THE MONTREAL CHASSIDIC COMMUNITY: COMMUNITY BOUNDARIES AND THE MAINTENANCE OF ETHNIC IDENTITY

by

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ABSTRACT

This thesis is a study of the Montreal Chassidic community and employs as a frame of reference a symbolic interactionist perspective. The main argument is that the Chassidic community may be regarded as stigmatized and that consequently strategies are adopted by Chassidic groups to offset the social psychological consequences of the responses of others. While isolation from the larger community is characteristic of all the Chassidic groups, certain practises of the Lubavitcher Chassidim are initiated primarily to increase contact between themselves and the rest of the Jewish community.

PREFACE

The Chassidim are a religious Jewish movement who live within the framework of Jewish laws and practises and their own unique customs and traditions. In general, their everyday way of life is circumscribed by religious ideas and principles through whose implementation they come to be different from the other religious minorities often dealt with in the literature. The reader must not confuse the Chassidim with another element of Judaism, Orthodox Jewry. Although the Chassidim are within the realm of Orthodox Jewry, Orthodox Jews are not necessarily Chassidim. The distinctions between the Chassidic and non-Chassidic Orthodox Jews are found primarily in particular traditions and customs, "intensity and emphasis in belief, varieties in Rabbinical allegiance, and social structure and organization," (Mintz, 1968:25).

The following thesis is divided into four chapters. In the first chapter I try to spell out my theoretical commitment which is essentially a symbolic interactionist perspective. I ask whether or not the Chassidic community can be regarded as stigmatized and, by drawing upon the literature dealing with processing of labeling and stigma, conclude in the affirmative. I end by mentioning a few strategies employed by Chassidic groups to reduce the social psychological consequences of the responses of others and suggest that isolation is the prevalent response to minimize their offensive nature.

In chapter two I deal with the ways the Chassidim try to withdraw from the larger community. For example, I discuss their efforts to communicate in the Yiddish language, the extent to which their secular learning is suited to fit their religious beliefs and practises, as well as their efforts to have only minimal contact with the mass media. I conclude by briefly pointing to the Tasher Chassidim who have, at least for the present time, successfully managed to residentially isolate themselves.

Chapter three is entirely about Lubavitcher and almost completely about newcomers to Lubavitch. The chapter is primarily intended to show the processes of interaction between the newcomer and the Lubavitcher and how the former moves through successive stages as he becomes initiated into the Lubavitch movement. The reader will hopefully realize as well, however, that while the Chassidic community withdraws itself from the larger community, in the case of Lubavitch, in certain instances, just the opposite is done.

In chapter four I suggest that during the coming research particular attention be devoted to analyzing the social boundaries of the Chassidic community. Hopefully, research in this direction will help make more clear who is to be included in the Chassidic community as well as the criteria employed to make such decisions.

What will hopefully emerge from this thesis is the dilemma for the deviant, in this case the Chassid, that is only implicitly suggested in the literature. If the discredited

person bands together with others similar to him, together they can assist each other to offset the identity degradations from the larger community. But by banding together they compound their problem as they become more visible, since they all congregate in a particular area, and thus attract greater attention than would be the case as individuals.

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CHAPTER I

CHASSIDIM, LABELING AND STIGMA

Introduction

The following chapter deals with the social process of labeling with respect to the Chassidim as a collectivity. Essentially, my concern is to employ the theoretical foundation of the labeling approach and pose as the main question whether or not the Chassidim can be regarded as stigmatized or not. One of our chief concerns will therefore be the reaction of others and how the community as a whole responds to these reactions; for it is these reactions that produce the stigma, become translated and incorporated into the self-concepts of the Chassidim.

Some of the literature in the Sociology of Deviance and in Social Psychology has stressed the importance of the responses of others in the study of how the individual comes to regard himself as being a certain kind of person and possessing certain characteristics. Such a theoretical approach is apparent in the works of Becker, Erikson, Goffman, Lemert, and Kitsuse, to name but a few sociologists. Thus Becker has written with respect to deviance that:

> . . . deviance is not a quality of the act the person commits, but rather a consequence of the application by others of rules and sanctions to an "offender." The deviant is one to whom that label has successfully been applied; deviant behavior is behavior that people so label (1963:9).

