning. As the hour for the exercises drew near every seat was occupied and many thousands of persons who could not be accommodated, remained standing in the vicinity throughout the entire proceedings.

More than 1200 gaily decorated automobiles, containing the officers of different institutions, formed in line at the Jewish Center on West Eighty-sixth Street, several hours before the time set for the cornerstone laying, leading a great parade which wended its way to the scene of the festivities.

This procession was headed by Mr. Nathan Lamport as President of the institution and Mr. Fischel, as Chairman of the Building Committee, and was escorted along the entire route to 186th Street and Amsterdam Avenue, by motorcycle police. On entering the grounds of the Yeshiva, the procession was greeted by cheer upon cheer from the throats of the thirty thousand spectators who by that time had assembled.

The ceremony of the laying of the cornerstone made an indelible impression upon the thousands of persons who were present. It was the general opinion of all those who attended, that such an event and such a celebration had never previously been held either in the City of New York or elsewhere in the United States, which, indeed, is a fact, for no similar institution of the size and importance of the Yeshiva College has heretofore been established anywhere in America. The cornerstone laying

marked the beginning of what must be regarded as a new epoch in Jewish religious education in America. It proved that American Jewry appreciates the need and desirability of the establishment of a Jewish Parochial College where the Jewish youth shall, under one roof, obtain both the Talmudic and secular knowledge essential to the upbuilding of Jewish character and to the preservation of Jewish traditions in America.

Not only was this viewpoint expressed by the Jewish leaders and educators of the community, but such noted non-Jewish educators as Dr. John H. Finley, former Commissioner of Education of the State of New York, Dr. Frederick Robinson, President of the College of the City of New York, Dr. James C. Egbert, representing President Nicholas Murray Butler of Columbia University, and many others. A letter from the President of the United States stressed the great importance to the American people at large, of giving the Jewish youth this opportunity of embracing Talmudic and secular knowledge under proper religious environment and under the auspices of a single institution. This letter was written after Congressman Sol. Bloom and Rabbi Herbert S. Goldstein had caused the undertaking to be brought to the President's attention.

In addition to the remarks of the educators, the leading officials of the State and City, including United States Senator Royal S. Copeland, the Acting Mayor, Joseph V. McKee, President of the Board of Aldermen and Julius Miller, President of the Borough of Manhattan, together with other high officials, expressed their appreciation in behalf of the State and City for the facilities which generous and public-minded Jews were to provide through this great institution.

In order to have a complete record of the ceremony the report of the occasion appearing in the Jewish Daily Bulletin of May 3, 1927, is given herewith.

YESHIVA COLLEGE CORNERSTONE LAYING IS WITNESSED
BY 30,000

*President Coolidge lauds Institution blending Jewish and secular
learning; Prominent Leaders and educators participate
in Solemn Exercises. Additional \$200,000
raised at National Committee Dinner*

The cornerstone laying exercises for the first group of buildings of the Yeshiva College of America, an institution sponsored by Orthodox leaders for the purpose of combining Jewish and secular education for the training of rabbis, teachers and lay professionals, were held Sunday afternoon at the Yeshiva site in the presence of an audience exceeding 30,000. An automobile parade from the West Side Synagogue on Eighty-sixth Street to the Yeshiva grounds at Amsterdam Avenue and 186th Street, preceded the exercises.

The ceremonies were begun with an address by Harry Fischel, chairman of the building Committee and donor of \$100,000 to the Yeshiva College Building Fund. He said:

"Ladies and Gentlemen:

"On behalf of the Building Committee I herewith extend to you a hearty welcome. We have assembled here this afternoon to celebrate the greatest event in Jewish history, the laying of the cornerstone of The Yeshiva Isaac Elchanan and the first Jewish college ever built in America. I will therefore say with the Psalmists 'This is the day which the Lord has made, let us be happy and rejoice thereon.'

"We consider this the happiest day in our lives, for we have lived to see our dream realized.

"My friends. In looking back 33 years, I remind myself of the time when we bought an old private house at 85 Henry Street. We were then contented. It was fifteen years later that we first found the need of a new building. We then bought two old houses at 9-11 Montgomery Street which we transformed into a school building. We were again contented. However, our institution grew, and with it our pride in it. Only five years elapsed before we bought the building at 301-302-303 East Broadway, and converted it into a first class school building

which was equal to the needs of that time and which buildings we still occupy.

"It is now three years since a handful of men saw the vision of a modern Yeshiva College building. At that time we had in mind a building occupying about ten city lots. However, our enthusiasm grew daily until we bought the present site. We went far beyond our expectations. The site on which we are erecting the present buildings, occupies a space of 15 city lots. In addition thereto, we own these two beautiful square blocks facing us, consisting of nearly 70 city lots. On these two blocks, we expect to erect in the near future; the Yeshiva Building, a College Building, a Library, a Teachers' Institute, a Gymnasium, a Dormitory for college boys, also all other necessary buildings required for a complete university.

"The buildings we are now erecting are as follows: A High School to accommodate over 1500 boys; an auditorium with a seating capacity for nearly 2500; a dormitory building to accommodate about 200 out of town attendants of high school grades.

"These buildings when completed will house all our activities until the time comes and, I hope in the very near future, when we shall be able to complete our entire plan.

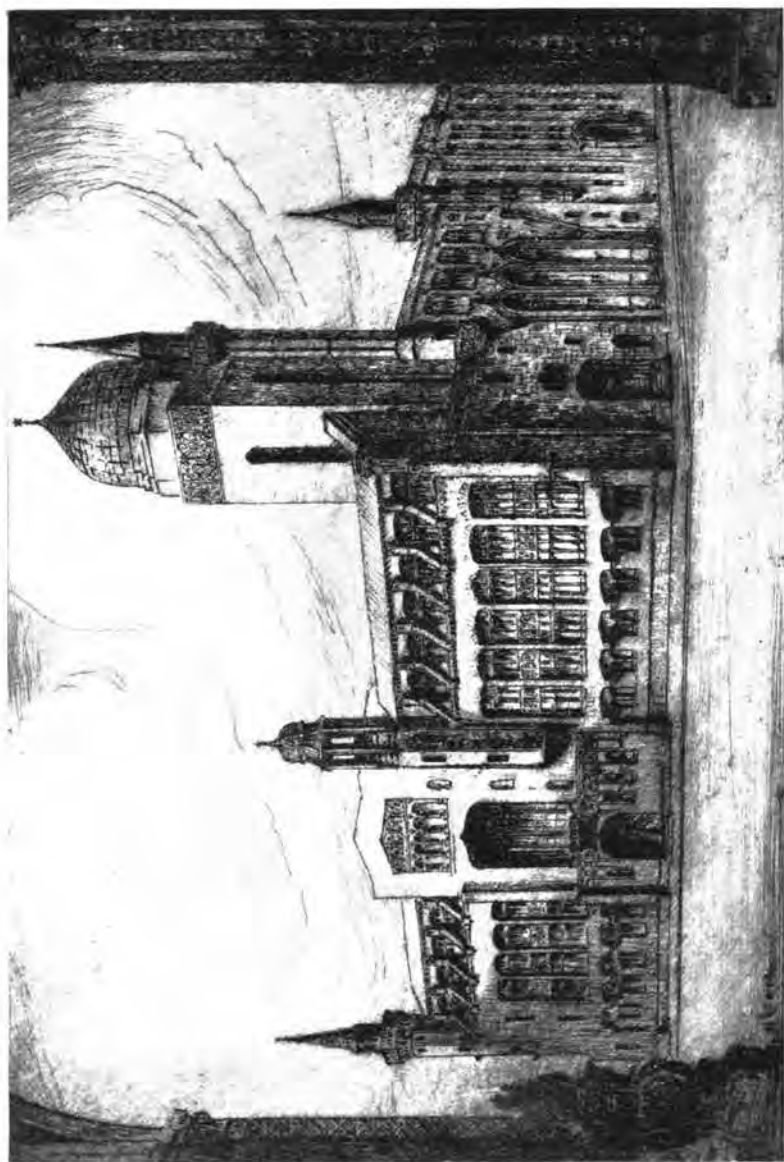
"I take this occasion to extend my thanks to the Almighty for giving me the privilege of acting as Chairman of the Building Committee for every building which the Yeshiva Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary has ever built or altered. I am especially grateful to the Almighty for having the privilege once again to hold the same position in connection with present buildings.

"Before I conclude, I will say that I would be derelict in my duty, were I not to publicly express my appreciation for the splendid cooperation I have received from my four Vice Chairmen, namely: Mr. Jacob Levy, Mr. Joseph Ravitch, Mr. Louis Gold, Mr. Henry Friedman.

"I also extend my thanks to the entire building committee who have helped to prepare the plans for the present structure.

"I am likewise grateful to the Campaign Fund Committee, with Mr. Samuel Levy, as Chairman, for their devotion and energetic labor in providing the funds to pay for the buildings.

"I am very thankful to Mr. Abraham Levy, the Chairman of



FIRST GROUP OF THE YESHIVA COLLEGE BUILDINGS.
Of which Mr. Fischel was Chairman of the Building Committee.

the Arrangements Committee, who has performed his duty in a manner that is a credit not only to the Building Committee, but to the entire Jewish Community.

"Last but not least, I am grateful to the Architects, Mr. Charles B. Meyers and Mr. Henry B. Hertz for the great skill they have displayed in planning these buildings.

"My friends, in accordance with the Orthodox Jewish custom on festive days, I will conclude with the traditional Schehecheyanu prayer.

"Blessed art Thou O Lord our God who has kept us in life and hast preserved us and enabled us to reach this occasion of the laying of the cornerstone."

"I further pray to the Almighty that I, as well as everyone who is assembled here this afternoon, will be privileged to share in and be present at the completion of all the buildings, not only on this side but on the other side of the street as well."

A Megillah in Hebrew and English was deposited under the cornerstone, relating the history of the first Yeshiva in America and of the developments leading up to the rise of the present structure. The exterior of the first group of buildings is already completed.

The ceremonies were attended by many Orthodox Jewish leaders, rabbis and contributors to the Fund, as well as by representatives of the National, City and State governments. Samuel Levy, as chairman of the Executive Committee of the Yeshiva College, was master of Ceremonies.

Joseph V. McKee, Acting Mayor and president of the Board of Aldermen, bringing the greeting of the municipality, said that the Yeshiva will do for its future pupils what modern universities are failing to do when they neglect the "immortal souls" of their student bodies.

"Our universities are teaching physical facts and forgetting to discipline the wills of their students," he declared. "Thus they are bereft of the fruits of a full education. You Jews here are making better men for yourselves and for your country by not ignoring the needs of the soul. After establishing yourselves as leaders of commerce, politics, and finance you are making yourselves leaders in education as well."

Senator Royal S. Copeland said the planning and building of the Yeshiva project should be a cause for great satisfaction to

American Jewry, calling attention to the literal meaning of Yeshiva, a "Meeting" or "Session." Senator Copeland said the new college was in line with an American tradition which began in the New England meeting house of the Seventeenth century.

Professor James C. Egbert, director of the University Extension at Columbia University, brought the greetings of Columbia and of President Nicholas Murray Butler. Dr. John H. Finley, former Commissioner of Education, welcomed the new college because, he said, it would preserve the gifts of Jewish religion and culture for future generations in America.

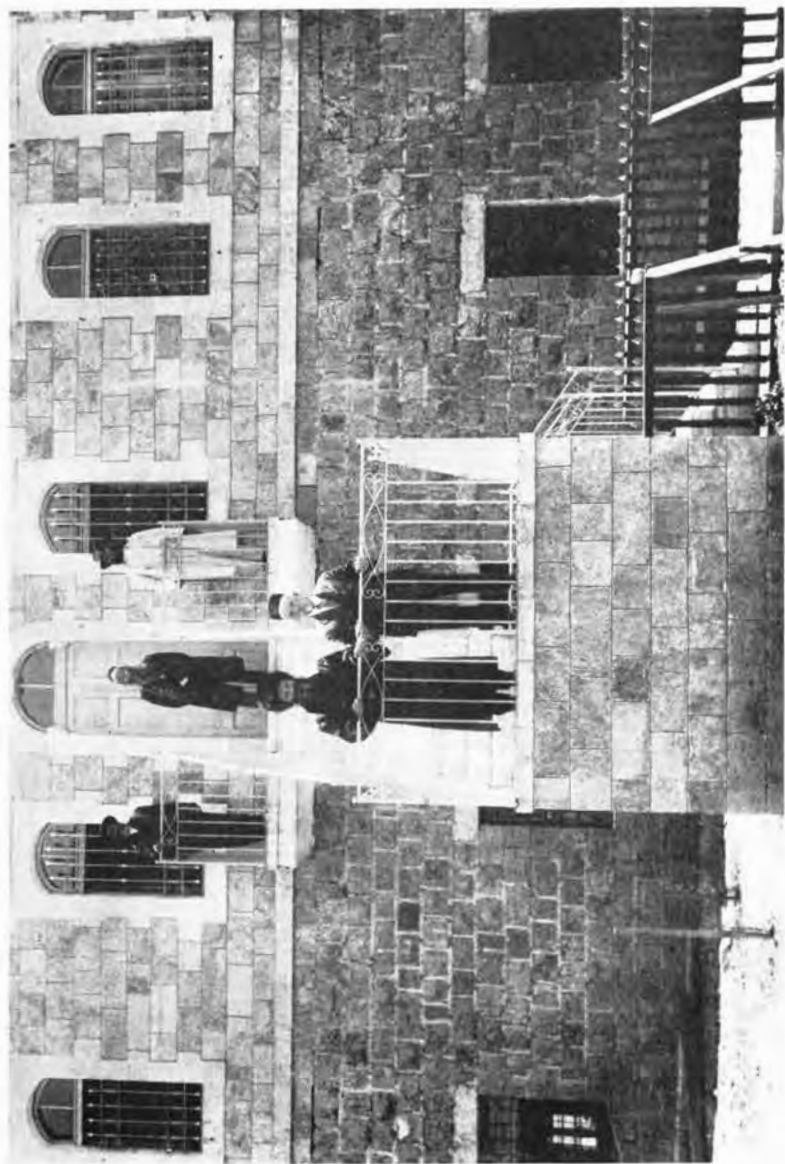
Dr. Bernard Revel, the Rosh Yeshiva, president of the institution's faculty, delivered the principal address.

The cornerstone was laid by a committee of six which included Nathan Lamport, Harry Fischel, Adolph Lewisohn, Frederick Brown, Meyer Vesell and Samuel Levy. They were assisted by Morris Asinoff, Samuel Bayer, Joseph H. Cohen, Jacob Fabian, Henry Friedman, Pincus Glickman, Louis Gold, Mendel Gottesman, Maurice Greenstein, Samuel Kamlet, M. W. Levine, Abraham Levy, David Levy, Jacob Levy, Nathan Levy, Isaac Liberman, Samuel Minskoff, Isaac Polstein, Joseph Polstein, Joseph Ravitch, Harry Roggen, Judge Otto A. Rosalsky, Gustavus S. Roth, Max Silberman, Louis Topkis and Benjamin Winter.

A letter from President Coolidge addressed to Dr. Revel was read. In his letter the President said:

"I regret that it is impossible for me to be present at the laying of the cornerstone of the new buildings of the Yeshiva Rabbi Isaac Elchanan, marking as they do a new era in the development of your institution of higher education, which stands for culture, learning and scholarship and for religious training so vitally essential to the welfare of our country. The exercises on Sunday have a peculiar significance to all true Americans. Long eminent in philanthropic, social and communal work, the Jews of America, through the increased advantages at the disposal of the Yeshiva, will be able to broaden their field for the training of scholars and religious leaders for their people. This is of importance, not only to them but to our national life as a whole.

"I send my congratulations, greetings and best wishes."



CHIEF RABBI ABRAHAM I. KOOK, OF PALESTINE

With Mr. Fischel at the entrance to the Chief Rabbi's home in Jerusalem, during Mr. Fischel's fourth pilgrimage to the Holy Land, June, 1927.

A cablegram of congratulations was received from Rabbi Abraham I. Kook, Chief Rabbi of Palestine.

The Hebrew text of the Megillah was read by Harris L. Selig and the English by Gustavus A. Rogers.

Music was furnished by the Hebrew Orphan Asylum Band and singing by the Jewish Cantors Association of America, led by Louis Lipitz, president, and Cantor Pinchas Jasinowski. An additional fund of \$200,000 was raised at the dinner given in the Grand ballroom of the Hotel Astor Sunday evening in honor of the National Yeshiva Committee.

CHAPTER LXV

A FOURTH VISIT TO PALESTINE

THE cornerstone of the Yeshiva College having been laid and the most important contracts for the construction of the Group A. buildings having been let, Mr. Fischel once more turned his eyes toward Palestine. He was anxious again to visit the Holy Land both for the spiritual inspiration he invariably received from this source and for the reason that he had in mind a definite program that he believed would be beneficial both to the Yeshiva College here and to the Yeshiva Chief Rabbi Kook had established in Jerusalem, known as the Universal Yeshiva.

This plan was to arrange an exchange of professors between the two institutions and also to afford the graduates of the Yeshiva College in America the opportunity to go to Palestine and take a post graduate course in higher Talmudic learning in Rabbi Kook's institution. This latter institution was being conducted in the synagogue Mr. Fischel had erected in connection with his gift of a residence for the Chief Rabbi several years earlier.

Mr. Fischel entrusted to the Vice Chairmen of the Building Committee of the Yeshiva College the work of proceeding with the construction of that institution and, with Mrs. Fischel, took passage for Palestine on May 17, 1927.

It was their privilege on this occasion to be accompanied by Rabbi M. S. Margolies, Dean of the Orthodox Rabbinate of America, who was paying his first visit to the Holy Land, an experience that gave this venerable Rabbi, the greatest joy.

Arriving in Palestine, the party, before reaching Jerusalem, was met by a committee representing the several institutions, which was sent by Chief Rabbi Kook to welcome them. This committee escorted them to the Chief Rabbi's home. A little

distance from their destination they heard the melodious sound of the students' voices in the Yeshiva as they studied the Talmud.

At the residence of the Chief Rabbi, they found assembled a large number of Rabbis, heads of institutions and business leaders who had arranged a formal reception for them. The Chief Rabbi was especially cordial in his greetings to Rabbi Margolies, whom he presented to the gatherings as the leader of Orthodox Rabbis in America, at the same time taking advantage of the opportunity to relate the manner in which Mr. Fischel had provided the Chief Rabbi's home and Synagogue and the efforts he had put forth in behalf of the Universal Yeshiva, with his contribution of \$10,000 to the latter cause.

The party reached Jerusalem three days before Shevuoth, (the Feast of Weeks) and, in accordance with his practice on his previous journeys, Mr. Fischel paid his first visit to the oldest synagogue in the city known as the Churva Rabbi Jehuda Ha-Chasid, which is 700 years old. He at once noted that the interior of the edifice had been entirely redecorated and presented a beautiful appearance. Looking toward the center, however, he was surprised to find, in view of the spic and span appearance of the rest of the building, that the Bimah, or centre-platform, was broken and dilapidated. Curious to know why this should be he inquired of the President of the Congregation, the reason for the discrepancy.

He was informed that during the decoration of the ceiling, which is about 75 feet high, the scaffolding broke. Two painters fell and were not even hurt but in the descent of the scaffold the pulpit was struck and shattered to pieces. Asking why it had not been repaired, Mr. Fischel was told the Congregation believed this was inadvisable as the ancient pulpit did not conform to the rest of the remodeled structure. What had long been desired was an entirely new pulpit. The cost, however, would be \$1,000 and the Congregation did not have this sum to spare for the purpose.

Mr. Fischel at once offered to contribute this amount, an-

nouncement of which, when made to the Congregation by the President, was received with expressions of joy and gratitude.

On this visit, the Fischel party remained in Palestine four weeks, going from one end of the country to the other, visiting the people and the institutions. Mr. Fischel found that since his previous visit four years earlier, notable progress had been made on every side and many important improvements had been completed, which, more than ever, caused him to have confidence in the future of the Jewish Homeland. Many of the institutions, however, faced economic difficulties which Mr. Fischel sought to remedy by his financial assistance.

While in Jerusalem he organized a Free Loan Society among the students of the Universal Yeshiva, starting the fund with a substantial amount so that it might immediately function and afford loans to students when in need.

On the evening of June 29, the day before their departure, Chief Rabbi Abraham I. Kook, together with the teachers and students of the Yeshiva, arranged a farewell reception in honor of Mr. and Mrs. Fischel. This function was held in the Yeshiva Building and was attended by the representatives of many of the institutions of Jerusalem. Mr. Fischel was greatly touched by this expression of affection and respect and publicly gave his thanks to the Almighty, for having been privileged to lend his assistance in both the religious and material upbuilding of the Jewish Homeland, which he fervently prayed he might visit many times again and might continue to aid.

CHAPTER LXVI

AN INTIMATE VIEW OF HARRY FISCHEL, THE MAN

No biographical work is complete or satisfactory that does not attempt to visualize to the reader something more of the personality of the individual than is contained in the mere chronicle of his public activities. For this reason, it is sought to give, in the final chapter of this book, a glimpse of Mr. Fischel in his every day life, in his home and office, with his family, friends and business associates, in order that the reader may come to know the man himself, not merely the astute and sagacious business leader or even the philanthropist and ardent communal worker.

It is Mr. Fischel as husband, father and friend that this chapter will seek to make known to those who have followed the history of his achievements as set forth here.

What sort of man is it, then, who has emerged in middle life from the crucible of a boyhood spent in hardship and privation in a primitive Russian hamlet; who, as a youthful immigrant in a strange land, struggled to preserve his ideals and to win a livelihood against overwhelming obstacles and who, in later life, triumphing over poverty and discouragements, attained material prosperity and a record of service to his fellow man undreamed of in his most extravagant early imaginings.

To begin with, the dominant traits of Mr. Fischel's character, his unassuming manner, supreme gentleness, sympathy with and understanding of the needs of others, and his reliance upon his faith, have remained unaltered with the passing of the years and during the transition from poverty to affluence. Today he is as easily approachable, as ready to do a service, as democratic and kindly in his attitude toward all he meets as he was when an obscure and friendless youth. Nor have the fires of his enthusiasm,

his belief in human nature or his zeal for his religion been in any way abated.

The worldly power which wealth of necessity brings, the association with outstanding leaders in every walk of life, the opportunities for opulent living, have left him unaffected. His tastes are as simple, his wants are as easily satisfied as when frugality was imposed by circumstance. Service to his fellow man, the advancement of Judaism remain the things closest to his heart.

Mr. Fischel has permitted publicity to be given to his work in behalf of the great Jewish institutions with which he is affiliated, his strivings in the interests of religious education for the Jewish youth, his efforts to upbuild the Jewish homeland in Palestine, in order to stimulate others. On the other hand, Mr. Fischel's private gifts, and these have been innumerable, have remained a secret between himself and those whom he has aided.

A pen picture of Mr. Fischel's physical characteristics and mode of living may not be inappropriate here. Although slight of build and of medium height, he enjoys that durable type of constitution which is sometimes defined as "wiry." He is, as his career indicates, possessed of a great reserve of nervous energy so that, despite the exactions of a life continually at the service of others, he is enabled to meet extraordinary demands upon his vitality and perform a vast amount of labor. His capacity for work is heightened by his ability to concentrate his entire attention upon the matter immediately before him until it has been disposed of, leaving his mind free to devote to the next problem. Mr. Fischel's sandy hair, closely trimmed beard and soft blue eyes indicate the determination of the man, no less than his kindness.

His method of living is methodical and he is abstemious almost to the point of asceticism. He does not use liquor or tobacco in any form, except as wine is partaken of and only occasionally as part of the ritual of his faith. His regular habits, close observance of the dietary laws and generally simple living have

enabled him to preserve his health and strength and to throw off illness when it has assailed him.

Arising daily at six-thirty o'clock it is Mr. Fischel's invariable practice to repair at once for morning worship to the Synagogue of the Congregation Kehillath Jeshurun. Following the services, Mr. Fischel, together with a few other devout souls, spends half an hour in religious group study of the Mishna, led by Rabbi M. S. Margolies, after which he goes home to breakfast. This procedure is never broken, no matter at what hour Mr. Fischel returns to his home the night before from meetings or other functions and even though he is unable at times to retire until the early hours of the morning.

Following breakfast, Mr. Fischel devotes his mornings until lunch time exclusively to his charitable and public undertakings, visiting institutions, calling upon those in distress, studying reports, planning new undertakings, in short, laboring as assiduously to relieve the necessities of others as many men slave over their desks to advance their own fortunes.

After luncheon Mr. Fischel goes to his office, usually arriving there about two o'clock and remaining until five or six. It is between these hours that Mr. Fischel sees most of those who daily come to him for assistance or advice in one form or another. These callers are legion and come from every walk in life. His office is never closed to any person, whether he be of the humblest in the social strata or among the mightiest in the financial world. Mr. Fischel's secretary has very positive orders that each visitor is to be received with courtesy and consideration and shown into his private office the very moment he is disengaged.

Although Mr. Fischel at once commands the respect that is due a man who has risen to a commanding place in the world by dint of his own ability and effort, there is nothing of austerity in his demeanor, no hint either in his manner or surroundings that he is anything but the warm-hearted, solicitous, unaffected gentleman which in truth, he undoubtedly is.

Mr. Fischel's modest tastes are further borne out by his dress. He wears no jewelry other than his watch and chain, though he will tell you he possesses thirteen matchless gems. These are his four daughters and nine grandchildren. For all his love of simplicity and modest personal requirements, Mr. Fischel does not believe in denying either his family or himself the really worthwhile things of life.

An afternoon spent in Mr. Fischel's office gives an illuminating insight into those characteristics which govern his life at all times. It is at once apparent that there is to be found system and method, without driving or waste, in short a harmonious, contented, efficient organization.

The furnishings of the office are dignified without being in any sense ostentatious, the quarters spacious and uncrowded. The clerks and stenographers proceed quietly and diligently with their work, each knowing what is expected of him and doing it, so that, although the volume of transactions both financial and philanthropic is very large, Mr. Fischel himself is seldom annoyed with details due to the fact that he has so efficiently organized his business that he has relieved himself of all but the major problems.

Practically all of Mr. Fischel's private fortune is invested in real estate. Mr. Fischel has never dealt in Wall Street nor has he ever owned speculative securities of any kind. Even to this day his surplus funds are invested only in United States government bonds, to which he turned during the war, purchasing Liberty bonds.

It is truthfully said that an accurate barometer of a man's disposition and character is to be found in what his employees and business associates think of him. That Mr. Fischel is a just, considerate, amiable employer, as well as partner, is best indicated by the fact that those to whom he has entrusted the chief responsibilities of his business have been continuously with

him for many years as have most of his office assistants, who regard him not alone in the role of employer but that of friend.

In the matter of his correspondence Mr. Fischel is punctilious. It is the very first item to be attended to on his arrival at the office each day. Every letter, no matter from whom it comes or what its contents is answered personally and promptly by him in such a way as to make the recipient feel that Mr. Fischel has given to the matter under advisement his very best thought and judgment. If he is compelled to refuse a request, the declination is so considerably couched and the regret so evidently sincere as to disarm resentment.

Having finally disposed of his mail, Mr. Fischel is ready to receive the first of the many callers who invariably await him. It is inevitable that with Mr. Fischel's reputation for philanthropy and the general knowledge that he is by no means a poor man, a majority of those who seek him out should be in quest of financial assistance. Mr. Fischel seldom turns away any one whom he feels merits his aid and gives to each visitor that sympathetic attention which bespeaks genuine interest and solicitude in his welfare. For Mr. Fischel not alone has the broad understanding growing out of a lifetime of accumulated experience governing such problems as he is daily asked to solve but he has both the heart and the will to be of service.

Mention has been made of Mr. Fischel's private benefactions. Countless individuals, as well as whole families in this country, in Europe and in Palestine are partly or entirely maintained by stipends from his purse.

To this number must be added many others aided in like manner by Mrs. Fischel, to whom her husband has always opened his purse without limit. Mrs. Fischel even enjoys the privilege of drawing upon Mr. Fischel's bank account without consultation with him. At the Passover season, particularly, these private benefactions mount into a very large total.

Mr. Fischel's home and home life coincide entirely with what

people have been led to expect of him outside this intimate circle as his devoted wife and fond children eloquently testify. In his youth a dutiful and loving son, Mr. Fischel has been an equally loyal and affectionate husband and father. His home has always engaged his first interest next to that of his religion of which, of course, the home is a most important part and he has given to his wife and daughters every advantage and comfort consonant with their welfare.

The content and happiness of his home is the best proof that he has, during nearly forty years of married life, successfully filled that most difficult of roles, that of a revered and loved husband and parent. When his children were growing up, he was never so busily engaged or had so important a conference on hand that he did not have time first to consider them. It was his practice throughout their childhood to take each of his children to school every morning and in the evenings to assist them with their lessons.

Even when they grew up and attended college and their studies had advanced far beyond the point where his education ended, he still continued to work with them, thus stimulating their interest and, at the same time broadening his own knowledge. In this manner Mr. Fischel came to be possessed of a vast store of learning, acquired during his adult life, the opportunity to gain that which was denied him in his youth.

Mr. Fischel's interest in his children has not ceased even with their marriage and he holds himself at all times literally at their beck and call, ready to help them with the problems which arise in their lives and in connection with the upbringing of their families. Due to his precept and example and constant instilling of a love of religion in his children, while their minds were still in a formative stage, Mr. Fischel has the satisfaction of knowing that each is as true to the ideals of Judaism he set before them, as is he himself, and that each is rearing her family with like principles and aspirations.

Now that Mr. Fischel is permitted to abate somewhat the

strenuous labors of his earlier years, most of his evenings are spent at home with his wife, when they do not go together to visit one or the other of their children and grandchildren. The other evenings of the week are taken up with important board meetings of the institutions in which he is more than passively interested. Occasionally he takes in a movie. He also enjoys sitting by his hearthstone, a good book upon his knees and the radio supplying a fine concert or timely discussion of some current topic. Mr. Fischel has never played cards or other games, intended merely to pass the time, or indulged in any form of amusement not in some way connected with the advancement of his knowledge of the world or related to his physical well-being. For many years he had a team of horses. In recent years he has preferred an automobile for his airings.

When Mr. Fischel feels he requires a change of scene he goes to Atlantic City for a few days, there enjoying the sunshine of the boardwalk. Frequent short excursions to that resort have been his practice for a number of years and have constituted his principal outings. He still owns a country place in the Catskills to which he repairs at intervals in the Summer season. Here, however, his self-imposed duties in connection with the synagogue he established and in which he retains an active interest, renders his visits to the mountains not wholly a vacation. However, his greatest delight is when he can spend his vacation in the Holy Land. The anticipation and realization of doing good in the religious centre of his people and receiving afresh renewed vigor and inspiration, exalt and exult him.

Such, in brief, is a picture of Mr. Fischel as his family and host of personal friends know him.

CONCLUSION

FORTY YEARS OF STRUGGLE FOR A PRINCIPLE

THE title chosen by Mr. Fischel for his biography, namely "Forty years of struggle for a principle" epitomizes not only his entire purpose in life, but the sole motive which actuated him in supplying the data for this record of his most active and interesting career.

In conclusion, it is hoped and it is believed that this biography has demonstrated to the reader that the principle for which Mr. Fischel has so unremittingly striven is none other than the preservation of historic and traditional Judaism, as represented by Orthodox Jewish religious precepts and practices.

This is the religion which, throughout the centuries, has withstood the onslaught of inquisition and persecution, as well as the tests to which it has been subjected by philosophy and by science. It is the religion which was his grandparents' and his parents' and has, in turn, been practiced not alone by Mr. Fischel himself, but by his children and grandchildren as well.

Mr. Fischel has, during his life, encountered and triumphed over most severe trials and temptations which he was compelled to undergo in order that he might be able to observe the Sabbath and the Jewish Holidays in every detail and to scrupulously maintain the Jewish Dietary Laws.

This struggle was not confined to his own home, but was extended to the institutions for the care of the orphaned, the aged and the sick, as well as to the educational institutions to which he has devoted the major portion of his life.

Through his benefactions and his sincerity of purpose, Mr. Fischel has earned the respect and esteem not only of every faction of the Jews of America but of the Jews throughout the

world, winning the regard and confidence of his gentile brothers as well.

It is Mr. Fischel's earnest prayer, at the conclusion of these forty years of struggle and effort, that the Almighty may grant him the opportunity of continuing his labors in behalf of religion, education and philanthropy, so that he may, at a later date, be able to record additional efforts in behalf of these same religious and humanitarian principles.

I fervently hope and pray that I may be privileged to edit the additional record of Mr. Fischel's noble and exemplary life.

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PRELIMINARY NOTES TO THE
“CONTINUATION OF MY BIOGRAPHY”

Harry Fischel's full-length original autobiography, *Forty Years of Struggle for a Principle*, was published in 1928, having been edited by his son-in-law Rabbi Herbert S. Goldstein, and written in the third person. It is reproduced in full in the beginning of this volume. The Continuation, privately circulated in 1941 and basically limited to family members at that time, was written in the first person without any mention of the participation of Fischel's son-in-law or anyone else. It is likely that the Continuation was edited by Rabbi Goldstein, but lightly, with the intention of maintaining the language and the color of the colorful Mr. Fischel as much as possible. The Continuation was first circulated only in bound typewritten form. It has been edited further for this publication, but again very lightly, and again to continue to preserve the character and the writing style of the author. An effort was made to ascertain the correct spellings of names in particular, for the purposes of historical references and the Index. There had been no Index to the original Continuation. There is now an Index to the Continuation as currently published. This Index includes references to entries for all the other material, as well, that now supplements the original biography, as well as some material in the original book not included in the original Index.

It should be noted that *Forty Years of Struggle for a Principle* was published when Harry Fischel was a millionaire, even in pre-inflationary dollars, a year before the stock market crash. By contrast, most of the period covered by the Continuation was during the Great Depression that followed, and preceded the inflation that occurred since that time. The value of the dollar has increased by a factor of about 14 since 1919, when Harry Fischel signed the million-dollar check reproduced facing page 160, which would be worth about \$14 million as this volume went to press, and by a factor of about 13 since the mid-1920s, which means that the

\$160,000 that Harry Fischel contributed to Yeshiva University was the equivalent of about \$2 million at the time of the publication of this edition, and the millions he owned in his prime would make him a multimillionaire quite a few times over in today's currency.

Additional minimal observations placing the Continuation in further context appear in the new Introduction to the current edition of the now supplemented biography beginning at page 14a.

AIR

Forty Years Sequel
CONTINUATION OF MY BIOGRAPHY
FORTY YEARS OF STRUGGLE FOR
A PRINCIPLE
1928–1941
PREFACE

At the completion of the story of my life, known as *Forty Years of Struggle for a Principle*, I prayed to the Almighty to grant me the privilege of continuing the labors in behalf of religious education, religion and philanthropy, so that I may, at a later date, be able to record additional efforts in behalf of the same religious and humanitarian principles. Well, the Almighty answered my prayers and has given me the privilege of accomplishing several achievements which are beneficial, not only to our religious education, but to myself as well.

I was privileged to distribute large sums of money for religious education, such as Yeshivoth, *Talmud Torahs* in America, Palestine and all over Europe, as well as to many other philanthropic institutions.

I have given two large contributions, one to the Yeshiva, Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary and the Yeshiva College, adding up to the sum of \$160,000, and the other to Beth Israel Hospital, in the sum of \$75,000, as well as many smaller contributions to other institutions.

While this money was well invested and has given me great pleasure, I have done nothing to perpetuate the name of Harry Fischel, which would end with the present generation, because I have no sons to carry the name further. While the Almighty has blessed me with four daughters, four sons-in-law and ten grandchildren, all of whom are following in my footsteps, the fact remains that the name of Harry Fischel would be forgotten. This fact was always on my mind, and I was awaiting the time when the Almighty would help me solve that problem.

CHAPTER 1

INVESTMENT FOR AN ENDOWMENT FUND

The thought that the name Harry Fischel, which was familiar practically the world over in philanthropy, charity and religious education for more than two generations must disappear with the present generation has caused me many sleepless nights.

Many propositions traveled through my mind. Finally, in 1927 when I was in Palestine, I decided to perpetuate my name by erecting an institution for higher learning bearing the name of Harry Fischel. In order to assure the existence of such an institution, it first required the creation of an endowment fund to provide enough income to maintain such an institution as far as one can foresee.

For two years I waited for the opportunity to create such an endowment fund. Finally, I succeeded in purchasing a parcel of land in a first-class location in New York. This land was leased to a responsible tenant, a corporation, for eighty-five (85) years at an annual rental of \$50,000.00 net. This corporation has invested over a million dollars in the erection of a twenty-six (26) story commercial building on this land.

It is impossible to describe the pleasure I enjoyed when I was assured with an annual income of \$50,000 for an endowment fund. This made my plan half accomplished. But, with such a large income, I decided to elaborate on the plan of establishing such an institution. I had several plans in my mind. I consulted many scholars, such as Dr. Nathan Isaacs of Harvard University, the late Dr. Bernard Revel of the Yeshiva and Yeshiva College, also my own son-in-law, Rabbi Herbert S. Goldstein, and many others.