Erikson's theoretical perspective is similar to the above:

> Deviance is not a property inherent in certain forms of behavior; it is a property conferred upon these forms by the audiences which directly or indirectly witness them. Sociologically, then, the critical variable in the study of deviance is the social audience rather than the individual person, since it is the audience which eventually decides whether or not any given action or actions will become a visible case of deviation (1966:6).

In essence, the above mentioned researches have primarily been interested in the influences and effects which the reaction of others may have on the individual's sense of identity; that is, the kind of person the individual thinks himself to be, and whether the cues and messages he receives from others in the course of his interactions with them, support and give credence to his self-conception. This notion of identity is similar to Strauss'when he asserts that: "But whatever else it may be, identity is connected with the fateful appraisals made of oneself--by oneself and by others" (1959:9). A focus on the etiology of deviance, then, under whose rubric "labeling" is incorporated, must be concerned with the interaction process between those labeled as deviant and those who in a sense designate who is to be regarded as deviant.

A central feature of the labeled or stigmatized individual's situation in life is concerned with what Goffman refers to as "acceptance." In other words those who have dealings with the stigmatized person fail to accord to him the respect and regard which the uncontaminated aspects of his social identity have led him to anticipate receiving. What therefore tends to occur is that on the basis of a particular personal failing, a host of generalized characteristics are imputed to the person's

character which may be totally unrelated to the 'original handicap.' Thus we find that physically handicapped people are not only regarded as individuals possessing a physical deformity but also as "different," "odd," ". . . estranged from the common run of humanity, etc., in short, other than normal" (Davis, 1961:122). Homosexuals may be regarded as "perverted," and "mentally ill," and the marijuana smoker "as an insecure escapist lacking self-control and looking for kicks." Such individuals typically find that certain areas of activity, for example employment or recreation, become closed off to them as a result of being "branded" as a special kind of person.

Given that the labeling of an individual will most likely have consequences for the person primarily in terms of his conception of himself, but concomitantly in other areas of everyday life as well, we should ask how the labeled person responds to his situation. For the most part, the literature in this area has tended to focus on the individual and the nature of the strategies which he has adopted to maintain a relatively stable "sense of self." On the other hand, some studies have shown that individuals who are labeled as being certain "types" of people, may band together to offset the hardships caused by the consequences of being labeled. A subculture is thus formed which provides for the individual a more or less stable arena in which he may expect that other therein treat him as a "normal" person. Since the subculture may consist of stigmatized persons, or persons upon whom the label of "deviant" has been conferred (but who may nonetheless be, in Goffmonian terminology,

"discreditable" we may expect that the members of this subculture will develop a set of cues and signals which may be specific to that subculture and recognizable only by the members of the subculture. Thus one mode of response to being labeled may be the formation of or entrance into a specific subculture.

Since labeling is a process which usually develops out of contact situations, whether these be physical or aural, such situations will probably result in unpleasant effects for those regarded as "weird" or "different." The very anticipation of these contacts can lead the labeled to arrange life so as to avoid them. This constitutes another possible response of the labeled person to his "dilemma." On the other hand, there will be situations that the labeled will seek to enter, primarily because once in them, he does not have to be "on guard" as he is when in the presence of "normals." This of course is more true of "discredited" persons than "discreditable" ones, for the latter can learn to conceal their failing from others. In fact, each subculture will probably adopt its own distinctive ways of coping with difficult "contact situations" with nonmembers.

Public Stereotypes of Chassidim

The world in which men live is too complex for individuals to respond to each item or object in terms of its unique characteristics. As a result, objects tend to be classfied into categories and all objects within a category are regarded as being similar. Because objects can so be labeled, men can

conceive of their complex and ever changing world as if it were relatively stable and somewhat predictable.

Just as human beings classify and label objects and events, so do they label people. Besides giving or exuding information about themselves, individuals in the course of their interaction also seek to learn about others. For whatever reasons, it appears important that in order to participate in some activity men reqire at least some information about the other participants. It is mostly a simple matter to acquire such information about close friends, but it is not so simple to immediately gain relevant data about strangers or new acquaintances, and consequently they, too, are labeled and classified. Generally they are labeled into social types, and are approached or avoided on the basis of their classification. As Shiboutani and Kwan point out:

> Social types, like other popular concepts, make it possible for men to organize their world--to anticipate more effectively what the people they encounter are likely to do. Although they are not entirely accurate, their existence facilitates concerted action. Each group has its own repertoire of social types (1965:85).

In a similar vein, Simmons has asserted that:

> The "overcategorization" of objects seems to be a necessary and ubiquitous aspect of human thought processes--a necessary means of organizing the infinate detail and complexity of the "outside" world. But such coding is necessarily a simplification in which information is lost, and misinformation may be added. It must be emphasized that such stereotypes about people and things often contain some freight of truth. But they lead to distorted appraisals because they over estimate within group similarity and between group differences, and they tend to be unresponsive to objective evidence (1965:225).

Although stereotypes and labels are not for the most part accurate, they nonetheless represent ways in which people see each other and behave toward each other. What tends to occur is that conspicuous traits are chosen about an ethnic group, or an individual, and "others" react toward them with respect to public images which these traits produce. These public images, be they of ethnic groups, or deviant subcultures, are in a sense a shorthand depiction of individuals associated with that group or subculture and for the "public" serve as guides by which one may appropriately orient oneself to them. Before I consider a few labels that are commonly pinned on Chassidim, however, I want to briefly deal with Chassidic dress--a general feature of Chassidic appearance by which they come to be regarded by others as "different." It is this "differentness," which, when seen as undesirable, produces the stigma.

A popular conception of male Chassidic dress is confirmed by those to whom Poll refers as shtickl Rebbes and Rebbes (1962:67). Besides having the beard, earlocks, biber hat, and kapotte these Chassidim also wear the shtryml and bekeshe, and especially in the case of the Rebbes, shich un zock . While all pious Jews may wear a taless-kotn, Chassidim believe that the tzitzes should be visible to all and not tucked into the pants so as not to be seen. Male Chassidic garb is sufficiently odd and unusual, so as to elicit a wide range of negative comment, especially from Jews but also from Gentiles. Thus one Jew remarked:

> They're too fanatic for me. Like they walk around with a kapotte and shtryml. . . . Why do they have to do that for? O.K., I can understand that Shabbes is a different day and they want to dress differently . . . but to walk around with a kapotte all the time . . . it's crazy. I mean we're living in the 20th century.

Another Jew, referring to the taless-kotn, said:

> Why to hell do they walk around with the tzitzes hanging out? . . . What to hell are they doing with those tzitzes hanging out? Christ, they ought to be put away. They're an anachronism, that's what they are.

While Gentiles have less to say about Chassidim than do Jews, their most frequent comments about Chassidic appearance was that they "looked funny" or "look queer."

Although Chassidic females can also be recognized by their appearance, their particular dress seems less bizzare than the men's. In fact, the distinguishing feature of the female's appearance is the length of her dress, and this symbol may easily be concealed by wearing a coat. Nonetheless, however, some critical comments are made about the length of the dress. For example: "Well, they wear nightgowns" or "They wear them not that long, but they wear them over the knee, enough to look terrible."

Even when some Chassidim, especially Lubavitcher, decide to adopt contemporary cloths, they will in most cases remain unusual to non-Chassidim, although less so than those who wear the traditional garb. Jerome Mintz, referring to male Chassidic dress, writes:

> Even when the Chassidim adopt contemporary garb they try to distort the manner and style in which it is customarily worn: beaver and

> fedora hats are usually black, and often the brim is turned upward; coats are buttoned on the opposite side; most Chassidim do not wear neckties, or if they do they may wear them folded rather than knotted; those who relinquish the long kaftan during the week usually replace it with an old fashioned dark, double-breasted suit (1968:138).

Two recruits to Lubavitch give what they think was their impression about Chassidim before they turned religous.

> They always stood out. I used to wonder not why they dressed differently, but the idea they were old fashioned. . . . I didn't really think about it too much, but I knew that's how they dressed and some people feel very strongly that they dressed differently. I don't think I felt too strongly about it. You sort of wonder, that's all.

and:

> I just thought they were a bunch of queers, I don't know. I mean, after all, you see a man with a long coat and a big fur hat. You know, I didn't know they were religious. I just thought they were a little queer, because, you know, my uncle's religious too, but he looks like a normal man.

We see, then, that Chassidim elicit a host of reactions from others, especially because of their dress and general appearance, reactions ranging from mild curiosity, on the one hand, to severe censure. Each ethnic group or subculture may find that the generalized responses to them may become transformed into more specific reactions. Simmons has noted that the stereotype portrait of each deviant type studied was somewhat distinct in content.