We finally decided to establish an institution in New York for research in Talmud to give post-graduate courses in Talmud, and to grant degrees of Master and Ph.D. on same.

I was advised that the first step to accomplish such a plan is to obtain a charter from the State of New York to grant such degrees.

CHAPTER 2

MEETING GOVERNOR FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT

I was privileged to have had the acquaintance of Franklin D. Roosevelt, then the Governor of the State of New York. I took advantage of this acquaintance and succeeded in having a one-hour conference with the Governor on September 15, 1929.

I laid my entire plan before the Governor, who was very much interested. He was so impressed that he gave me a letter of introduction to Commissioner Graves and letters to every member of the Board of Regents. He even called the Commissioner on the phone and asked him to do all in his power to help me obtain this charter. Before I left, the Governor suggested that should the Board of Regents find that such charter is impossible, in accordance with the present laws, then I should come to him next February and he would send a special message to the legislature to grant such a charter.

Having the financial problem assured and also the promised assurance from the Governor of the State for the granting of a charter, the next step was to build a building and provide the necessary material for such a school.

CHAPTER 3

REFERENCE TO *FORTY YEARS OF STRUGGLE* FOR A PRINCIPLE

I must refer to the first story of my life. This story ended with May 1, 1927, when I laid the cornerstone for the Yeshiva, Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary, and Yeshiva College, and left for Palestine.

As I was away from any thought of business, my entire mind was occupied with the thought of what to do in order to perpetuate

the name of Harry Fischel. During the entire three months I spent in Jerusalem, I had many conferences with the late Chief Rabbi Abraham I. Kook on this subject. We then came to the conclusion that the best way of perpetuating my name is by establishing an institution which shall carry the name of Harry Fischel, and arrange an endowment fund to maintain such an institution [on three continents; see p. 411 and Ophir, in references, p. 485].

From the time I left Palestine, my only thought was how to carry out the idea of establishing such an institution.

The first step was to erect a building to house such a college. As it happened, some time ago I purchased a corner plot on Amsterdam Avenue and 185th Street, one block from the Yeshiva College. I made plans for a large building containing several lecture rooms, a large assembly hall and specially spacious library rooms required for such a college of research work.

CHAPTER 4

PURPOSE FOR WHICH THIS GROUND WAS BOUGHT

I believe it is of interest to note at this point the purpose for which this lot was purchased. When the new building of the Yeshiva, Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary, was opened, there were a large number of students, among them a number not suited either to be a rabbi, a teacher, or members of another other intellectual profession.

Then an idea came to me to establish a trade school in connection with the Yeshiva, so that those students desiring to learn a trade in connection with the Talmudical instruction could do so.

My plan included the erection of a six-story apartment house on the plot and to rent the apartments to the Yeshiva teachers at a low rental and use the income to maintain the trade school, to have the basement and first floor for the trade school, and five floors for apartments.

My plan was all completed, the money to erect the building without any mortgage was all provided for, but the Board of Directors of the Yeshiva felt that such a school would cheapen the Yeshiva, and refused my offer. Accordingly, my plan was dropped and the plot remained.

The next step was to provide the material required for such research work. To get the material here was impractical. I then came to the conclusion that such material could best be obtained in Palestine, Poland and Lithuania, where the talmudical colleges were then located, and where the talmudical students are spending all of their time at talmudical study, and are familiar with the Talmud in all its branches.

For this purpose I authorized the late Chief Rabbi of Palestine, Abraham I. Kook (1865–1935) to select thirteen of the best talmudical scholars from all of Palestine, who would receive a good salary, and who were to give their entire time in the research of the Talmud. I transmitted the same order to the late Chief Rabbi of Poland, Chaim Ozer Grodzinski (1863–1940), and to the Chief Rabbi of Lithuania, Rabbi Baruch Shapiro. Each one was to select thirteen of the best scholars that could be found in their country.

My plan was that all of the three schools would be guided by a system established by the Chief Rabbi of Palestine, and would be followed by all the three schools.

The material obtained by these schools would be forwarded to the headquarters in New York regularly.

The plan was that when the building in New York was to be finished, this school would be opened free of any charge to students, and also to provide some scholarships to those who would be in need of maintenance.

All of the plans were ready and we were only waiting for the charter to be granted by the State Board of Education. However, this plan was not approved by the Almighty, for reasons best known

to Him, and the panic of October 29, 1929 destroyed my elaborate plans. In one year the entire fortune invested in the property for the endowment fund had been lost.

My disappointment was indescribable when my life's ambition to establish an institution bearing my name entirely collapsed. However, I was thankful to the Almighty for losing this money before this gigantic plan was fully carried out, which saved me from the embarrassment of being compelled to stop the work after it was organized, and the large expense incurred.

However, my ambition to establish a school for research in Talmud was not shattered. [Fischel was indeed destined to establish graduate-level schools in Jewish Studies in Jerusalem (p. 410 sqq.) as well as in New York (pp. 408, 478–483)]. I decided to establish such a school in the city of Jerusalem, where only the best Talmudical scholars were found and the environment was more favorable.

At this time I decided to first provide a building to house this school. It seems that this plan had the approval of the Almighty because it met with great success right from the start.

CHAPTER 5

PURCHASE OF BUILDING IN JERUSALEM

We succeeded in purchasing a building in the city of Jerusalem suitable for a school, and after making extensive alterations we were ready to start to carry out my long-desired ambition to organize the school for research in Talmud.

During the time of the alteration, the late Chief Rabbi Abraham I. Kook gave out an order that only the outstanding scholars should apply, by submitting themselves to an extensive written and oral examination. This news spread throughout

Palestine like wildfire, with the result that 102 applicants applied for the written examination, and only 52 of them came back for the oral examination, which was before the Chief Rabbi and two other outstanding Rabbis. As a result, only 18 of the applicants passed the oral examination.

As stated before, my order was to select only 13 scholars, but the committee left the other five as alternates.

It is of interest that the purchasing of the house and the entire plan was accomplished by a committee in my absence, in accordance with orders given by me by mail and cables.

There was one thing on my mind, how to get the proper man to manage the institute in my absence, to look after the building and equipment, and also to act as Registrar when the Institution opened. This job required a man who was a great scholar and also to have had some practical experience to understand the physical part of a building, in addition to his scholarship.

As it happened, Rabbi Dove Kook, a brother of the Chief Rabbi, was in New York at that time. I sent for him and after a short conference I found in him all the qualifications required for this position. I engaged him and sent him to Palestine, and he was there before the school was opened. He took complete charge and thanks to the Almighty the right man was sent to me. He filled the position with great credit and with full respect from everybody. He occupied an apartment in the same building and managed the Institution to my entire satisfaction.

CHAPTER 6

OPENING OF THE HARRY FISCHEL INSTITUTE

It is impossible for me to describe my pleasure when on November 1, 1931 I received a cable that the building had opened, with 18 outstanding scholars, under the name of "Harry Fischel Institute

for Research in Talmud”; also with many other activities, as the building was much larger than required for the 18 scholars.

There is a very interesting story attached to this building. In the year 1913 a wealthy Jew, Said Baruchow from Bucharia, part of Russia, came to Palestine. He decided to settle in Palestine and receive the Messiah, when the time will come for him to arrive. For this purpose, he bought a very large plot occupying a square block, with four streets around same. In a very high part of Jerusalem, he constructed an unusually fine building, suitable for this great prophet, the Messiah. He arranged unusually large rooms and very high ceilings. Any material he could not obtain in Palestine he had imported from the different parts of the world. However, his ambition was not fulfilled. Before the building was completed the great European war started. The Bolsheviks took away all his wealth and in order to complete the building, this man was compelled to borrow money from a bank in Jerusalem.

After 17 years of adding interest, which was not paid, the bank foreclosed the mortgage and this property was purchased for the Harry Fischel Institute for Research in Talmud, by the attorney, Dr. Eliash, at my request. So much for the story of the building.

CHAPTER 7

OBJECT OF THE HARRY FISCHEL INSTITUTE

I will now return to the Institute itself. The main object was to extract from the Talmud and other such publications, the science contained therein and to publish same for the benefit of the world.

A Board of Education was organized under the leadership of the late Chief Rabbi Kook, together with other Rabbis. Rabbi Kook was known the world over as a great scholar. He knew the Talmud, and many other great works, almost by heart. He, therefore, assigned the 13 scholars and the 5 alternates to the part in the

Talmud to which each one was fitted best.

Fortunately, I succeeded to have Rabbi Kook accept the position as the Dean of the Harry Fischel Institute for Research in Talmud. As such he delivered a lecture to the scholars every week. These lectures were attended by many outside scholars as well.

This building was much larger than required for the school of research; therefore, in planning the building, I fitted up a synagogue accommodating about 150 worshippers. In a short time the synagogue was full, not only on Saturdays but mornings and evenings as well.

CHAPTER 8

ESTABLISHING OF THE LIBRARY

I was informed that the Institute would need a large library. I, therefore, took advantage of the presence of Rabbi Dove Kook before he left for Palestine, in collecting all sorts of rare books which could be gotten in New York, and sent them to Palestine. Many books were ordered from Warsaw and Vienna, and the most were purchased in Jerusalem. Thus we fitted up one of the best libraries.

This library became very popular, and it was used to advantage by many students of the different *Yeshivoth*, also many *bal-habatim*, who enjoyed the building with its spacious accommodations, heated with steam in the winter (the only Yeshiva with central heating in Jerusalem).

The Synagogue became crowded by worshippers and especially by those who have taken advantage of the large supply of rare books in the library. A librarian was engaged to give out the books and to place them back in their proper places.

Today the entire building is being used practically twenty hours daily. It also became the place of study and worship by the many

scholarly refugees who have settled in the neighborhood.

As stated before, the purchase of the property, the planning of the building and the entire organization were done by me in New York, because the financial depression in 1929 kept me home to look after our real estate and to save all we could from the destruction by the depression. However, I was eagerly hoping that the time would come soon when I would be able to leave my property in good hands and go to Palestine to enjoy the fruit of my labor in person.

Before realizing this hope there was a very important matter to be accomplished, namely: to bring the news of the whole project to my family, who did not know anything of the entire proposition. The only advisor I had was my personal friend, the late Rabbi M. S. Margolies.

CHAPTER 9

REPORT TO THE FAMILY

On one Saturday afternoon I called the family together and read this report to them:

“Report delivered by Mr. Harry Fischel to his family on July 18, 1931:

“The clock is moving steadily . The time is flying. Many years have passed and my desire, the dream of my life, and the hope of perpetuating the name of Harry Fischel has not as yet been realized. I have solved many difficult problems which required hard work and a great deal of thought and energy; nevertheless, my own problem and desire of creating an institution to bear the name of Harry Fischel has not as yet been solved.

“This thought has never escaped my mind, neither day nor night. I have been lying awake nights thinking, and also praying to the Almighty to give me vision and understanding as to how my wishes could be fulfilled and my dream of years realized; namely,

to create an institution which shall serve the purpose of spreading Torah, for which I have spent the best part of my life; an institution which shall be recognized as a necessity in Jewish life.

“Well, dear family, I have fully decided not to postpone any longer, and start in a small way. If the real estate market would have lasted a couple of years longer, then my dream would have been realized by this time. However, since the Almighty saw fit to make this drastic change in the financial world, it is impossible to consider large plans at the present time, until the time will come when real estate returns to the position it occupied up to two years ago. One of the most prominent financiers has made the statement, ‘Never put off for tomorrow, that which you can do today, as you do not know what tomorrow will bring.’ The moral of this saying is especially worthy of my earnest thought and attention, considering my age and the desire for which I am praying daily; namely, that the Almighty shall grant me the privilege of carrying out my wishes during my lifetime and reap the benefit of my hard labor, and to enjoy this pleasure together with my entire family.

“On many occasions I have expressed to you my great desire to establish in America a college for research in Talmud, a college of this kind would require the right to grant the degree of Ph.D. Naturally, a state charter would be necessary for such purpose. I have succeeded in having a conference with his Excellency, Governor Franklin D. Roosevelt. I have explained to him that our Talmud contains a great deal of science in every field of knowledge, such as medicine, law, astronomy, psychology, and various other sciences; yet our Jewish people have never taken advantage of these sciences, with the result that up to this date the world has been deprived of the great benefit which the Talmud could bestow to the educational world. I explained to the Governor that during all our Jewish history and up to the present date, the Talmud has always been used by our people for religious purposes only, and

the time has come, and I am thankful to the Almighty for having the opportunity to show the world of what benefit the Talmud could be, not alone to the Jewish people, but also to the world at large. The Governor was very much interested in this subject, and gave me a great deal of his time in discussing the proposition. He went so far as to address letters to every one of the Trustees of the Board of Regents of the State of New York, and has furnished me with copies of these letters. He has given me letters of introduction to each one of the Trustees, should I decide to call on them. In fact, he has instructed Dr. Horner, the Secretary of the State Board of Regents to call on me, which he did on two occasions, spending several hours in order to help me prepare the application for a charter. The Governor also stated that should I be unable, for any legal reasons, to obtain this charter, he would assist me by having a special bill passed by the Legislature for the purpose of granting me a charter for the college I had in mind; namely, a College for Research in Talmud.

“My plans were all complete. We have organized the Harry Fischel Foundation, and we have obtained a charter from the State. However, men make plans and the Almighty has the power to upset them; which is His wisdom. He saw fit to do so in my case. The investment that I made for this special purpose, which had shown a safe income of over \$50,000 annually, has temporarily been discontinued, and from the present outlook, it will take many years until I will be able to depend upon the income from this investment. Therefore, since no one can tell what tomorrow will bring, and in order to prevent Satan from gaining his point; namely, to prevent me from carrying out my dream of years, I have decided at least to make a small beginning.

“It has always been my desire to create a permanent fund for the purpose of establishing and maintaining an institution of higher Talmudical learning in New York, with a branch in Palestine. In

fact, provision for such project has been made in my will. Naturally, it was always my intention that the main expense should be allowed for the institution in New York, and a small portion should be set aside for the branch in Palestine. Since this large plan is impossible to be carried out at present, I have decided to begin from the other end; namely, to start in Palestine first.

“I will rather center all my efforts, and bestow my contributions for the benefit of the Torah, in one school of learning, under the name of the Harry Fischel Institute for Research in Talmud, with the hope of enlarging this school as time will progress and financial conditions will permit.

“For this purpose, I have succeeded in purchasing a house, with which I am very well acquainted, in a very nice section of Jerusalem, for a little over \$10,000, which is probably less than 25% of the actual cost of the building only; besides, it has a large plot of ground covering an entire square block surrounded by four streets. This house is in first-class condition, and is just as if it were made-to-order for this purpose, since it has been occupied by an institution of learning for many years.

“I have authorized Chief Rabbi Abraham I. Kook, with the assistance of my brother-in-law, Rabbi Rubin Braz, to select from the entire land of Palestine, thirteen of the best known Talmudical scholars, who will spend all their time and effort in the Research of Talmud. They will be supported by the Harry Fischel Foundation with a monthly allowance of \$25.00 each. The entire budget including the cost of maintaining the house will amount to about \$10,000 annually. I am fully convinced that this is a step in the right direction, for which I am thankful to the Almighty.

“The first part of my life’s desire to create an institution for the purpose of perpetuating my name will shortly be carried out. Although at present it will be on a very small scale, it is my intention to transfer most of my larger charitable contributions to this

institution, with the hope that when the Almighty will see fit to improve the real estate conditions, it will enable me to enlarge the expenditures, so that this Institution will grow to a position where it will occupy a prominent place in the field of higher Jewish learning, which will be a pride to our entire family.

“I have given the best part of my life for the benefit of religious education. I have contributed large sums of money for this purpose, in America, Europe and Palestine. Nevertheless, I feel that all my activities up to the present date cannot be compared with the great benefit which we expect this institution to bring, especially through the purchase of this building, which has accommodations and space for a great deal more than required for the thirteen scholars at present.

“This institution will be known as the Harry Fischel Institute for Research in Talmud under the leadership of Chief Rabbi Abraham I. Kook, who is very enthusiastic about the Institute for Research in Talmud. He has promised to give his full and undivided attention to the organizing and supervision of this school for higher Talmudical learning. He will also deliver lectures on higher Talmudical learning on which his authority is recognized the world over. This will also draw to the Harry Fischel Institute a large number of Talmudical scholars, who will not require financial assistance.

“Our building will house the following activities:

1. A place of learning for these thirteen men who will be supported by the Harry Fischel Foundation.
2. A Synagogue with a capacity of nearly 150 seats, which will be used daily.
3. A lecture room for Talmudical scholars outside of those supported by the Harry Fischel Foundation. Many students from different Yeshivas, as well as many laymen, will come to listen to the lectures delivered by Rabbi Kook, as well as the daily lectures which will be given by the thirteen great Talmudical

scholars supported by the Harry Fischel Foundation.

“In addition thereto, there will be room for many of the Jewish activities, thereby making the Harry Fischel Institute Building the center of Jewish learning and communal activities, which will add no expense to the present budget. All we will give them is the use of the building.

“At this time, when my nerves are shattered daily from the great financial strain, the thought that the Almighty has helped me realize part of my life’s ambition of creating the Harry Fischel Institute for Research in Talmud, is a great stimulant to me, and helps me carry through and solve the daily problems. I am fully convinced that if not for this great pleasure I would be unable to survive this great strain.

“My reason for starting with thirteen at the present time is that the symbol of Jewish life is connected mostly with thirteen.

“I am looking forward to the time when the Almighty will see fit to improve financial conditions so that my original plan may be fulfilled, which will produce men of the highest Talmudical knowledge with scientific accomplishments, and will radiate the ‘light of the Torah’ throughout the world, kindled by the Harry Fischel Foundation.

“I am fully convinced that I was sent down to this world to perform a certain duty; that is, to help spread the Torah among the Jewish people. There are two facts in my life’s history which prove that my contention is right.

“First: I was born on the 17th day of Tamuz, the day when the Tablets of the Law were destroyed. I therefore, feel that it is my duty to try to restore the Torah among our Jewish people.

“Second: When a name was to be selected for me, my dear parents, Blessed be their Memory! must have had a vision from High, which made them name me Israel Aaron. According to our scriptures, we are told that it was the mission of Israel to keep the ‘Light of the Torah’ burning in the hearts of our people, and spread

the knowledge of the Torah throughout our future generations. We are also told in the Bible that at the time of the dedication of the Tabernacle, it was Aaron who was ordered by the Almighty to kindle the light of the Menorah, which represents the 'Light of the Torah'. Therefore, in order to carry out the mandate given to me under that name, and in order to keep the 'Light of the Torah' from being extinguished from the present and future generations, I have decided to establish the Harry Fischel Institute for Research in Talmud in Palestine, in order to comply with the saying in the Scriptures, that 'From Zion shall come forth the Torah, and the words of G-d from Jerusalem'.