> It appears that the deviant types are far more similar than different in the degree to which a consensual stereotype of them

> exists. . . . Discernable stereotypes of at least several kinds of deviants do exist in our society and there is a fair amount of agreement on the content of these stereotypes (1965:229).

When we isolate specific labels that become pinned on and attached to the Chassidim's social identity, we find that these orthodox Jews are often said to be "unkempt," "dirty," and that they "smell." It is to be noted that these reactions are not only expressed by one group of people, for example, second generation Canadians. They are voiced by both Jews and Gentiles, but more frequently by Jews. Several reactions from various individuals who exemplify the above labels will now be given. From a young man who had rebelled against his Chassidic upbringing:

> Some of them are azoi farshmeert; payes flying all around, tzechazert, tzeshmeert, his fly's open there, torn stockings, one yellow stocking, the other green, a brown shoe, a black shoe, ripped laces. . . . Oh, what the hell. Those are what you call chazayrim.

A teacher in a Chassidic school:

> They look dirty and I have to admit that some of them smell. . . . I actually smelled it. You know, I can walk into a class and not all of the kids but some of them.

From a policeman whose beat was in a Chassidic neighbourhood:

> They're dirty. Just look at them walking around. And they smell. [How do you know they're dirty?] Look at their shirt and see how dirty they are. I guess I've picked up a few things since I've been here.

Another policeman:

> Let me ask you something. Do you think these people are clean? . . . Na, they're not. [Why do you say that?] Because for one thing they don't look clean. And they smell. [They smell?] Ya. When I talk to them sometimes they smell. And sometimes I have to go to their house on the Sabbath you know, to put in a light, and I see their house, and you see the cockroaches all over.

And finally an orthodox women recounting her experiences about the Chassidim:

> I think I sort of had mixed emotions, because I would hear from friends and people around me what people usually say about the religious people and about Chassidim, and they go, and they're dirty, these typical things that you hear about religious people, and so I had a feeling against them in that respect. . . . all the religious people were crowded in that one area near Park Avenue, and people used to go down there for shopping . . . and they would see these people. . . . The men walk around and they smell, and they dress very raggedly and unfortunately there are some that are not very very straight in their dealings, so you can't really blame them. . . .

As we will see below, Chassidim are not only aware and familiar with these labels but have also proposed counter arguments to show that they are unfounded.

Another popular impression about Chassidim, almost entirely prevalent among Jews, is that a sizeable number support themselves from the donations that are solicited for the Chassidic Yeshivos and/or Rebbes. People ask: "Do these Jews work for a living? What kind of work do they do?" or "Who supports these Jews? Where do they get money?" In other words, many people find it difficult to believe that Chassidim hold regular jobs and work for a living; instead, they are seen as a somewhat

parasitic element, living off charity from the non-Chassidic Jews.

Chassidic Jews, then, come to be labeled by non-Chassidic Jews as well as by Gentiles. They are typed and classified and regarded as being a certain "kind" of person. As a result of being labeled, Chassidim may be seen as stigmatized individuals. Goffman, in analyzing the stigmatized person, says:

> While the stranger is present before us, evidence can arise of his possessing an attribute that makes him different from others in the category of persons available for him to be, and of a less desirable kind--in the extreme, a person who is quite thoroughly bad, or dangerous or weak. He is thus reduced in our minds from a whole and usual person to a tainted, discounted one. Such an attribute is a stigma. . . . By definition, of course, we believe the person with a stigma is not quite human. On this assumption we exercise varieties of discrimination, through which we effectively, if often unthinkingly reduce his life chances (1963:2-3,5).

Goffman continues to distinguish between two different kinds of stigma--one which is discreditable to the holder (it <u>may</u> discredit him) and the other, which will immediately discredit the bearer. The Chassidim, are to be included in the later category, primarily due to their appearance.

The possessor of a stigma will in many cases try to conceal the object of stigmatization from others. In other instances, however, he proudly bears the stigma and does not seem to be affected about doing so. As Goffman notes:

> . . . insulated by his alienation, protected by identity beliefs of his own, he feels that he

> is a full fledged normal human being, and that we are the ones who are not quite human (Ibid:6).

Whether the stigmatized individual bears the stigma voluntarily or is virtually "forced" to do so by others, he can be expected to face certain consequences for it. These consequences emanate from the societal reaction to his stigma and from the fact that others perceive him as being somehow "different." We can now ask the following question: What are some of the outcomes for the Chassidim as a result of being labeled and stigmatized by others?

Consequences of Labeling

At this point, I am primarily concerned with the immediate effects for the Chassid as a result of being labeled. In other words, are there certain contact situations with others during which a Chassid is likely to feel himself less than a "normal human being" when in the immediate presence of a "normal"? Goffman asserts that "when normals and stigmatized do in fact enter one another's immediate presence, . . . these moments will be the ones when the causes and effects of stigma must be directly confronted by both sides" (Ibid.:13).

A person's conception of what he is like is formed partly from the reactions his general demeanor elicits from others. For the most part, people are assured that they are "normal" when their appearance does not call forth nontypical responses; in other words, their presence does not become a focal point of vision or discussion.

Generally speaking, Chassidim, and especially those who wear the traditional garb, learn to be aware that they are the centre of attention in any social situation, with non-Chassidim, be/a focused or unfocused gathering. Thus when one Chassid was asked to pick up the mail at the post office, he replied:

> Ich ho' nisht leeb dortn aranfoorn, me kikt oif mir.
> (I don't like to drive there, they stare at me.)

Another Chassid, when asked to wait for someone for a few minutes at a laundrymat, refused, arguing that "menchn kimen aran in me kikt tzi mir." (People come inside and look at me.) A third individual who began to wear Chassidic dress as he decided to become a Chassid, said: "I was not sure on the street. . . . I was feeling people were looking at me. . . ."

Chassidim sometimes deny, and understandibly so, that they are paid special notice by others. As Davis points out: "A recurring issue in social relations is the refusal of those who are viewed as deviant to concur in the verdict" (1961:120). Many Chassidim are quick to argue that there is no longer any "conventional dress" today, and that therefore their appearance is not outstanding. Others contend that people are generally not concerned about others but are primarily interested in themselves; consequently, "nobody is against nothing, and nobody cares about the other, and nobody will look at you." It is indeed possible that Chassidim are unaware that others accord them special attention and tend to stare at them. Perception is selective and people often see only that which they want to see and blot out

the rest. My own observations indicate that especially Chassidic men and younger boys become spectacles on which others focus their attention, sometimes in apparent disbelief. For example, once when driving with a Chassid in a car and stopping for a red light, I noticed that the passangers in two other cars by our side were pointing at the Chassid and smiling at the same time. On another occasion, I observed firemen as they answered an alarm at a Chassid's home. Since the home was near a Yeshiva, a number of students ran out to watch the firemen. As well, a crowd of non-Chassidim were also gathered. It seemed that the non-Chassidim were more intent on watching the Chassidim than the fire. Also, one of the firemen, referring to the Chassidim, remarked to his co-worker: "Colis, as tu les regaredé?"

While Chassidim may be reluctant to admit that others look or stare at them, accounts and opinions from those who have sustained contacts with these pious Jews may help to verify this belief. A young man whose upbringing was Chassidic and who has many Chassidic acquaintances remarked:

> I feel ashamed to walk around the street with them . . . I'm sure not going to walk around with them. . . . They're what you call an oisnam. [Why should you feel ashamed?] Because most people say, "Look at that schmuck." I just don't want to have anything to do with . . . what if I meet up with a friend, and I'm walking around with that guy?

Another young man with a Chassidic background whose brother was dressed in Chassidic garb, recounted the following incident.

> I went with my brother fishing in Lachine, with a whole crowd watching us. Oh, God. Oh, God. Was I ashamed. No, but I felt so bad--my brother there in his payes, the

> tzitzes in droisn (on the outside, stick-ingout). I can't walk around in Lachine, with a whole bunch of English people. . . .

In most cases, it is reasonable to conclude that the stigmatized person, especially the visibly stigmatized one, will have good reason to feel that mixed contact situations will result in anxious and strained interaction (Goffman, 1963:18).

Another consequence of being labeled centres around the area of employment. It is reasonable to suggest that by virtue of their "out of date" garb, certain types and places of employment are closed off to Chassidic males which might otherwise be available. One individual referred to precisely this when he noted:

> They have jobs, they work, but they're somewhat limited in what kinds of jobs they can get. For example, the Chase Manhatten Bank has just taken in a Negro teller but they still refuse to take in a Chassid.