"There is also a selfish reason for my desire to create a college of this kind, and that is, in order to perpetuate the name of Harry Fischel in the same field of activities in which I have spent the best part of my life. While the Almighty has blessed me with four daughters, four sons-in-law, and wonderful grandchildren, all of whom are following in my footsteps by the strict observance of the 'Shulchan Aruch'; nevertheless, the fact is that I have no son who can carry my name to the next generation. Naturally, the name of Harry Fischel must cease with the present generation. Therefore, in order to perpetuate this name, which has always supported and fought for the Torah, I have decided to establish an institution for the study of the Torah, which shall carry the name of the Harry Fischel Institute for Research in Talmud.

"I pray to the Almighty that He shall grant us long life and happiness, so that all of us will be able to see with our own eyes, and together we will reap the benefit from the Harry Fischel Institute for Research in Talmud.

"Well, the Almighty has answered my prayers. With the house purchased and the thirteen best scholars of Palestine selected, my dream is practically fulfilled. I have received an answer from Chief Rabbi Abraham I. Kook as well as from Rabbi Rubin Braz, both of

whom were very enthusiastic about the plan for Research in Talmud.

"Rabbi Kook, in his letter, stated that he is very happy to be in a position to carry out the dream of his life. It was always Rabbi Kook's desire to be able to find someone who would establish an institution for Research in Talmud. He has, therefore, agreed to organize and supervise this work, giving his name and all of the time necessary, without any remuneration.

"The next question was to find the proper man to act as supervisor of the Institution as well as of the building. It was suggested that Rabbi Dove Kook, a brother of Chief Rabbi Abraham I. Kook, who is now in New York, is the most suitable man for the position of Supervisor of this Institution. Rabbi Dove Kook, being in New York, I succeeded in engaging him as Supervisor. He is a man with a great reputation as a Talmudical scholar in Palestine and in America. He is also known to have business ability, and a straight mind. He is loved and admired by everyone who comes in contact with him, for his great knowledge and fine gentlemanly appearance.

"I was fortunate in having Rabbi Dove Kook accept the position as I feel that he is the proper man in the proper place. Having been in America twice on behalf of the Universal Yeshiva, he has met many people, and I believe that he has acquired enough business ability to enable him to manage the Harry Fischel Institute for Research in Talmud and also all the other activities in said building with great care and ability. He is leaving for Palestine this day. We prepared a complete set of rules and regulations for the guidance of the Harry Fischel Institute for Research in Talmud and all other activities.

"In addition thereto he is thoroughly familiar with all my views on this subject, and I am positive that he will guide the Institution so that it will be a credit to the Harry Fischel Foundation."

This report was a great surprise to everyone. They admitted that it is a great accomplishment and each one gave his approval, except

they felt that I should have consulted them before I started this enterprise. My answer was that it took me many years to decide on this plan and even if they would have had objections, I would have carried out the plan in any event; and that would have been going against the will of my family, which I wanted to prevent.

When this was accomplished, I began planning the second and most important matter, namely: to provide sufficient funds to assure the perpetuation of this school with a budget between \$10,000 and \$15,000 annually, which would be largely increased by publishing the work prepared by our scholars.

I then came to the following conclusion, that my real estate holdings have large equities and still produced enough income for myself and for those of my family depending on me. I have before given to my children large sums of money. I felt that I am entitled to do something for myself to perpetuate the name of HARRY FISCHEL.

CHAPTER 10

ORGANIZING THE HARRY FISCHEL FOUNDATION

I then organized the Harry Fischel Foundation [later renamed the Harry and Jane Fischel Foundation]. I have assigned to this foundation practically all the liquid assets I possessed at that time, and by making careful investments the budget required for the Harry Fischel Institute could be easily provided for.

This foundation was organized on January 4th, 1932, with the full consent of the entire family. Everyone was made a trustee and each one signed the application for the charter.

With the creation of the Harry Fischel Institute for Research in Talmud in Jerusalem already functioning, and the Harry Fischel Foundation established to provide for the maintenance, I was the happiest man, seeing the dream of my life already materialized.

My mind was set on making provisions to go to Palestine and see with my own eyes, and reap the benefits of my accomplishments. However, conditions in the real estate became worse, and my time was required to look after same. I was compelled to delay going to Palestine until June 6th, 1933, when my late wife and I left for Palestine. [For more on the Foundation, see p. 16a and the web site at fischelfoundation.org.]

CHAPTER 11

MY ARRIVAL IN PALESTINE: FIFTH TIME

We arrived in Jerusalem on June 22, 1933. Words fail me to express my pleasure when we reached the house in Jerusalem and were welcomed by Rabbi Kook, accompanied by the 18 scholars, who were all lined up in the front of the building. The door was opened by Rabbi Kook, who led us into the Synagogue, and we were followed by all the scholars. There a prayer was offered for our safe arrival.

We then examined all the rooms and noted all the activities carried on, in the building. While I had pictured all of this in my mind, my surprise was with great pleasure, because I found everything better than I had expected, and for several days I enjoyed watching and getting acquainted with all the scholars, whom I considered as my own children, and have succeeded in getting them to feel the same way.

Then arrangements were made to celebrate my 68th birthday, which was on July 11th. This celebration took place on the outside piazza which was attended by 72 Rabbis and about 200 celebrities from different institutions. This celebration started at 2:00 P.M. and lasted until 11:00 P.M. Every one of the Rabbis made a speech, and in commemoration of this birthday, I accepted the five alternates as regular members of the scholars with the same salary as the others, and also gave an order to engage two more on the same

basis, making altogether 20 regular scholars.

I had spent, at that time, seven weeks in the Institution which I consider the best time in my life.

CHAPTER 12

STARTED SUIT FOR POSSESSION OF BAYARA

In addition to the pleasure of the Institution (described above), I have gained a legal and moral victory in the Palestinian court, and came back with \$30,000 in cash. The case was as follows:

In 1910 I brought to Palestine a brother of my late wife with a family of ten children. I then bought an orange grove partly producing fruit and partly vacant land. I supported the entire family for about ten years. During this time, the sons grew up. I sent them money during all this time for the purpose of planting the rest of the land. During all these years they enjoyed the benefit of the old grove as well as the new grove, which amounted to large sums some years. They never repaid one dollar to me, but they used the income to purchase other groves in their own names.

When I was in Palestine in 1927 there was a law declared in Palestine to allow owners of groves to register their holdings in the land registry, and receive a deed from the land courts, which was never entered before, as all land was purchased under a contract in Hebrew and handed over from one purchaser to the other. My contract was drawn up in the same way. Naturally, while being in Jerusalem at that time, I made an application to the court for a government deed to my name. It required publishing this application. To my great surprise, I found that the sons of my brother-in-law filed an injunction claiming that the property belonged to them by possession, in accordance with the old Turkish law. Naturally, the deed was stopped and I was compelled to bring suit.

I was compelled to prove that I was always in possession, be-

cause I have given the money to work the land. As I could not remain there to wait for the case to reach trial, I was compelled to leave it in the hands of an attorney and to try the case on taking evidence in New York, by the English consul. It took about six years for the case to reach trial and about two weeks before I came, in June 1933. Naturally, it was put off, and the shortest time for which my attorney could get an adjournment was for six months. Then, upon my arrival, my attorney made every effort to try to place the case on the calendar while I was in Palestine, but he did not succeed.

I then called on the American consul, explained my difficulties, and he gave me a letter of introduction to the English Judge, Sir Landay. I was very well received by him. The Judge explained that it was impossible to give preference in the court, but he offered to try the case on his own time after three o'clock, when the court adjourned. Naturally, I was very pleased, and in order to make sure I engaged a high-class attorney to try the case, because I found the other side had engaged the best-known attorney.

The case took six afternoons. The tables were full with law books, both sides quoting the law and the Judge taking every word down by hand, which is the custom in this court. I produced over \$11,000. in checks which was claimed as presents to the family. I finally produced a check for \$364.50 which I gave them to pay taxes for the land. This was also claimed to be given as a wedding present to one of the sons. I noticed that my attorney and the Judge were ready to pass this check also on the same basis. This was more than I could stand for. Then I requested the court to give me the privilege to question the attorney for the other side. The Judge granted me the privilege. Then I stated, "Mr. Horowitch, you are supposed to be a man of great reputation with worldly knowledge. I will ask you a question. Did you ever witness a case when the amount of \$364.50 is given as a wedding present? You are trying to make the

court believe that all the \$11,000 checks were all presents, but you can't fool the court all the time." Then the Judge answered that in his experience he never saw a check for such an amount given as a wedding present. This was the climax of the case.

Then the Judge addressed himself and stated that he believed every word of my testimony and decided the case in my favor. He also rebuked the attorney for the other side, for all the falsehoods he was trying to make the court believe. Thereupon, the two sons of my brother-in-law offered me the sum of six thousand (6,000) pounds. Although I was offered much more from another party, however, I wanted to have the land remain in my late wife's family. So I accepted their offer of six thousand (6,000) pounds, and left for America with an order for thirty thousand (\$30,000) dollars on the National City Bank, which I believe is the first large sum ever obtained by an American from Palestine.

As soon as we came back to America my mind was set on going back to Palestine at the first opportune time. However, conditions in real estate were getting worse, and it was impractical for me to leave my real estate holdings in strange hands. In one way I have benefited by the low real estate market because I bought a whole block of houses on the Grand Concourse, at a very low price as an investment for the Harry Fischel Foundation. This purchase was of great importance to me because the income from this property has shown to be of a substantial amount and the budget for the Harry Fischel Institute in Jerusalem was almost covered from the income of this property alone. The purchase of this property was also a great inducement to me in making plans to go to Palestine in the near future. However, the Almighty hastened my plans, as described in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 13

THE DEATH OF MY LATE WIFE

On January 3, 1935, about eighteen months after we came from Palestine, my late wife, to whom I was married over forty-seven years, passed away. I was left alone in the home. While all the children and grandchildren did their best to keep me company in order to make me forget my lonesomeness, being alone most of the time was more than I could stand.

I then sent for all the children, each one separately, and asked them to advise me what to do. Naturally each one, from the oldest to the youngest, suggested that I should give up the home and go to them. My answer was that each one of you have, thanks to the Almighty, a husband and children who need their time and attention. It is, therefore, impossible to divide their attention between their family and their father. They can't do both, and I have no right to interfere in their family life. It was too soon for me to make other plans because I had a very good housekeeper, an intelligent old woman, given to me by my daughter, Mrs. Goldstein. This woman was in her employ for several years, and was very reliable.

However, as time went on my lonesomeness increased, until one evening my granddaughter, Ann Esther Rafsky, the older daughter of Dr. & Mrs. Rafsky, only thirteen years old at that time, made the following statement: "Grandpa, I have been thinking that you must be very lonesome. It is true that we all come to see you for a short time, but you are alone twenty-four hours a day. I think you need a companion." The words of my little granddaughter started me thinking and after a great deal of consideration, I came to the conclusion to go to Palestine and maybe the Almighty will help me to get the right companion to spend the rest of my life.

I called the children together and informed them of my plan. I

also told them that under any event I will not remarry before the year is over.

CHAPTER 14

PERPETUATING THE NAME OF MY LATE WIFE

I also told the children of my decision to perpetuate the name of their mother in the following way:

I exposed to them a complete plan which I had prepared for the purpose:

1. I gave them a check for \$10,000 with which to establish the Jane Fischel Memorial Fund.
2. I purchased a Maternity Ward in the Hadassah Hospital in Jerusalem to be known as the Jane Fischel Maternity Ward.
3. I purchased a Maternity Ward in the Beth Israel Hospital also to be known as the Jane Fischel Maternity Ward.
4. I gave a sum of money to several colleges with an agreement that the income from such fund shall be used for the purpose of presenting prizes every year to a boy or girl who is to prepare an essay on Jewish Literature, and to be known as the Jane Fischel Memorial Prize.
5. The Harry Fischel Foundation passed a resolution to give to the Jane Fischel Memorial Fund every year on the "Yarzeit" of Jane Fischel, \$500.00. This sum to be used for the purpose of paying annual dues to all societies, and also to give annual prizes in the educational institution to which Jane Fischel belonged before she died.

The news was greatly appreciated by all the children. They stated clearly that they had never expected such generosity on my part.

CHAPTER 15

DEDICATION OF LABORATORY IN
BETH ISRAEL HOSPITAL

I engaged passage on the steamer *Conte di Savoia* on May 11, 1935. This news spread among the institution, with the result that the Board of Directors of the Beth Israel Hospital arranged a reception for me on April 28th, and on this occasion they dedicated the chemical laboratory in my name.

In the presence of nearly 250 guests representing several of the institutions with whom I am connected, they also unveiled a bronze tablet, reading as follows: "This chemical laboratory was established and equipped in the old building at Jefferson and Cherry Streets in 1912 by Mr. Harry Fischel. It is dedicated in this new building in honor of Mr. Fischel's 70th Birthday, July 1935. Mr. Fischel is connected with the hospital as a director and officer since 1889."

I was very happy to be going to Palestine that year because it was always my desire to celebrate my 70th birthday in Jerusalem in my own institution.

Before leaving for Palestine I decided to share my fortune with my children, in case I decided to remain in Palestine for the rest of my life.

CHAPTER 16

DIVIDING THE STOCK AMONG THE CHILDREN

I have, therefore, distributed 40% of all the stock I held in all the real estate corporations, to my four daughters, equally divided.

While on the steamer away from everybody, my mind was set on the Harry Fischel Institute for Research in Talmud, and I forgot all about my personal future.

One day an idea came to my mind to pray to the Almighty that I should find my companion in Palestine. I reminded myself of the story in the Bible when Eliezer went to look for a wife for Isaac. He had made up his mind that if he found a woman who would answer certain questions which he had prepared, that she would be the one who was destined by the Almighty to be a wife for Isaac.

I therefore, also decided on similar lines. If a woman should come to my Institute, who could answer the qualifications which I feel would be required for a woman who is to be my companion, then I would try to arrange to marry her when the year is over.

CHAPTER 17

ARRIVING IN PALESTINE: SIXTH TIME

With this thought in mind I arrived in Palestine on May 23, 1935.

When I reached the Harry Fischel Institution building I found all the scholars lined up in front of the house, and with a greater welcome than in 1933, except that this time I was all alone. My late wife was no longer with me.

I entered my apartment alone, which was quite different than when I came to the same place two years earlier. I missed my late wife in every move I made. It took me some time acclimating myself to this condition.

It was only when I entered the study rooms listening to the voices of the *Talmidei Chachomim*, chanting and discussing the Torah, I was so overjoyed that I forgot about the whole world. I thanked the Almighty for the great privilege he has given to create this holy Institution, and for the privilege to be in Palestine again.

However, my entire pleasure was marred by the fact that the leader of my Institution was missing. The great scholar who was guiding the work was not there. Rabbi Abraham I. Kook, the Rosh Hayesheva was sick for some time, and the Institution was greatly

disorganized. It took me several weeks to reorganize the work. I then came to the conclusion that we must find a man to continue the work left off by the great scholar Rabbi Kook. This was not so easy for two reasons; first, because we did not want to antagonize the sick sage by engaging someone without his knowledge and to consult him was not permitted by his doctors. Second, it was rather impossible to find the scholar who could replace this great *Talmid Chachom*. Many conferences were held by the family of Rabbi Kook and other rabbis, until we found the man who possessed all the necessary qualifications.

CHAPTER 18

THE ENGAGEMENT OF RABBI LIEBERMAN

This was Rabbi Saul Lieberman, and after several conferences with him, I succeeded to engage him as the Dean of the Harry Fischel Institute for Research in Talmud.

I well remember the first lecture he delivered. It made a great impression on all the scholars, and he was welcomed by everyone.

Rabbi Lieberman took full charge of the Institution and suggested to me that it is advisable to change the entire method of study and put it on a more scientific basis, in order to do real research work and publish the results, giving the benefit of the findings to the scholarly world. This was proven, for in less than two years the Harry Fischel Institute published a scholarly work of 600 pages. This book has been recognized the world over as a great useful work, and it was distributed to libraries, colleges and many individuals, free of charge.

While I was busy in the selection of the Dean and in reorganizing the work of the school, a committee was organized to arrange a celebration of my 70th birthday.

CHAPTER 19

CELEBRATION OF MY 70TH BIRTHDAY

On July 17th, 1935, this celebration was attended by over 300 people, most of the celebrities among professionals and laymen, were present. Speeches were made by Rabbis, leaders of the Institute and professors of the Hebrew University. Everyone praised the Harry Fischel Institute. I felt at that time that all the hardships I went through my whole life were worth the pleasure I derived at this time.

A book entitled the "Jubilee of 70" was published on this occasion by the scholars of the Institute, and was presented to each guest as a souvenir of this memorable occasion.

I almost decided to remain in Palestine and spend the rest of my life in watching the progress of my Institute. However, I reminded myself that the money required to maintain the Institute must come from New York, and on account of the depression in the real estate values, I would jeopardize the income of the real estate if I remained in Palestine. I therefore, decided to go back to America to look after the investments of the Harry Fischel Foundation and wait until the time would come when I could settle in Palestine, when the income required to maintain the Harry Fischel Institute for Research in Talmud would be safely provided for.

I will now return to my dream before arriving in Palestine, namely to find the proper companion who would fit into my life, to help me carry on the work in Palestine and in America. Thanks to the Almighty my dream came true.

CHAPTER 20

MEETING MY WIFE MIRIAM

On Sunday, June 23rd, 1935, while I was sitting in my study, I was informed that a Rabbi from England, together with his daughter,

wished to see me in the reception room. I immediately came out and saw standing before me a man of a type like the prophets of old, and addressed himself to me with the following words: "Mr. Fischel, I am Rabbi Aaron Hyman. I heard all about your work in education and philanthropy. I heard also that you are looking for a companion. I brought you my daughter Miriam, the only woman who is suitable to help you in your life's work. Take her in your study, talk to her, and if you find that she will make you the right companion, then I will give you ten years of my life."

I then said to him: "Rabbi if she is the one sent to me by the Almighty, I want you to live a long life and to enjoy the pleasures from this union."

I took her into my study and conferred with her for one hour, and before she left I came to the conclusion that her father was right. She possessed all the qualities required to be my companion, to help me to continue my work. And in order to get better acquainted, I suggested to her that she might help me in my work at the Institute.

After I paid a visit at her home in Tel Aviv, she came to my study every day at 3:00 o'clock, and spent the rest of the day with me. I took her home to her brother in Jerusalem each evening. This lasted for three weeks. Each day I was more convinced that she was the proper woman to make my life happy, because she showed keen interest in my work.