Another person said:

> They'll find it hard. Someone 'll take one look at them and find them queer. . . . Some Jews wouldn't hire them. If a Jew has a Chassid working for him he'll be afraid of being told he's not Jewish.

Large companies and department stores, for example, expect their employees' appearance to range within "reasonable" limits. Many Chassidim extend the permissible boundaries with their earlocks and untrimmed beards, and three-quarter length kaftans. Those Chassidim who cling to the traditional dress will encounter difficulties when seeking work from non-Chassidic employers. As well, additional difficulties present themselves when Chassidim seek to secure employment by those who are either indifferent or

unsympathetic to the Chassid's religious beliefs. Poll, in writing about Chassidic Jews states that they "not only observe the Shulchan Aruch in the most minute detail but are most meticulous and zealous in their observance. They perform all the perscribed commandments and precepts (of the Torah) with the greatest of care"(1962:25).

First, the Chassid will under no circumstances work on the Sabbath. Actually, according to the Jewish calendar, the Sabbath commences with the setting of the sun on Friday. At that time, a variety of specific mitzvehs guide the Chassid's behavior until the Sabbath ends. Since Chassidim wish to prepare themselves to greet the Sabbath on Friday, they must see to it to be home well before the Sabbath begins. In most cases, and especially during the winter months, this necessitates leaving work early on Friday. Since travelling on the Sabbath is prohibited, this, too, will obligate him to leave earlier. Finally, certain jobs include working Saturday till noon and obviously will have to be declined. A Lubavitcher provides an illustrative example:

> I would have to say that if you're from a religious home then this makes it difficult, first of all because of Shabbes. But you also have Friday afternoon. When I left High School I found it difficult to get employment because the office was open five and a half days a week. There was no work on Shabbes but there was office work which had to be done.

There are also a number of Jewish holidays, spread throughout the calendar year, during which the Chassid will not work. Unless the employer is a religious person, it is to be expected that in most cases the Chassid will not be hired because of his

religious requirements. That this is so is suggested by the following:

> No hospital will employ her with her needs for religious observance. The Toireh says that a doctor must care for the sick--not that he may work on Shabbes but that he must. It is written. But there is no such dispensation for any other group.

For the most part, Chassidim tend to be employed in religious or parareligious occupations or else try to be independent businessmen. In the case of occupations, these usually include teaching in the Yeshiva, being shochtim and mashgichim, to name but a few. In some instances they become salesmen, of car or life insurance, for example, and thus also ensure for themselves to be able to observe Jewish law and tradition. As is suggested in the following comment from a Chassid, certain opportunities are closed off to Chassidim, in part due to the labels extended to them by others:

> It's a sore spot with me what they say about Chassidim that they're unkept, and that they wear their hair long and the coats they're not clean and everything. It's a sore spot. . . . I wonder if some of them that criticize keep themselves as well. . . . Now most of the boys, they start in the Yeshiva, . . . they're there let's say, ten years, . . . so many of them naturally very well become Rabbis and shochtim. Some of them become businessmen for themselves because of prejudices and some of them because there's the opportunity.

Another reaction Chassidim have had to bear due to their stigmatized nature is related to the area of residence. Individual Chassidim as well as Chassidic groups have discovered that their presence is not welcome in certain areas of the city or in rural municipalities. In some instances petitions have

even been circulated to ensure that the Chassidim will be kept out. I am specifically referring to the difficulties which both the Lubavitcher and Tasher Chassidim have encountered. A Lubavitcher was asked if there were any obstacles involved before setting up the Lubavitcher Yeshiva on the corner of Westbury and Plamondon:

> Ooo, was it not easy. Ah, was it not easy. You know, in fact, they had signed a pretty strong petition at city hall, demanding that the school not be allowed in. In fact, we were scouting to buy a house when the ground was broken. This particular house was, I think, three doors from the Yeshiva. Now these people told us that they were one of the first who had signed the petition and they were pretty proud about it too. . . . To them we were monsters. . . . Those who know of us and what they know of us is a poor image of what we really are. For them we are sort of a monster.