When the day of the celebration of my 70th birthday came, I requested her to supervise the affair, which was done with great skill, never before witnessed in Jerusalem. It is a custom in Palestine that men and women are in separate rooms. In this case the men were seated on the large veranda. The women were all in the rooms adjoining with a clear view through the large window.

As soon as the last speech was finished, I left the men and entered the ladies room, and in the presence of every man and

woman, I came over to my intended bride and kissed her in the presence of the guests. So our engagement was announced.

CHAPTER 21

ACCEPTED MIRIAM ON MY 70TH BIRTHDAY

I have accepted her as my future bride. We continued our friendship until July the 26th, when I left Palestine. Before I left we made arrangements that I would send for her at the end of January 1936.

I will never forget the scene when I called on the late Rabbi Kook at the hospital to bid him good-bye. While he was then already in a serious condition, he stated to me that he heard the news that I expected to marry Miriam Hyman, the daughter of Rabbi Hyman, a personal friend of his. He expressed his desire to see her and give us his blessing. The doctor at first refused to permit such an excitement, but this was his desire and I brought my bride to him. He had met her in her father's home in London. He took my hand and asked me to hold her hand and gave us the priestly blessing. This was the last time I was privileged to see this great sage of Israel, who was responsible for the organization of the Harry Fischel Institute for Research in Talmud.

When I arrived home I found that the children had received a cable from Palestine that their father had been married to an English woman. It took me some time to convince the children that I did not break my promise to wait until the year was over. I assured them that I had not married. However, I informed the children that before leaving Palestine arrangements were made for Miriam to join me in America at the end of January.

Miriam arrived in New York on January 28th, 1936, and we were happily married in Atlantic City at the home of the Rabbi on February 6th. Thanks to the Almighty we are as happy today as we were the day we were married.

Soon after our marriage we began to make plans to go to Palestine as soon as possible. As time marched on, the Harry Fischel Institute had increased its activities, and accordingly the expense of the Institute had also been increased. The problem was to provide more income. The Government bonds which are the safest investment produced between 2 and 3%. We, therefore, decided to take some chances and invest some money in good real estate. We succeeded in purchasing the property at 1100 Grand Concourse, Bronx, New York, an unusually fine property. This added a substantial income to the Harry Fischel Foundation. The purchase of this property has helped greatly to the preparation of our plan to go to Palestine, with the result that on February 27th, 1937 we left for Palestine.

During my six former visits to Palestine, each time the anticipation of visiting Palestine again was considered by me a great event. This seventh time was of greater consequence for the fact that I had additional interests, namely, the hope of seeing my father-in-law, the great and celebrated author, Rabbi Aaron Hyman. I was looking forward to the great pleasure of spending some time with him and giving him an opportunity to enjoy the happiness existing between my dear wife and myself. However, the Almighty saw fit to deprive me of this pleasure, because three weeks before we left for Palestine the sad news reached us that he had already passed away.

CHAPTER 22

ARRIVAL IN PALESTINE THE SEVENTH TIME

We arrived on March 11th in Lud, about ten miles from Jerusalem, where we met Rabbi Dove Kook, the Registrar of the Harry Fischel Institute, and Rabbi Saul Lieberman, the Dean of my Institute, who came to meet us. We arrived in our Institute and were taken into the Synagogue, where a prayer was offered by all the scholars, thanking the Almighty for our return to Palestine.

In the evening a reception was arranged by our scholars and the worshippers of our Synagogue. It lasted for several hours, and at the conclusion of the reception, a petition was presented to me by the gabai of my Synagogue requesting to enlarge the Synagogue, which could not accommodate the many refugee worshippers who had settled in this neighborhood. I lost no time in preparing plans, and in four weeks the alteration was completed, adding about 100 seats to the Synagogue, and the new decoration of the entire Synagogue.

CHAPTER 23

DEDICATION OF MY MAUSOLEUM ON MOUNT OF OLIVES

It has been the desire of every Jew, beginning with our father Abraham, to be buried in Palestine. The next mention in our Bible is that Jacob asked his son Joseph, the ruler of Egypt, that his remains shall be taken to Palestine. Then Joseph left a request with the Jewish people that when they would be redeemed from Egypt, that his remains shall be taken to Palestine. And as history tells us, since that time, it has been the desire of everyone, man or woman, to have the privilege to be buried in Palestine, especially on the Mount of Olives.

With this in mind I decided to take advantage of my stay in Jerusalem and build a mausoleum. For this purpose I purchased a large plot on the finest part of the Mount of Olives. I paid for same about the same price as our Father Abraham paid for the entire Me'oras Hamachpayla. I then prepared plans for the structure. I gave out contracts and have watched the construction with the same interest as I had in my large structures in New York, and probably more, considering that this is my future home. This building adds credit to the Mount of Olives.

When the building was finished, a dedication was held on June 8, 1937, attended by a large crowd, presided over by the Chief

Rabbi [Herzog]. The program consisted of first burying *shamos*, meaning the out-used (worn-out) religious books, which according to law must not be destroyed. Then speeches by the Chief Rabbi and many other Rabbis, prayers and psalms by a Cantor and a choir. Also music. Then Mincha was recited and the program was closed with buffet refreshments and drinks of all kinds. I was the recipient of a blessing from the Chief Rabbi that I shall have the privilege to visit this holy place for twenty-five years and always go back. To this everyone chanted, Amen, in such a voice, that I am confident that it reached Heaven. I am also sure that the blessing was accepted and so ordered.

There are many people who order in their will to be buried in Palestine. Some of these wishes are never carried out because of different reasons. Some are buried in their home temporarily and then transferred to Palestine. It is my wish, and I pray to the Almighty, that when my time comes to pass over to the better world, I shall then be in Palestine to be taken directly to the ohel which I have erected during the best time of my life.

This celebration was a sight which was never seen before. Automobiles were furnished by me for the entire crowd of more than 100.

CHAPTER 24

DECISION TO PUBLISH THE MISHNA

As I stated before, during the time from 1935, when I left Palestine, until our arrival in February 1937, the Harry Fischel Institute, under Rabbi Lieberman, had published a scholarly work. With this work completed, the question then came up, what will be the next work for the Harry Fischel Institute. For this purpose, my wife and I called on Dr. Joseph Klausner, one of the best-known scholars the world over. I called on him with my wife, because she has a great

knowledge of literature; besides, she is the daughter of Rabbi Aaron Hyman, who is the author of several scholarly and useful books.

I told Dr. Klausner that the Harry Fischel Foundation, with its investments in New York, is maintaining the Harry Fischel Institute for Research work in Jerusalem, and is ready to finance a work of vital importance which should be used, not only by scholars, but should also be appreciated by a man with less knowledge. Whereupon Dr. Klausner suggested that he wanted a few days to think it over. He would also like to talk it over with Rabbi Lieberman, the Dean of the Institute. I lost no time, and on Sunday, July fourth, a conference was held and different works were suggested by both Dr. Klausner and Rabbi Lieberman.

Finally, Dr. Klausner suggested that the Institute should prepare and publish a new version of the six tracts of the Mishna. He stated that since print came into existence about 500 years ago, fourteen different versions have been printed in different places and in different generations. Many important subjects have been omitted on account of censorship, and many other matters have been added. Besides, there are many manuscripts hidden in the important libraries, such as the Vatican and in Oxford, which have never been printed. Dr. Klausner also suggested that all of these fourteen sets should be obtained, also copies of the unprinted manuscripts, and collaborate in one. This idea, while a very costly project, appealed to me, and without any hesitation, I consented.

The next question was, will Rabbi Lieberman undertake to carry out this gigantic work? With this idea in my mind, my wife and I were very happy. However, the next morning Rabbi Lieberman did not come to the Institute as usual and was absent for three consecutive days. He could not be reached at home or anywhere else. Naturally we were very much worried, fearing that something had happened to him, G-d forbid, or he might have left the Institution for fear of this great undertaking. Finally, three days later, early

in the morning, Rabbi Lieberman entered our apartment, full of joy and contentment, and made the following statement, "Mr. and Mrs. Fischel, the suggestion of creating a new version of the Mishna is a colossal work and will cost an enormous amount of money. Before I was to undertake this work, I wanted to decide for myself whether I can undertake it. I have, therefore, closed myself in my library since I left you, and after I have given this matter due consideration, I am ready to undertake to prepare and publish a new version of the Mishna and also include a new commentary by our own scholars. Therefore, as far as we are concerned we are ready. Now are you ready to give us a free hand to buy all the necessary books, buy some manuscripts and obtain photostatic copies of hundreds of manuscripts in different libraries?" My wife and I were so pleased with the enthusiasm of Rabbi Lieberman, that we told him, "Rabbi, you have my full consent, and with the help of the Almighty, go on."

CHAPTER 25

APPROVAL BY RABBIS TO PUBLISH THE MISHNA

At the suggestion of Rabbi Lieberman, I called a conference of the most outstanding Rabbis, with the Chief Rabbi Dr. Herzog at the head. I declared to them that on behalf of the Harry Fischel Foundation, we agree to finance the publication of a new text of the six tracts of the Mishna, which is to be a popular edition containing the text and commentary by our own scholars. The text and the commentary is to be translated into English in order to give an opportunity to *bal habatim* in the English-speaking countries to study the Mishna.

At first the Rabonim suggested that the English translation should be published in the back of the volume. I proved to them that this would not answer the purpose, because in this way the

Hebrew would be entirely forgotten. I suggested that the translation shall be on the same page, right under the Hebrew text and after spending a whole evening, it was finally decided that we first publish this popular edition, consisting of the revised text of the Rav and a commentary by our own scholars. The text and commentary shall be translated into English; also a scholarly edition with many commentaries, including the translation of the Rambam from Arabic to Hebrew.

It was suggested that many thousands of the popular edition shall be printed. In fact there was a bid made by one of the Rabbis for the agency of this popular edition, to be sold in every English-speaking country. It was also decided that a scholarly edition should be published next and distributed to Yeshivas, libraries and outstanding Rabbis.

This meeting was attended by the Chief Rabbi Dr. Herzog, Rabbi Meltzer, Rabbi Charlop, Rabbi Hillman, Rabbi Berlin, Rabbi Dove Kook, Rabbi Lieberman, and myself. A resolution was drawn up and signed by everyone. This meeting has given me great spiritual pleasure, appreciating that the Almighty has granted me the great privilege of undertaking this most useful Jewish literature, the Holy Mishna. To this I was very much encouraged by the great leaders of our Jewish people, the most representative Rabbis of Palestine, with the Chief Rabbi Dr. Herzog at the head, and after receiving their blessings, I prayed to the Almighty to have the privilege to complete the entire six tracts of the Mishna during my life and residing in Palestine. To this they all said "Amen".

I am now looking forward to the time when the Almighty will bless the world with genuine peace, and that my wife and I shall have the privilege of going to Palestine and spending the rest of our lives in Jerusalem, watching and hoping to see the entire Mishna completed by the Harry Fischel Institute and published by the Harry Fischel Foundation.

CHAPTER 26

CHANGING OF SCHOLARS

I stated before that when the Institute was opened in November, 1931, we had engaged thirteen men for a term of five years. When I arrived in 1933 I engaged seven more. Some of them had left because they had obtained Rabbinical positions. Some have become *Rosh Hayeshivot*, and others obtained different positions, leaving only fifteen in 1937, but only ten were fit for the Mishna work. Then the problem arose as to how to dispose of the five others who were unfit for the Mishna work. There is a custom in Palestine that it is easy to engage men, but it is very hard to discharge them, especially married men with families.

I called the Rabbis together and organized an advisory board for the future to take care of matters which cannot be solved by Rabbi Dove Kook and Rabbi Lieberman alone. At the meeting the question of disposing of the five men was settled. Some of them received a year's notice with pay, and some received six months salary and this problem was solved.

Rabbi Lieberman declared that we need more men to work on the Mishna. He suggested that we engage young, unmarried men, who had no home responsibilities, who could devote all of their time to this work. I then authorized them to engage ten young men, from the ages of 19 to 25. This was no problem. In two days time fifty young men had applied for the examination. Ten were selected by Rabbi Dove Kook and Rabbi Lieberman.

When I left Palestine in August 1937, Rabbi Lieberman informed me that most of these young men were great scholars and fit for Mishna work and might be better than some of the older men. In fact the translations of the Rambam from Arabic to Hebrew were done by one of the young men. I was also informed by Rabbi Lieberman that the English translation is being

accomplished by a son of Dr. Herzog, who is a great scholar, both in English and in Hebrew.

CHAPTER 27

MY SEVENTY-SECOND BIRTHDAY

During the time I was engaged in the organization of the different requirements to start the work on the Mishna, a committee was organized to celebrate my seventy-second birthday. The plan was even more elaborate than the plan to celebrate my seventieth birthday. When the plans were brought to me, I told the committee that it was unnecessary to celebrate my birthday every year. Five years apart was sufficient. I also told them that it is my hope to celebrate my seventy-fifth birthday in my own institution. The plans for an elaborate celebration were abandoned, and my seventy-second birthday was celebrated by our own scholars and a few Rabbis representing the Institution and some of the worshippers in our Synagogue.

We left Palestine July 28th, 1937 with great satisfaction because during the five months we were in Jerusalem we solved many important problems. We made all arrangements to fill a long-felt need by Jewish scholars to publish a new revised edition of the six tracts of the Mishna, a work never tried before. The Almighty blessed me with the privilege to undertake this holy work.

We arrived in New York August 24th with the hope and prayer to the Almighty that our real estate shall improve in order that we shall soon be able to go back to Palestine and watch the progress of the Mishna work. While conditions did not improve, however, eight months later, in April 1938, we reserved passage on the *Queen Victoria* to go again to Palestine, but we were compelled to cancel our passage on account of the preparations for war. During the two years since we left Palestine, the first tract of the Mishna, known as *Zeraim*,

was completed, ready for print. However, printing was impossible on account of Italians trying to get near to Palestine. Everything in the printing line was disorganized. We were, therefore, compelled to abandon the printing until conditions improve in Palestine.

As it happened that our Dean Rabbi Lieberman received a call from the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York to come there as a visiting professor for one year. Rabbi Lieberman came here in October. We called a conference of the trustees of the Harry Fischel Foundation and decided that if conditions do not improve in Palestine, we may be compelled to print the first volume in New York. For this purpose we cabled to Palestine that copies of all the work should be made at once and sent to New York, to be printed, if necessary, under the direction of Rabbi Lieberman and Dr. Arthur Hyman, a brother of my wife, who is an expert in this work. We are now awaiting the first part of the work to be printed in New York, unless the Almighty will decide to bring peace soon, as we would rather print in Jerusalem, which is more preferable, since Rabbi Lieberman declared that he is waiting patiently to go back to Palestine and take charge of the work again.

A short time later, on January 27th, 1941, the Chief Rabbi of Palestine, Dr. Herzog, arrived in New York. Dr. Herzog is the President of the Harry Fischel Institute in Jerusalem and, as such, is thoroughly familiar with the progress of the Mishna work and also with conditions in Palestine. Naturally, I took advantage of the opportunity and had arranged a conference at my home between Dr. Herzog and Rabbi Lieberman, who is the Dean of the Harry Fischel Institute in Jerusalem, and after a great deal of discussion, we decided that as soon as Dr. Herzog will return to Palestine, and I hope very shortly, we will start printing the popular edition of the *Seder Zeraim* in Palestine.

The Chief Rabbi assured me that he will give his full cooperation to this work, as his son is the one who is translating the Mishna into English.

Rabbi Lieberman also reported that before he left Palestine, paper sufficient for this edition was purchased and is stored in our own building in Jerusalem.

CHAPTER 28

TEN YEARS OF ACCOMPLISHMENT

The ten years just past from 1930 to 1940 were the best in my life; while not financially, but spiritually, beneficially, and in self-preservation. Spiritually, because we succeeded in giving an opportunity to our scholars to increase their knowledge in the Talmudic studies; beneficially to twenty families who were provided with a living; self-preservation, because of the opportunity to perpetuate the name of Harry Fischel.

In the ten years the Almighty has given me the privilege to first establish the Harry Fischel Institute for Research in Talmud; second to establish the Harry Fischel Foundation, which made it possible to maintain this Institution; and third the perpetuation of the name Harry Fischel. Besides this, the Almighty has sent me my dear wife Miriam, at the time of my life when I needed a companion most, who has been of great assistance in my work from the first week I met her, through her ability, her cooperation, her influence and her inspiration. In spite of my adverse financial position, she urged me to continue this work as a labor of love to both of us.

The Almighty saw fit to prevent my celebrating my seventy-fifth birthday in Palestine. However, it is our intention to go to Palestine as soon as peace is declared, with the hope to remain there for the rest of our lives, in order to carry out the promise I made in 1923 at the dedication of the residence I built for the Chief Rabbi Abraham I. Kook and presented to the High Commissioner Herbert Samuel. On this occasion several Rabbis requested me to settle in Palestine. My answer was that now I can do more for Palestine by residing in

America at this time, but I expect to settle in Palestine when the Almighty will help me to reach the age of 80. I also promised that if the Messiah will come before, as we believe he will, and no doubt he must come to Palestine first, then the Chief Rabbi is to send me a cable and I will dispose of my real estate in New York and come to Palestine to help build the Temple, which is in my line of work. This was agreed by the Chief Rabbi, also by all those who were there. Everybody answered "Amen"!

Therefore, now at the age of seventy-five, as the time of my eightieth birthday is not far off, my wife and I are ready to make good my promise.

CHAPTER 29

MY WORK IN AMERICA

In my life's history, under the name of *Forty Years of Struggle for a Principle*, which was completed in 1927, the last chapter deals with laying the cornerstone for the Yeshiva Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary and leaving for Palestine. In this story, the continuation of my biography, I have recorded the additional work I have accomplished, thanks to the Almighty, during the ten years in Palestine, by creating and maintaining the Harry Fischel Institute for Research in Talmud.

I now take the privilege to record the work I have done at home in New York during the same time, especially for the Yeshiva and the Yeshiva College. For this purpose I must go back three years earlier from the time my late wife and I came back from Palestine in September 1927.

Upon our arrival I found that the construction of the Yeshiva building was progressing slowly. Then, as Chairman of the building committee, I took charge of the work of the building. In addition to this work, I was also compelled to take charge of the management

of the entire Institution, because, to my great regret, I found that the President, Nathan Lamport, had passed away. I was then holding the position of First Vice President, so I was compelled to take the leadership. Having the additional responsibility, my time was occupied day and night, until the building was finished.

It took me some time to order and supervise the equipment of this large building, and for the dormitories. The next job was to prepare for a formal opening, which took place on December 9, 1928 in the presence of at least ten thousand (10,000) people. It would take a professional story writer to picture the opening of this, the finest Jewish institutional building in America, the pride of the American Jewish people.

I feel it my duty to record also in this narrative the financial problems which were also part of my duties to arrange for this great enterprise. The cost of the building and land including the equipment has reached the colossal sum of nearly two million five hundred thousand dollars (\$2,500,000). A committee to raise the money required was appointed with Samuel Levy, Chairman. The committee arranged a dinner, and at this dinner over a million dollars was subscribed, from sums of \$100 to \$100,000. Two sums of \$100,000 were subscribed, one by the late Nathan Lamport and one by myself.

Then, soon after the dinner a drive was made which resulted in getting subscriptions up to the amount of \$3,000,000. The subscriptions of the larger amounts were to be paid in annual payments from five to ten years, in a legal form which was binding and negotiable. The largest majority of those subscriptions were made by real estate men who were very prosperous up to 1929, then as soon as the panic of October 1929 arrived the payments on this subscription stopped, except by a small number of us who have continued payments.

I want to record at this point, that before the building was finished I obtained a mortgage from the Title Guarantee and Trust

Company for \$700,000, expecting to pay this mortgage from the monies to be collected from the subscription, but I was disappointed. We needed more money to pay the contractors, to pay for the equipment and other expenses, so I succeeded in borrowing \$100,000 from the Chatham Phoenix Bank on the endorsement of sixteen directors, each one for \$10,000. When this loan was due, only two of us, Samuel Levy and myself, paid the \$10,000 each. Some paid part, and the rest have either filed legal excuses or were not responsible on account of the Depression. We also succeeded in borrowing \$100,000 from the same bank on good pledges. We also owed Barth & Co. a balance of \$90,000 on equipment. All the claims amounted to \$232,000, and came into the possession of the Manufacturers Trust Co. We also borrowed from the Bank of the United States the sum of \$100,000. On pledges, part of this amount was paid, leaving \$68,000, for which they took judgments against the Yeshiva.

We also owed a balance of about \$400,000 to the contractor. In addition thereto, the general income of the Yeshiva has been reduced on account of the Depression.

Therefore, as acting president and as chairman of the Building Committee, these financial troubles were more than I could carry myself. I called a meeting of the Board and asked them to relieve me from this great strain. My health was affected, but no one was willing to accept this responsibility. Then the late Rabbi M. S. Margolies, a personal friend of mine, decided to undertake the responsibility in order to relieve me. He stated that he felt as a Rabbi it was his duty, and he would maybe succeed in getting the cooperation of the directors. To my great regret, Rabbi Margolies was entirely disappointed. Those of the directors who had any responsibility had left the Institution.

Conditions went from bad to worse and the Institution was to close on July 15, 1932, with no chance to open in September.

CHAPTER 30

DESIRE TO OPEN THE YESHIVA

The happenings of this summer have made an indelible impression on my mind. As I was spending my vacation at Atlantic City, the late Dr. Bernard Revel and Rabbi Levinthal of Philadelphia called on me and informed me of the condition of the Yeshiva. I well remember their words. "Mr. Fischel, you have invested in this enterprise more than any man. You cannot afford to let the Yeshiva remain closed. We have tried every method and every one whom we thought we could interest, but we made no progress. You have carried the ship through all storms. It is your duty to open the Yeshiva on time to save our Jewish name."

It was a very hot summer; however, I went to New York immediately. On the way I was trying to prepare plans of how to begin. I decided to try to interest one who has not suffered in the Depression. The lot fell on the late Meyer Vessel, who, several times before, had spent the summer in Long Branch. I called on him, and I still remember our conversation. "Mr. Vessel, the lot fell on us to save the Yeshiva. It is a privilege that very few men can get in a lifetime. We need \$100,000 to place the Yeshiva in a good position, but with \$50,000 I can manage to open the building on time and keep it open. You and I will loan \$25,000 each to the Institution." Mr. Vessel agreed and we both went to New York. We each deposited \$25,000 with Samuel Levy, under an agreement that this money can only be available if we succeed in obtaining either loans or gifts of an additional sum of \$50,000. With this understanding I went to the late Rabbi Margolies, the President, and we prepared a letter, reading as follows:

"Dear Sir:

It grieves me very much to inform you that the Yeshiva is closed

and I have done everything in my power to get people to come to our assistance, without any result.

Finally, a ray of sunshine has appeared. Mr. Harry Fischel and Mr. Meyer Vessel are willing to loan the Yeshiva \$25,000 each, providing we will raise \$50,000 additional.

If the Torah means anything to you, and if you have any respect for my old age, please come to our assistance in this time of distress, to save our Yeshiva, the only bulwark of our Jewish people in America.”

This letter was signed by the Rabbi personally and was sent to every one of the directors and also to a number of the former subscribers, with the result that we waited two weeks and not a single dollar came in. I will never forget the disappointment of this great sage, seeing that the light of the Torah has been extinguished and no hope to rekindle it again. It was the Rabbi’s expression of feeling that made me go on further.

In order to open the Yeshiva it required paying eight months interest on the mortgage, about \$30,000, and eleven months salaries to the teachers at the rate of \$5,000 per month.

I then went to the mortgagee and arranged to give them \$10,000, for which they agreed to give us an extension for six months to pay the balance. I also agreed with the teachers to give each one three months pay, leaving the balance of eight months due for them for later. I decided to loan the \$25,000 myself. However, I went to Mr. Vessel and offered him a partnership in this loan and to give him half of the *mitzvah*. Mr. Vessel accepted the offer. We both loaned \$12,500 each for which we took notes to be paid at the rate of \$1,000 per month; \$2,500 of these notes were paid to each of us. The balance of \$10,000 is still due to each of us. However, the Yeshiva was opened on time and the late Rabbi gave his blessing, and I had the great privilege to take off the stigma from our Jewish people in America.

Conditions commenced to improve from that time on, except that two years later in September 1934, the late Dr. Bernard Revel called on me with a sad story again, that he could not open the College in time because the professors had not been paid for several months. He needed \$3,000. He had tried every which way to get a loan for this money, but he did not succeed. I was the only one on whom depended the opening the College. I gave him a check for \$3,000 and the College was opened on time. It seems that this loan of mine was lucky, because since then conditions in the Institution have improved. Their income was sufficient to cover the expense. However, not a dollar could be saved for the reduction of the large obligations, with the result that judgments were taken against the Institution. The bank account was attached, a foreclosure notice was served by the mortgagee and the directors left the Institution one by one, fearing to be connected with a bankrupt institution.

As I stated before, my wife and I came home from Palestine in August 1937, with great satisfaction that the Harry Fischel Institute in Jerusalem had made great progress. While on the steamer, away from all thoughts of business, seeing G-d's creations around you, the mind is engrossed in nothing but the spiritual.

My wife and I decided that when we got home we would try to help our own Yeshiva, where I have put in years of hard labor. Besides, I had invested up to that time the large sum of \$156,000. It also came to my mind the pleasure I enjoyed at the laying of the cornerstone, then watching the building going up, and above all, the opening of the building. Later on I had the privilege of making it possible to open the Yeshiva and the College when it was closed.

All this came to my mind. It made one feel that this institution is a part of my life. We then came to the conclusion that when we got home I would make every effort to try to relieve the institution of its colossal obligation. I lost no time.

As soon as we came, I made an investigation and found that the most urgent debt was to the contractors, amounting to about

\$440,000, because they had started a foreclosure on a second mortgage they held on the Yeshiva property.

CHAPTER 31

CONTRACTORS' CLAIMS SETTLED

I well remember that several efforts were made before to settle this enormous amount of about \$400,000, conferences being held without results. The best the contractors were ready to accept was not less than \$100,000. However, on this occasion I was in a better position because the building was under a foreclosure by the first mortgagee, and after several conferences, I succeeded in buying the entire claims for \$29,000. I gave them my own check of \$5,000 as a deposit. Then, with the assistance of Mendel Gottesman and Samuel Levy, we raised the balance, and the Yeshiva was released from the largest obligation. However, this claim was not discharged. We took an assignment in the name of the Yeshiva Endowment Fund, which I thought would help me to settle the other obligations.

CHAPTER 32

PURCHASE JUDGMENT FROM THE BANK OF THE UNITED STATES

Next in line was the judgment held by the Bank of the United States, in liquidation for \$68,000. For this purpose, I was compelled to make use of my acquaintance with the attorney for the bank in liquidation, also with the deputy of the bank examiner, to whom I was introduced by a man of high standing, which helped me considerably. I succeeded in settling this claim for the sum of \$10,500. I had the contract drawn up by my attorney for the transfer of the judgment, and I gave them a deposit of my own money.

With this accomplished, I notified the temporary chairman of the Board of Directors, Hon. Samuel Levy.

A meeting was called and I reported my accomplishment, which was appreciated by everyone. I then suggested that this money should be subscribed by the board. I explained to them that with the removal of the obligation and judgment, every loan made to the Yeshiva is perfectly safe. However, no one was willing to make any loans. With my determination to relieve the Yeshiva from its obligations, I suggested to the board that the Harry Fischel Foundation would advance the money on condition that the Yeshiva shall assign to the Foundation some of the better subscriptions as security for the loan, and any additional loans which my Foundation would make. This suggestion was accepted by the board and a resolution to this effect was passed by a unanimous vote, signed by those present.

Among these subscriptions was one from the late Nathan Lamport for the sum of \$40,000. As soon as the assignment of the subscription was delivered to the Harry Fischel Foundation, I lost no time, paid the Bank of the United States the money and took the assignment of the judgment against the Yeshiva in the name of the Harry Fischel Foundation, thereby relieving the Yeshiva from the second large obligation.

I was thankful to the Almighty for this privilege of being able to carry out two-thirds of the plan I had prepared while on the steamer coming from Palestine. This was accomplished in a much shorter time than I ever expected, and for much less money than I anticipated, giving me more courage and a greater desire to continue the work to redeem the Yeshiva from all its obligations.

CHAPTER 33

PURCHASING CLAIM
FROM MANUFACTURERS TRUST CO.

The only claim left was to the Manufacturers Trust Co. for the sum of \$232,000. I decided to handle this case differently from the way I had handled the other two cases, because in the case of the contractor I dealt with the chairman of the committee, who had worked for me for years. He himself was a real estate owner. He knew what the Depression had done to real estate. He also knew how much more the contractor had lost on other buildings.

In the case of the Bank of the United States it was a little harder, because it was in the hands of attorneys who had to get the approval of the court to the settlement.

In the case of Manufacturers Trust Co. I had to deal with a live institution and one of the largest banks in New York. I therefore decided to reach the head, the President, Mr. Gibson. It was not so easy to get an appointment with him. Fortunately, one of the Vice Presidents, Mr. Boyd, had known me for forty years. When he was manager of the Century Bank, which took over the Jefferson, I had dealings with him because I was the chairman of the Liquidation Committee of the Jefferson Bank. Since then we very often met, because I was a depositor in the Jefferson Bank. I went with the Jefferson Bank to the Century Bank, under the management of Mr. Boyd. Then the Century Bank was bought by the Chatham Phoenix Bank and I went with them. Eventually I came to the Manufacturers Trust Co., and having Mr. Boyd as my friend, I had no difficulty to get an appointment with Mr. Gibson.

CHAPTER 34

CONFERENCE WITH MR. GIBSON

I will never forget the reception extended to me by Mr. Gibson. I thought that half the battle was won, because once before I had such a reception by the President of the New York Central Railroad when I was introduced by the late Jacob H. Schiff. That reception brought great success. I therefore felt that in this case, too, the Almighty would guide me and lead me to success to clear the Yeshiva from this last obligation.

When our greetings were over, Mr. Gibson stated, "Mr. Fischel, I presume you came here not for your personal interest, because your reputation is well established in this bank, since you have paid up hundreds of thousands of dollars during the worst depression. Now, Mr. Fischel, what is your request, and before you state your case I will call in two of my associate officers, who I am sure will also be interested to hear your story." Then Mr. Gibson called in Mr. Van Elem and Mr. Faulkner.

I then proceeded, "Gentlemen, I am here on behalf of the Yeshiva Rabbi Isaac Elchanan [Theological Seminary] and the Yeshiva College. This institution is in existence for sixty years. Personally, I am connected with this institution for fifty-three years. During that period we have changed our buildings four times, in different locations in New York. In each instance, I had the privilege to be the Chairman of the Building Committee. Then in 1924, when the real estate men were prosperous, a few of us got together and decided to erect a large edifice with sufficient space to provide the need for future generations. For such an enterprise the estimate was to be about \$3,000,000. As usual, such a campaign is started with a dinner. This dinner was an exception. We sold 1,000 plates at \$1,000 each, making the sum of \$1,000,000. Besides, subscriptions were obtained from \$100 to \$50,000. In a short time the subscriptions

mounted up to nearly \$3,000,000. Two of the subscriptions were for \$100,000. each, one from the late Nathan Lamport and one from myself. Later on Mr. Lamport increased his to \$200,000, and my own amounts to date [were increased] to \$160,000, which is all paid, and most of the other large subscriptions were made in yearly installments, from five to ten years. Then came the 1929 Depression, and very few were able to meet the payments, with the result that we owe money to the contractors, interest on the mortgage, as we expected to pay off from the subscriptions. This mortgage is now being foreclosed. We owe your bank \$232,000.

"I came to you, not as a Director of the Institution, but as the President of the Harry Fischel Foundation, [which] is willing to purchase this claim from you for the same price. We have just paid a claim of \$68,000 from the Bank of the United States, in liquidation, namely at 12 1/2% percent, amounting in your case to about \$30,000.

"I want to inform you that the Harry Fischel Foundation was established by me for charitable purposes only, and I have succeeded in having our Board of Trustees loan the amount necessary to give a deposit on the purchasing of the two bank claims, because we expect to collect the sum of \$40,000 from the Lamport estate."

Well, my story and offer appealed very much to Mr. Gibson and his associates, especially when this offer came from me. However, Mr. Gibson stated that as an individual he sympathized with the Yeshiva, but as President of the bank he could not approve of this offer and make an exception to a Jewish institution, because there had been many such offers made by other institutions not Jewish, and it was the policy of the board not to entertain any settlements. He also told me that they had made one exception in the case of the Lafayette College, and that brought them lots of trouble, and the board had decided not to make any more exceptions, and if necessary they would rather lose the entire sum.

Then, while talking to them the Almighty came to my assistance with a new thought, and with great courage I made the following statement: "Gentlemen, the Harry Fischel Foundation is the owner of 1,000 shares of the Manufacturers Trust Company stock, and as a partner in the bank I feel it my duty, and take the liberty to warn you as officers, not to lose this offer of \$30,000, because you will never see one dollar of this indebtedness, which also means a loss to my foundation. I beg of you to consider carefully before you turn down this offer."

This statement worked like magic. Their entire attitude was changed and Mr. Gibson asked me to increase the offer to \$35,000, and he would advise the committee to accept and authorize their attorney to prepare the agreement. I asked them for one week's option, which they granted me.

Naturally, with such a victory I lost no time and ordered a meeting of the board. At this meeting I reported the entire episode. It took no time to convince the board of my accomplishment, and a resolution was passed unanimously, authorizing me to make the deal at \$35,000. I then suggested that I was ready to give a deposit on behalf of the Harry Fischel Foundation. This offer was appreciated by the entire board, and was unanimously approved by the board.

I went to the attorney for the bank and told him that I was authorized to close the deal, and to my great surprise, the attorney informed me that my appeal to the board had made such a great impression, that they had decided to accept my offer of \$30,000 instead of \$35,000. The papers were drawn up, the bank agreeing to assign the claim of \$232,000 to the Harry Fischel Foundation for the sum of \$30,000. I gave the bank a check for \$5,000 and agreed to pay the balance thirty days later, on January 10th, 1938.

The contract provided that if I fail to pay the \$25,000 on that date, the deposit shall be deducted from the original sum of

\$232,000. I signed the contract and gave a deposit of \$5,000 as provided in the contract.

Words fail me to describe the pleasure I enjoyed when I left the office of the bank with the contract in my possession. This meant that my dream of clearing the Yeshiva from the last claim of \$232,000 had come true, and especially since I had succeeded in making this purchase for such a small sum of \$30,000, even \$5,000 less than the amount approved by the board. However, my pleasure was marred when I found that the man who had made the promise to advance 50% of the amount required had backed out.

I tried hard to get someone, or a group, to invest the 50%, but without any success. If the Harry Fischel Foundation had the entire amount on hand, I would, no doubt, have induced the trustees to advance the entire amount. But since this was impossible, I was compelled to try other plans.

In the meantime, I succeeded in getting an adjournment for thirty days.

As I stated before, the claim against the Lamport Estate was assigned to the Harry Fischel Foundation for \$40,000. As my next step, I went to the executors and to the attorney for the Lamport estate and suggested that they advance the \$25,000 necessary to pay the bank. I offered to wait for the \$4,000 advanced by the Harry Fischel Foundation for the deposit on the contract, also for the \$10,500 advanced by the Harry Fischel Foundation too for the purchase of the judgment from the Bank of the United States in liquidation. This \$15,500 deal could wait as long as they desired and without any interest.

I also went to the sons of Nathan Lamport and pleaded with them that their father had signed an agreement to pay this money. He had provided the money with which to pay. I said, "You are therefore in duty bound to carry out your father's desire."

The result was that one of the sons not only refused to grant my request, but stated that they would fight the claim in court, even if they had to pay the entire amount for legal expenses.

Realizing the position that we will never collect the \$40,000 unless we take legal action, I decided that it was my duty, as the custodian of this claim, to start a legal action.

Accordingly, I engaged an attorney to bring suit against the executors, compelling them to file an accounting of the estate, which they should have done ten years earlier. The executors were served, and they then realized that they could not get away simply by refusing to pay. Then the attorney for the estate requested an extension of time in which to file the accounting. This extension was granted by us, from time to time, for a period of two years. We felt that we might get the money much sooner in this way, until we were convinced that they were playing for time. Then our attorney went to the judge of the Surrogate Court and explained the entire situation to him. The judge was very much impressed with the patience we have shown.

The judge sent for the attorney of the estate and advised him to pay the \$40,000. Otherwise they would have to pay interest on this sum which was due several years ago.

The attorney saw that all these tactics would not work any longer, so he promised to produce the \$40,000, providing the attorney for the Harry Fischel Foundation would agree to relieve the Lamport estate from any expenses whatsoever. This was promptly agreed upon by our attorney. The check was delivered to the judge, and the Harry Fischel Foundation contributed the sum of \$2,400 for the legal expenses to Albert Wald, the attorney and trustee of the Harry Fischel Foundation, which was probably one-half of the amount which would have been charged by another attorney.

Once we were assured of the money, I lost no time and went to the attorney for the bank, Harry Kaufman, an old friend of the

Yeshiva and of mine, and informed him that the money was there, and that he should try to get the bank to accept the \$25,000 in accordance with the original contract signed about two years earlier. To my great surprise the bank accepted the \$25,000, omitting even the interest, to which they were entitled on the \$25,000 for two years.