When Lubavitch decided to construct the Bays Rivke , a girls' school in Cote St. Luc, a petition was circulated to prevent this from occurring. One of the bocherim gave what he thought was the main reason for the petition-- ". . . they didn't want the beards, it's as simple as that." A Lubavitch woman who was very familiar with the events surrounding Lubavitch in Cote St. Luc commented:

> You don't need more than two or three negative thoughts to be interjected to get a whole chain of thoughts and events started, and since there weren't that many positive feelings for the Yeshiva, at the time, it's easily understood why the community should have refused.

When the site for the Bays Rivke was changed to Westbury and Vezina, again there was some opposition but not as strenuous as in Cote St. Luc. While less information with respect to

"residence" is available about the Tasher Chassidim, their present site in Ste Thérèse was preceded by a number of refusals from other townships and municipalities. The Tasher were refused permission to construct a Yeshiva and housing complex in both St. Janvier and other areas in the lower Laurentians, and when accepted by the municipality of Ste Thérèse West, chose that site.

Individuals who sustain a discrediting stigma will inevitably have to interact with others who are regarded as "normals." In many cases, it can be expected that this interaction will be strained and tense. The stigmatized individual must somehow try to allay the obtrusiveness of his particular shortcoming, especially when in the presence of "normals." Simultaneously, however, he must also develop a rationale that will effectively help him to disavow his deviance. In short, Chassidim must be able to think of themselves as "normal human beings" even when others sometimes fail to accord them this status. What then, are some of the means employed by Chassidim to soften the consequences of being labeled? What rationale, if any, is evolved so that the Chassid may feel that "he is a full fledged normal human being," and that his critics are the ones who deserve understanding?

Strategies to Evade and Reduce Consequences of Labeling

The literature dealing with stigmatization illustrates that a major problem facing individuals upon whom the label of "deviant" has been conferred is that they must manage their

identity when interacting with others. For the most part, however, the process of "identity management" has been considered from the perspective of the individual and the private strategies he has learned to adopt. For example: Davis' research indicates that in the majority of cases, the physically handicapped individual, will have to effect his own personal strategies based on the nature of his handicap, in striving to institutionalize a "normal" relationship with another (1961:120-132). Similarly, Goffman's essay on "Stigman and Social Identity," which encompasses a wider range of stigmatized persons than Davis' study, implies that these individuals must essentially live alone with the discomforts of their stigma (1963). What I wish to consider, however, are the collective strategies Chassidim have assumed to cope with their stigma and their general reaction to the labels that have been credited to them.

It has been noted that when "normals" and stigmatized are in one another's presence that the resulting interaction between them will often be strained. In other words, it is precisely during these moments that the effects of the stigma will have to be confronted. As Goffman has noted, however, "the very anticipation of such contacts can of course lead normals and the stigmatized to arrange life so as to avoid them" (1963:12). (Whereas Goffman is referring specifically to contact "in one another's immediate physical presence," such a qualification is too limiting for our purpose. Instead, the present conception of a "contact situation" may be extended to encompass not only "physical presence" but visual and aural presence as well.) This

general tack seems to be characteristic of all the Chassidic groups and will now be discussed. While individual Chassidim may develop unique strategies to avoid contact with "normals," for example by rearranging their daily walking route, our concern centers about efforts initiated by the recognized formal leaders of the various Chassidic groups.

In general, Chassidic groups have tried to culturally isolate themselves from others, with this isolation ranging from selective contact with certain media to actual physical isolation. While it is both difficult and misleading to generalize about all the Chassidic groupings, it is nonetheless true that all have, in some way, attempted to limit interaction between their adherents and those they consider as potentially harmful influences.

An extreme instance of isolation is exemplified by the Tasher Chassidim in Ste Thérèse. The Tasher Rebbe along with others close to him were of the opinion that the corrupting influences of the urban environment were too powerful to combat effectively and thus decided to erect the Yeshiva in a rural municipality. The Yeshiva also includes a dormitory and those who study there also reside there. As a rule, students are not permitted to leave the vicinity of the Yeshiva. All students are prohibited from reading unauthorized secular literature, thus preventing them from exposure to forbidden ideas. Radios are immediately confiscated while other media such as television and movies are nonexistant. As well, students are covertly discouraged from carrying on conversations

with strangers or frequent visitors to the Yeshiva, and similarly, visitors may sometimes be kindly asked "not to bother with the students." For example, while I was employed by the Tasher, I was repeatedly asked not to spend any time with the bocherim as they were too preoccupied with their studies. In fact, however, some of the students were extremely anxious to talk, but this reminder was nonetheless repeated every few days. Also I would sometimes bring from home a book to read and the suggestion was often made that I refrain from bringing secular books into the Yeshiva "because the bocherim might get interested and they're not supposed to."