The matter was closed and the Yeshiva was freed from the large obligation of \$232,000. While I was happy at the times I relieved the Yeshiva on the two former occasions, the settlement with the contractor and the Bank of the United States, there was no comparison with my happiness when I accomplished my entire job of clearing the Yeshiva from every obligation, except the mortgage on the property, which is expected to be settled shortly.

CHAPTER 35

REORGANIZING THE YESHIVA

With all the obligations of the Yeshiva removed, I decided that now was the time to reorganize the Institution, to get a new board of responsible men to undertake maintaining the Institution and to bring it to the high position which it should occupy in the educational field.

I reminded myself that some time ago my good son-in-law, Rabbi Herbert S. Goldstein, had prepared a complete plan to reorganize the Yeshiva, but the time was not ripe, because of the indebtedness. I had a conference with Rabbi Goldstein, in order to revive his plan.

Accordingly, in consultation with Mr. Sarr, we made a list of about thirty outstanding men. We invited them to a meeting at my home on October 9th, 1939. Twenty-one answered the call, and right then and there we organized a committee to elect a Board of Directors and the necessary officers. Rabbi Goldstein accepted the chairmanship of this committee.

I am proud to record that this committee, under the leadership of my son-in-law, Rabbi Goldstein, has succeeded in organizing an excellent Board of Directors, with outstanding men as officers. The existence of the Yeshiva is now assured.

I must confess that I am now taking a retired position, since the Institution is now out of obligation, and for this I am thankful to the Almighty that He gave me the privilege to accomplish this through the Harry Fischel Foundation. I therefore feel that at the age of 75, having given to the Yeshiva fifty years of active service, and having the privilege to subscribe and pay the sum of \$160,000 according to the records of the Yeshiva during the last fifteen years only, I therefore feel that I am entitled to retire from active work. However, I am watching the work done by the new board, and I am ready to give my cooperation and advice based on my fifty years of experience.

I am happy to record that only about one month ago the Harry Fischel Foundation purchased \$5,000 worth of bonds which helped to provide a majority of bonds for the mortgage on the Yeshiva building, thereby removing and discontinuing the foreclosure of the mortgage.

CHAPTER 36

THE DEATH OF DR. BERNARD REVEL

This record would not be complete if I failed to record the loss to the Yeshiva by the death of our leader, Dr. Bernard Revel, a prince in Israel, who passed away. The loss sustained by the Yeshiva and by its students is impossible to describe. His place can never be filled by any one man who could possess all the qualities of Dr. Revel.

I had the privilege of being in close touch with him during the twenty-five years that our Yeshiva was blessed with his leadership. Many times Dr. Revel disclosed to me his heartaches, his sufferings for the Yeshiva. Personally, I lost the best friend and adviser.

Only a short time ago Dr. Revel attended a meeting, at my home, as a member of the Advisory Board of the Harry Fischel Institute for Research in Talmud in Jerusalem. The Advisory Board will also miss him. His knowledge in the field of higher learning cannot be filled, and the institution will suffer this great loss.

As a friend I was closely acquainted with his family life. The attention given to him by his wife under adverse conditions is to be admired. She devoted all of her strength to bring him relief. She consoled him in all his grief, on account of the Yeshiva. I am very happy that I brought before the Board of Directors the necessity of providing a pension for Mrs. Revel, which is the best tribute the board could have paid to their leader, who died as a martyr to the cause of the Yeshiva.

CHAPTER 37

AS TREASURER OF THE HIAS

There are two more events which I feel should be included in this record. One began fifty years ago, but was celebrated last May. Namely, the HIAS, the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society. I was elected Treasurer in 1890, and I was privileged by the Almighty to serve in this capacity for fifty consecutive years. Last March I was again re-elected for the fifty-first time.

Soon after election the President, Abraham Herman, called on me and presented to my wife and myself an elaborate plan for a public dinner commemorating my fiftieth anniversary of holding the position as Treasurer, also celebrating my 75th birthday. My wife and I decided that it was not advisable at this time to make such a public celebration. We told Mr. Herman that while we fully appreciated the honor and the good will of our directors, however, when our Jews all over the world were suffering, the expense of such a dinner could be used for a better purpose. Instead, we suggested to tender a dinner to the

board in our own home. This offer was accepted by Mr. Herman, and this dinner was held on May 16th, 1940, and was attended by the entire board of the HIAS, also by my own family.

CHAPTER 38

AS PRESIDENT OF THE PILGRIM STATE HOSPITAL

The other event is of ten years duration. This event is probably not so important to the community, but it has given me lots of pleasure and contentment.

In September, 1930, Franklin D. Roosevelt, then Governor of the State of New York, sent for me and offered me the position as a member of the Board of Visitors of the Pilgrim State Hospital for the Insane, the largest such institution in the world, accommodating 12,000 patients. This institution had just been completed. The board consisted of four men and three women members.

Mr. Roosevelt informed me that he had appointed six members of other nationalities and myself, representing the Jewish people, who comprised about 15% of the patients. He also informed me that he had selected me on account of my connection with the Beth Israel Hospital. Soon thereafter I was requested by the State Commissioner of Mental Hygiene, Frederick W. Parsons, to call a meeting of the seven appointees for the purpose of electing a President and Secretary. I called a meeting at my office on October 20th. The Commissioner also came to this meeting. He introduced himself and informed us of our duties and privileges. Then, when it came to the election of a President, the Commissioner informed us that it was the desire of the Governor that Mr. Fischel be elected President. Naturally the election was unanimous. Up to this date I have never found out what was the motive of the Governor to have me as President, where there were three more men of very high rank.

When the year passed I was again elected President by a unanimous vote, which was repeated every year, and I am proud that I am still occupying the office of President, and in appreciation of my management, the board honored me with a portrait of myself, which is placed on the wall of the meeting room, with the portrait of Dr. Pilgrim, whose name the Institution carries, on one side, and on the other side is the portrait of Dr. Tiffany, the first superintendent, who is now occupying the position of Commissioner of the State.

The board meets every month. One meeting is held in the institution and one in my office. Our work is very constructive and interesting.

CHAPTER 39

PUBLICATION IN MEMORY OF JANE FISCHEL

The Harry Fischel Foundation in conjunction with the Jane Fischel Memorial Fund has just received from Palestine, a very important work, a book of ethics, written by the well-known sage, Reb Alexander Ziskind (ca. 1735–1794), 150 years ago, under the title *Yesod Veshores'h Hoavodo*. He was a great-great-grandfather of Jane Fischel. This book was published for the first time in 1790, then was republished in 1840, and again in 1875.

It is being used in the *Yeshivoth* practically the world over as the best book on ethics, and it is practically impossible to obtain in any bookstore. It was, therefore, decided by the Trustees of the Harry Fischel Foundation and the Jane Fischel Memorial Fund to republish this important work in a more elaborate form of printing and binding, with an English synopsis, which has been revised by Rabbi Dove Kook, the Registrar of the Harry Fischel Institute in Jerusalem. This book is now being distributed to *Yeshivas* and libraries, also to important Rabbis free of charge.

This book has been published in memory of the late Jane Fischel, my late wife, let her soul rest in peace.

CHAPTER 40

PURCHASE OF 987 FIFTH AVENUE

I mentioned before that I had purchased two parcels of real estate with money belonging to the Harry Fischel Foundation. Both of these purchases were in the best locations in the Bronx, on the best part of the Grand Concourse, promising an excellent future as far as anyone can foresee, but each one is subject to a bank mortgage at 4% interest . However, the Depression proved that no property is safe unless it is free and clear of any mortgage. Therefore, my last investment for the Harry Fischel Foundation has been the property at 987 Fifth Avenue, which is free and clear of any mortgage.

The history of 987 Fifth Avenue is unusual and it is worthwhile recording in this narrative. This building was a palatial residence, built by a famous New York millionaire, at a cost of over \$300,000.00. There was a mortgage on this property held by the Franklin Savings Bank of \$125,000.00. After the Depression, the bank foreclosed this mortgage and bought in the property. They held it about five years, paying taxes, without receiving any income from it. Then the property was sold to me for \$40,000.00. When this purchase was recorded in the newspapers, comments were made that it was the cheapest property ever sold in New York, especially on the finest part of Fifth Avenue. I purchased this property for the Harry Fischel Foundation, and had the house reconstructed for thirteen families, at an expense of about \$50,000. Adding this to the cost of purchase of \$40,000, the property cost the Foundation about \$90,000, and is free and clear of any mortgage. At this time the house is about 90% rented and produces a very fine income for the Harry Fischel Foundation.

CHAPTER 41

BEGAN STUDYING THE TALMUD AT 69

Our sages state that the best is always left for the last. In the paragraph entitled "TEN YEARS OF ACCOMPLISHMENT," I enumerated several of the achievements I was privileged by the Almighty to accomplish. However, I left for the last the most important accomplishment, namely, the beginning of my studies in Talmud at the age of 69.

There is, no doubt, many a man who has duplicated my work in philanthropy, and there are, no doubt, several competitors of mine who have spent large fortunes for religious education, and there is probably some man somewhere in the world who has created an institution for research work in Talmud. However, our Jewish history does not mention anyone who began studying the Talmud at the age of 69. However, history does tell us that one of our greatest sages, Rabbi Akiva, started his education at the age of 40. Therefore, in this accomplishment of starting to study the Talmud at 69, I stand alone, for which I am especially thankful to the Almighty for giving me the privilege to do so.

In my first biography, known as *Forty Years of Struggle for a Principle*, I have elaborated on my youth. However, in this narrative I will only mention one fact, and that is that I came to America at the age of 20, coming from a small town in Lithuania, and of poor parents. I had no opportunity to acquire very much Hebrew knowledge. I was, therefore, content with the knowledge of the Bible only. However, since I came to our free country of America, where knowledge can be acquired without any hardship and without any cost, I immediately took advantage of the opportunity and began the study of the Mishna. At first I received a few lessons at home. Then I took advantage of a *Chevre Mishnaoth* which was studying every morning after prayers. I could not take up any

higher learning, for the reason that my mind and my time were immediately taken up with the responsibility of communal work at the very beginning of my life in New York, with religious education and philanthropy, and as mentioned previously, that I became Treasurer of the HIAS in 1890, four years after my arrival in America, besides the responsibility of raising a family. Also, some time was required for my real estate business.

As time marched on, the communal problems increased, leaving no time for me to continue any higher learning. I was therefore content with the knowledge of the Mishna, which I can happily state that I never failed to study every morning during the last fifty years.

Then in 1931, when the Almighty gave me the privilege to create the Harry Fischel Institute for Research in Talmud, the love for the Talmud developed in me greatly, and became part of my natural life. I then realized that it was absolutely necessary for me to have some Talmudical knowledge in order to appreciate the value of the research work being done in my Institute in Jerusalem, and also to participate in a Talmudical discussion whenever the opportunity would present itself.

On January 3rd, 1935, my late wife passed away, let her soul rest in peace, at which time I was 69 years old. I then decided to go to Palestine and probably settle there permanently. It was then that I decided that the time had come for me to begin my studying of the Talmud. I immediately started with a friend of mine, Joseph Adler, a good scholar of the Talmud. During the last six years we have studied together three sessions every week. It was rather hard at the beginning, but after a short time, I mastered the principles of the Talmud. Today, after six years of study, we have completed five volumes. I am now in a position to state that the Talmud has become part of my life, and is the best relaxation for the mind in times like these. I can safely state that it is the studying of the

Talmud that has broadened my mind, and has given me a clear vision and understanding of how to solve difficult problems.

I pray to the Almighty that He shall grant me the privilege of continuing to study the Talmud for many, many years to come.

CHAPTER 42

IN CONCLUSION

When I finished my life's history in 1927, I then prayed to the Almighty to have the privilege of continuing my labors on behalf of religious education and philanthropy, so that I might, at a later date, be able to record additional efforts on behalf of these same religious and humanitarian principles.

Well, the Almighty answered my prayers. I have had the privilege to record again some of my accomplishments during the thirteen years from 1927, to the present date, January 1, 1941.

At the time I completed the story of my life in 1927, I was worth millions in equities in real estate; also some liquid assets, which I put away for my old age. However, in 1929, the Almighty saw fit to bring the general Depression and washed away all real estate equities, and mine included. However, I am thankful to the Almighty that He gave me the vision and privilege to organize the Harry Fischel Foundation. I assigned to this Foundation the liquid assets which I had saved, otherwise this money would also have been lost, together with the real estate, and it is with this saving that I created the Harry Fischel Institute in Jerusalem, and provided a fund to take care of this work as far as any human mind can foresee. For this I am especially grateful to the Almighty.

I again fervently pray and hope that I may be privileged to record additional work, and that the Almighty will see fit to bring peace and happiness to the world, and especially in Palestine, so that the

work of the scholars of the Harry Fischel Institute in Jerusalem will go on uninterrupted.

I especially pray that my wife and I be privileged to settle in Jerusalem and enjoy the pleasure of seeing the six tracts of the Mishna completed.

Epilogue

Harry Fischel's rags-to-riches story stands out in two ways. One was his service to the Jewish community, especially in the field of education, and the other was his dedication to public service in general, to the point where at various times when still in his prime, he dedicated more time to public service than to making money for himself. For the 8-year period from 1903 to 1911 he focused his energies almost exclusively on his philanthropic work, and again later as Chairman of the Building Committee of Yeshiva College in the 1920s, and, to a significant extent, in keeping Yeshiva College from going bankrupt and closing during the Great Depression in the 1930s. Although many people lost their fortunes during the panic of 1907, because Harry Fischel was devoted primarily to philanthropic work during that period, he was insulated from the catastrophic effects of this panic, and his fortune was preserved. While it was affected by the Great Depression, particularly as to equities, the story of his life and his achievements after 1929 show that, particularly with his preserved liquid assets, Fischel still managed to do far more good on behalf of far more people after the Great Depression began than most philanthropists did before it hit. Fischel did not waver in his faith in God, and was rewarded for this faith.

Harry Fischel decided to live out his last years in Israel, but in a manner unlike any other philanthropist. In America, he lived on Park Avenue in New York, then one of the most prestigious neighborhoods in the world, in a custom-built apartment in a custom-built apartment house. He had built it to accommodate his own religious requirements of a low floor that did not require him to use an elevator, and with a room with a removable roof to enable him to celebrate the religious holiday of Sukkot with maximum convenience. This is described in the book, at page 370, with a photograph facing page 368. Because of the removable roof, he gave up the rent that he would have received

from tenants all the way above him, as can still be seen at 910 Park Avenue on the southwest corner of 80th Street and Park Avenue, in New York City, in what is still one of the most prestigious neighborhoods in the world. He could have easily lived out his final years in such luxury, or in similar luxury anywhere else. He chose, rather, to donate most of his remaining money to a foundation to support the Harry Fischel Institute (the Machon), as well as other charitable entities he had established and future projects not yet initiated, and to live out his final years in a relatively Spartan apartment adjacent to the religious school he had built in Jerusalem, which was then not nearly as well developed as most major cities were at the time, and on land that was not even developed into a country, and which was on the brink of turning into a War Zone. The reason for this decision? He wanted to bask in the sounds of Jewish studies in his institution throughout the day, on the highest level, from his ground floor apartment, when he woke up in the morning until he would go to sleep at night.

Even this was not enough of a sacrifice. When fuel was rationed, he insisted, at some point, in allocating his share to the students of the Yeshiva he had built. Rabbi Yosef Cohen, Of Blessed Memory, who had been a leading religious court judge in Israel and the head of the program for training religious court judges at the Machon, recalls Harry Fischel's couching his sacrifice in Jewish literary almost poetic terms; Fischel declared that he wanted his share of the fuel to go to "the *Choshen Mishpat*" (the section of the *Shulchan Arukh*—the *Code of Jewish Law*—which deals with monetary matters). The students of the *Machon* were already then known throughout the world to excel in this area of study, which lent itself to their future specialization as judges in the courts to be set up in the country that was about to be created.

Even this was not enough of a sacrifice. Efficient and frugal until the end, he was so focused on having every resource channeled into his beloved institution that he had a habit of turning off light bulbs

himself if he found any left on unnecessarily, and when he fell off a chair in doing so, his resulting injuries could not be overcome. It is hoped that the lesson he thereby “taught” was that every person should abhor waste; even the owner of or sponsor of an institution should make sure that resources will not be wasted. The deeper lesson, of course, is that all of us are custodians of our bodies for a limited period of time, and should not waste the time we have in them or any other resource in serving our Creator, nor should we sit back and wait for our Creator to turn off our lights!

Even in death, Harry Fischel continued to serve his people well. During his lifetime, he had arranged for a mausoleum to be built on the historic Mount of Olives overlooking Jerusalem for his final resting place. When he passed away, on January 1, 1948, the fighting for an independent country of Israel was in full swing, and dozens of human remains, some say hundreds of people, who had burial plots on this most historic cemetery, were piled up in hospitals unable to be brought to their designated eternal resting place. Because of Harry Fischel’s contacts, the fighting was interrupted in his honor, with the special passage of an armed convoy of the British army bearing his body to its final resting place on the Mount of Olives, and once this convoy was arranged, the remains of many of these other Jews were transported along with the remains of Harry Fischel. One of the young men, then, who had accompanied his remains part of the way, on that day, recalled his presence there at a ceremony that took place in the Machon the year this supplemented book went to press, more than six decades later. So once again, Harry Fischel continued to serve his people in his very first posthumous hours, and has continued to do so ever since.

And now, through the many institutions that Harry Fischel created, supported, and maintained, including the three institutions that came into being after the original biography was published, and projects current and future, the influence of Harry Fischel

continues, it is hoped, to make the world a better place, especially the Jewish world, not only for a limited number of years to come, but to eternity.

AIR

Harry Fischel Institute for Research in Jewish Law Machon Harry Fischel

The Harry Fischel Institute for Research in Jewish Law, known in Hebrew as Machon Harry Fischel, was founded by Harry Fischel in 1931. It is located on the corner of Israel Aharon Fischel Street, in the Bukharian section of Jerusalem, near the neighborhoods of Geulah and Meah Shearim.

Fischel had originally planned a network of Talmudic institutes with branches in Israel, Eastern Europe, and New York (see Ophir in references). He even purchased real estate in a prime location in New York, intending to use the annual rental income to fund these institutions. However, when the Great Depression wiped out the huge fortune invested in this property, Harry Fischel decided to proceed with his plans on a smaller scale. He focused exclusively on the Jerusalem site, where the best Talmudic scholars were to be found.

Fischel established the Harry Fischel Foundation for the primary purpose of supporting the Machon. He had originally earmarked a sum of money, relatively small for a man of his means, to make use of in his old age. However, upon seeing how transient one's material possessions are in this world, and how a financial fortune can disappear so quickly, he decided to utilize this nest egg for an eternal project—a Torah institute to carry on his name and values.

The Harry Fischel Institute enlisted the greatest minds of the yeshiva world in Israel. These scholars pursued a unique and demanding course of study, applying Talmudic teachings and principles to reach a thorough understanding of *halacha* (Jewish law). Until his passing, Fischel maintained a close connection with the individual scholars at the institute and took a personal interest in their needs. His active involvement contributed to the Machon's atmosphere of intense scholarship and pursuit of excellence.

The tradition of excellence established in his lifetime has continued through the generations, and the Machon still attracts the top scholars of the yeshiva world. Since there are many applicants

for each space that opens up, the Machon can pick the “cream of the crop.” Machon alumni have served as *dayanim* (judges) in the Jewish court system in Israel, as well as in many other rabbinical positions throughout the world.

The Machon’s *Dayanut* advanced study program, training scholars to serve as judges in the religious court system, was a trailblazer that later served as a model for other specialized high-level schools to train judges. The Machon was also a pioneer in the area of researched Torah publications. In the mid-1930s, the Machon spearheaded the field of publishing advanced works produced by scholars, at a time when such publications were almost nonexistent, especially in Israel. The Research and Publication Department of the Machon still continues this tradition today. Among its projects are:

- (1) *Halacha Pesukah*—a comprehensive compilation of Jewish civil law based upon the works of hundreds of *poskim* (decisors) and responsa throughout the generations.
- (2) *Tosafot HaShalem*—a comprehensive collection of commentaries on the Torah written by the Tosafists, the great scholars of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.
- (3) *Birkat Eliyahu*—a commentary on the Vilna Gaon’s writings on *Choshen Mishpat*, the section of the Code of Jewish Law on civil matters.
- (4) *Rishonim* and manuscripts—advanced research on the works of the *Rishonim*, the early commentaries on the Talmud, with comparative studies of various manuscripts.

An official statement by Israel’s influential Government Advisory Committee, which assigns funding for Torah research institutes, notes that the Torah publications of the Machon “are of paramount significance.” It states further that the Machon’s “*Halachah Pesukah*, *Tosafot Ha’shalem* and *Birkat Eliyahu* projects [are] of particular national importance.”

The Machon houses Harry Fischel’s beautiful, historic syn-

agogue, where communal prayers take place daily as well as on *Shabbos* and *Yom Tov*. Lectures are delivered there from time to time by prominent Torah scholars, attracting large audiences. In addition, the Machon supports public study programs, both in the mornings for retirees and in the evenings for lay people from the nearby neighborhoods. Years ago, the Machon *beis medrash* used to be unique in housing a number of full sets of *Shas* (Talmud), a rarity in Jerusalem of yore. It was also reputedly the only *beis medrash* to provide central heating! It is no wonder that the Machon *beis medrash* became a meeting place for scholars from all parts of the city. Though these “rare luxuries” are now commonplace, the Machon *beis medrash* still attracts many visiting scholars and neighbors at all hours of the day and night.

The Machon also sponsors a professional, economically self-sufficient book bindery, which serves the binding needs of the Machon, and provides employment for elderly as well as mildly disabled individuals.

Eighty years after its founding, the Machon continues to flourish as a direct, lasting result of the beneficence and foresight of Harry Fischel.

Rabbi Hillel M. Reichel
Director, Machon Harry Fischel

The Harry Fischel School for Higher Jewish Studies, of Yeshiva University

From its inception, in 1945, the Harry Fischel School for Higher Jewish Studies of Yeshiva University has added a critically important dimension to the Bernard Revel Graduate School.

The student body of the Bernard Revel Graduate School is made up of diverse elements. Among M.A. students, some attend full-time and wish to complete their degrees in a single year, sometimes because they have postponed their attendance in law school, medical school, or other professional school—and occasionally their direct entry into the workforce—in order to enrich their Jewish education. Such professionals constitute a major resource for the Jewish community as a whole. Others hope to continue as doctoral students and begin their work as expeditiously as possible. The M.A. degree at the Bernard Revel Graduate School requires ten courses. Even the most diligent student may well find a workload of five courses a semester unrealistic. The summer session offered by the Harry Fischel School enables such students to take eight courses during the regular academic year and complete the requirements of the Bernard Revel Graduate School by taking two summer courses at the Harry Fischel School.

Other M.A. students are simultaneously enrolled in the Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary or the Advanced Talmud Program for Women on the Beren campus and cannot realistically take more than two courses a semester in the Bernard Revel Graduate School. For these students as well, the summer program at the Harry Fischel School provides a precious opportunity to further their education in as expeditious a fashion as possible.

Doctoral students, who may be spending time during the regular school year taking a course in an allied non-Jewish field at another university (two such courses are generally required) or preparing for language examinations, take advantage of the summer program at the Harry Fischel School to complete their requirements.

In addition, the summer program enables Yeshiva University to offer a variety of courses taught by distinguished visitors from Israel and elsewhere that it cannot offer at the Bernard Revel Graduate School during the regular academic year. Such courses enrich the university's offerings immeasurably.

David Berger

Ruth and I. Lewis Gordon Professor of Jewish History and
Dean, Bernard Revel Graduate School of Yeshiva University.

THE RABBI ISAAC ELCHANAN THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
AND YESHIVA COLLEGE
AMSTERDAM AVENUE & 186TH STREET
NEW YORK

June 11th, 1945

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

Mr. Harry Fischel, President
Harry Fischel Foundation
910 Park Avenue
New York 21, New York

Dear Mr. Fischel:

In connection with the Agreement signed this date, June 11th, 1945 between the Harry Fischel Foundation, and the Yeshiva Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary and Yeshiva College, I hereby agree as President of the Yeshiva:

1. Since the Agreement will not be in operation until September 1st, 1945, after the Summer Session, as stated in the letter attached to the Agreement. However, we agree to withhold any publicity until September when the Agreement shall begin, unless authorized by the President or Vice-President of the Foundation prior to that date.
2. It is also understood that should any one of the students take courses in both the Harry Fischel School for Higher Jewish Studies, and also in the regular Graduate School then in the event that the student should attend two Summer Sessions or more in the Harry Fischel School of Higher Jewish Studies then he shall be entitled to receive his higher degree only in the Harry Fischel School for Higher Jewish Studies.
3. Students who have attended our Summer Graduate School in 1944, and will continue with their work in 1945 will have their accumulated credits transferred to the Harry Fischel School for Higher Jewish Studies so that they may receive their degree from that School.

I am looking forward, with the help of the Almighty, that the Harry Fischel School for Higher Jewish Studies which will begin in July, 1946, will be a model School for higher Jewish learning which will enhance the spirit of traditional Judaism in America, and will give an opportunity to Rabbis, scholars, and teachers to equip themselves in even a more effective scholarly leadership in the spirit of our sacred traditions. I firmly believe that with the establishment of this School, a new chapter will be written in the Jewish History of America.

May the Almighty bless you with many years of good health, happiness, and joy from this School, as well as the Harry Fischel Institute for Talmudical Research, in our Holy Land, in Jerusalem.

With kindest personal regards, I remain

Sincerely yours,

Samuel Belkin
Samuel Belkin
President

sbjrs

THIS AGREEMENT made and entered into this 11 day of June, 1945, by and between "HARRY FISCHEL FOUNDATION", a body corporate, organized, created and existing under and by virtue of the laws of the State of New York, hereinafter called the "Foundation", and "THE RABBI ISAAC ELCHANAN THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY AND YESHIVA COLLEGE, INC." a body corporate, organized, created and existing under and by virtue of the laws of the State of New York, hereinafter called the "Yeshiva",

W I T N E S S E T H:

WHEREAS, "Harry Fischel" established and is the moving spirit of the Foundation" and has spent the greater part of his life in sponsoring and supporting orthodox Jewish institutions and in propagating and enhancing orthodox Jewish ideals and education, and in that regard was one of the early founders and liberal supporters of the "Yeshiva", and

WHEREAS, the "Foundation" is desirous of perpetuating the names both of its founder, "Harry Fischel", and of itself, and

WHEREAS, "Harry Fischel" and the "Foundation" have requested the "Yeshiva" to establish the "Harry Fischel School for Higher Jewish Studies", and

WHEREAS, the "Yeshiva" is willing so to do upon the terms and conditions hereinafter stated,

NOW, THEREFORE, in consideration of the premises and the agreements herein contained and the sum of one (\$1.00) dollar and other good and valuable considerations by each of the signatories hereto to the other in hand paid at or before the enrolling and delivery of these presents, the receipt whereof is hereby acknowledged, it is agreed as follows:

1. That the "Yeshiva" shall create a Graduate School to be known as the "Harry Fischel School for Higher Jewish Studies", which shall be associated academically with the "Harry Fischel Institute for Research in Talmud in Jerusalem".
2. That the purpose and object of such School shall be to train "Yeshiva" graduates or any other Rabbis and scholars found eligible for admission by the faculty; to do original research in the field of Rabbinics and cognate subjects.
3. That the said "Harry Fischel School for Higher Jewish Studies" shall require students to establish academic residence during the months of July and August, and to continue their personal research work throughout the year, wherever they may reside, under the direct guidance of the faculty of the said School, who shall also assist them in the preparation of their theses.
4. That students who seek admission to said "Harry Fischel School for Higher Jewish Studies" shall be required to have to their credit an academic degree of either Bachelor of Science or Bachelor of Arts from a recognized college, plus an accredited "Smicha". That the faculty shall have the right

to accept any other students who are in their opinion eligible to do research in the field for which said School is to be created as aforesaid. Students of the "Harry Fischel Institute for Research in Talmud in Jerusalem", however, who shall be ordained Rabbis and who possess Palestinian State matriculation, shall be admitted to said "Harry Fischel School for Higher Jewish Studies" without a bachelor's degree.

5. That the subjects to be taught in said "Harry Fischel School for Higher Jewish Studies" are as follows: a) Rabbinical Codes; b) Jewish Philosophy; c) Jewish History; d) Cognate Subjects; e) Languages; f) Practical courses in community leadership; g) Courses in higher Jewish education and any other subjects that the faculty may see fit.

6. That the students who shall fulfil all residence requirements of said "Harry Fischel School for Higher Jewish Studies", and who shall write a thesis in Rabbinics or in a cognate subject which shall in the opinion of the faculty constitute a genuine contribution to scholarship, will receive the degree of Doctor of Hebrew Literature from said School, being part of the Yeshiva, or the future University as soon as charter will be granted.

7. That in order to induce the "Yeshiva" to found, maintain and bear the expenses of said "Harry Fischel School for Higher Jewish Studies", and in consideration thereof, the "Foundation" agrees to pay to the "Yeshiva" the sum of ten thousand (\$10,000.00) dollars, annually, in equal quarter-annual payments of twenty-five hundred (\$2500.00) dollars each during the months of August, November, February and May in each and every year, which said payments so to be received from the "Foundation" shall be deposited by the "Yeshiva" in a separate bank account in the "Yeshiva's" name and shall be used exclusively for the instruction only, and all other expenses be paid by the "Yeshiva" in running the said School, except that from said annual sum of ten thousand (\$10,000.00) dollars, up to two thousand (\$2,000.00) dollars thereof may be used for publications, the form, subject matter and scheme whereof shall be under the direction of the faculty of the "Yeshiva" but shall be published under the auspices of the said "Harry Fischel School for Higher Jewish Studies", it being agreed that any part of said two thousand (\$2,000.00) dollars thereof may also be used for the purpose of publishing any other scholarly work in connection with and beneficial to the said School. No check shall be drawn against the aforementioned annual fund of ten thousand (\$10,000.00) dollars without a voucher therefor approved in writing by the president of the "Yeshiva".

8. It is further mutually agreed that if the "Yeshiva" shall receive a charter granting to it the status of a University, then the said "Harry Fischel School for Higher Jewish Studies" shall become a part of the University and its graduates shall receive the degree of Master of Arts and/or the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, when and if entitled to the same, from the said University.

9. It is also mutually agreed that the said "Harry Fischel School for Higher Jewish Studies" shall always be conducted in accordance with the law and spirit of Orthodox Judaism.

10. This agreement shall be binding in perpetuity upon the signatories hereto and their respective successors and assigns.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, this agreement has been duly executed by the parties hereto the day and year first above written.

אשר כולל את כל

HARRY FISCHER FOUNDATION

By

Harry Fischer
President

THE RABBI ISAAC ELCHANAN THEOLOGICAL
SEMINARY AND YESHIVA COLLEGE, INC

By

Samuel Gray
Chairman,
Board of Directors

THE RABBI ISAAC ELCHANAN THEOLOGICAL
SEMINARY AND YESHIVA COLLEGE, INC

By

Samuel Belkin
President

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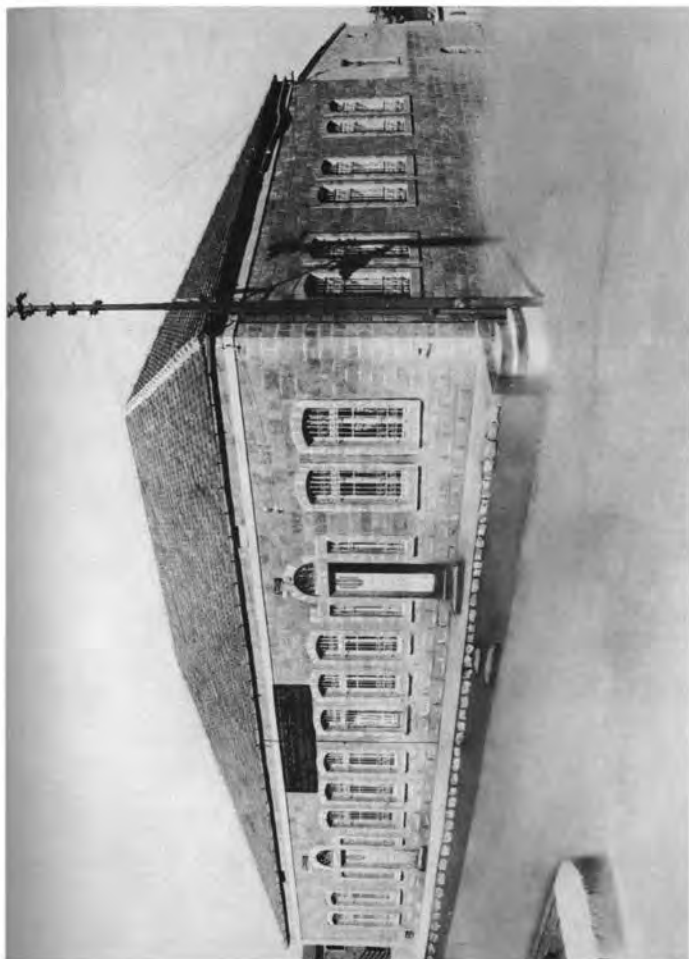
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Illustrations to Continuation



HARRY FISCHEL AS HE IS TODAY AT THE AGE OF 75.



HARRY FISCHEL INSTITUTE BUILDING IN JERUSALEM.



Original 20 scholars headed by the Chief Rabbi Abraham I. Kook, his brother Dore Kook, the Registrar of the Harry Fischel Institute, and Rabbi Braz, brother of my late wife.



Medical laboratory dedicated to Harry Fischel in Beth Israel Hospital.



MY WIFE MIRIAM.



Interior of the Synagogue in the Harry Fischel Institute in Jerusalem.



MAUSOLEUM ERECTED ON MOUNT OF OLIVES IN JERUSALEM.



*10 young scholars admitted in the Harry Fischel Institute
on my visit in 1933.*



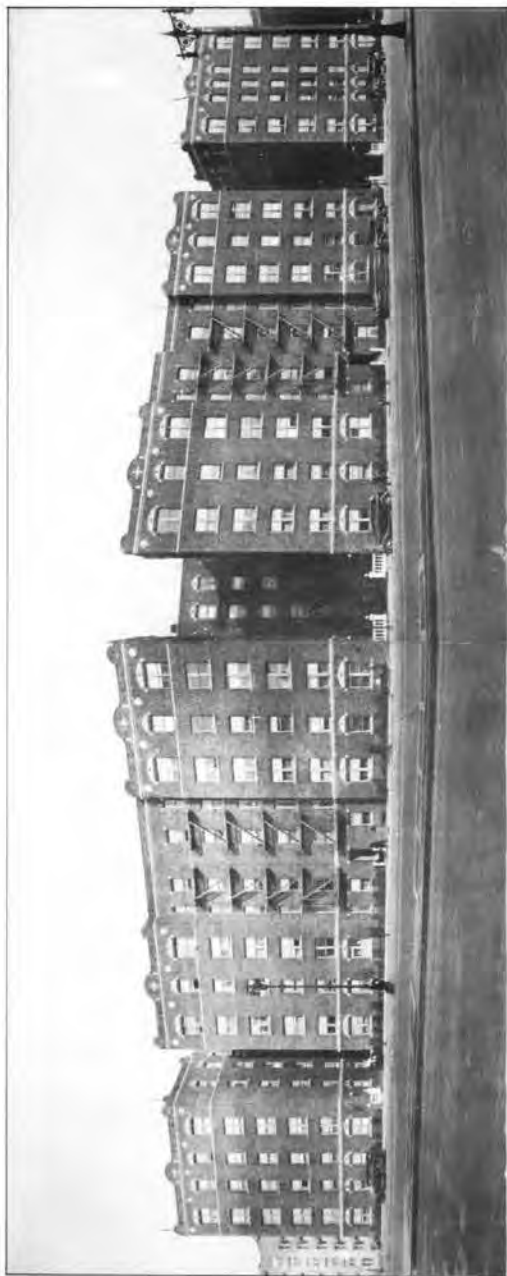
*Opening of the Yeshiva Buildings on December 9th, 1928,
by the Building Committee, Harry Fischel, Chairman.*



*Portrait presented by the Board of the Pilgrim State Hospital
and placed in the Board Room.*



*987 Fifth Avenue
Between 79th and 80th Streets*



*1454 to 1466 Grand Concourse
From 171st to 172nd Streets*



*1100 Grand Concourse
Northeast corner of 166th Street*



Harry Fischel with his wife and all his grandchildren seated around the table in his succah room at 910 Park Avenue, in New York City, in the late 1930s. Left to right: Jean C. Rafsky, Ann E. Rafsky, Gabriel F. Goldstein, Simeon H. F. Goldstein, Josephine H. Goldstein, Harry Fischel, Miriam Fischel, Naomi Goldstein, Helen J. Kass, Babbette Kass, Judy Wald, Neil Wald.

Supplemental Index

Note: This Index supplements the entries in the Index, at page 400, of the original volume, *Forty Years of Struggle for a Principle*, which is incorporated into the present book and also provides entries to all key names and words in the material published for the first time in this present book.

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