These regulations concerning the Tasher Yeshiva students' contact with "outside" influences also hold true in the Satmarer Yeshiva. In Lubavitch, however, conditions seem to be more relaxed. In other words, since not all the students are from families considered to be Lubavitch, students from Lubavitch families will inevitably come into contact with the others and at least learn about them and possibly from them. At the same time, however, strict regulations pertaining to the exclusion of secular influences, for example, magazines, certain books, radios, prevail in the dormitory.

The primary concern among all the Chassidic groups centers about the Yeshiva bocherim. It is they who must always be encouraged to learn and at the same time be shielded from "harmful" and "dangerous" influences. It is not surprising, therefore that their schedule is packed, for this serves the double purpose of a) providing them with an intensive education

and b) ensuring that they have very little or no opportunity to associate with others besides those in their own group. While the obtrusiveness of the men's stigma that is plain to others is sometimes more acute than the bocherim's, it is felt that they can fend others' criticisms and jeer with more poise and assurance. It is they who, over the years, have developed a rationale to justify to themselves but especially to others that their way is the only one. Apparently, less anxiety prevails over the unmarried females, possibly because their appearance is less noticeably different than is true for the males. In fact, they may often be seen in groups of three or four strolling along the street whereas this is hardly ever the case with older Yeshiva students. The latter usually walk at a brisk pace and their destination is usually either the Yeshiva or their home.

I mentioned earlier that in the situation of individuals who are disqualified from full social acceptance, it is important that they be able to regard themselves as "normal human beings." Such individuals usually find that negative imputations come to prevail about their character, that they are not normal like everyone else, and color their relationships with so-called "nornal" others. Stigmatized persons, for good reason, try not to accept others' definitions of them, for these mostly result in disastrous consequences in their own conception of themselves. Instead, like Davis' physically handicapped who attempt to initiate a process of deviance disavowal or normalization, they seek to maintain a definition of themselves as "normals."

In the case of stigmatized individuals who band together to cushion the consequences of stigma, the leadership of the group may posit arguments to account for the reasons labels are pinned on the group. In most instances these labels are not seen to be justified and explanations are usually provided to account for their origins. The leadership, then, assesses the group's situation with respect to the reactions it elicits from "outsiders" and proceeds to formulate a definition of the situation. This definition does not remain private to be employed only by the leadership when confronted by nonmembers who seek to criticize the behavior of the group. Instead it becomes well-known and incorporated by the rest of the members and, is also used by them as a basis for argument or discussion. In some instances meetings or other functions will be held, in part, to expose the members to the views of the leaders. If, as is usually the case, the members cannot always attend these meetings or functions literature may be sent to them, thus bringing them into contact with the views and decisions of the leadership. For example, homosexual organizations, such as the Mattachine Society or One Inc., hold meetings and publish literature whose purpose, in part, is to instruct their membership how to account for and refute the putative characteristics attributed to homosexuals by the rest of society.

Chassidic leaders are usually well-aware that the group's dress and behavior are targets for criticism. Thus it is not unusual for them to address themselves to these criticisms be it via commentaries in their group's publication (s) or through

sermons often delivered during holidays. For example, at the Satmarer Yeshiva during Erev Suckos a Satmarer Chassid delivered a siche for approximately three-quarters of an hour often referring to the kind of clothing worn today by non-Chassidic Jews, emphasizing the unfortunate consequences this would have for the entire Jewish people. He reiterated several times that the Chassidim are indeed the fortunate ones as they have retained the style of dress worn by their ancestors. This siche, it appeared, was directed primarily at the younger people. The Satmarer Rebbe has recently written a treatise in which he justifies the Satmar position vis-à-vis the State of Israel. In Lubavitch the Rebbe's siches, which represent the Lubavitch viewpoint, are disseminated to Lubavitcher Chassidim throughout the world. Both Satmar and Lubavitch have their own publications in which their respective scholars discuss the ideologies of their groups. At the Tasher Yeshiva, for example, Chassidim often preface their remarks by stating "der Rebbe hot gezugt" ("the Rebbe said"). Thus when Chassidim adopt certain arguments to assert that, in fact, among Jews they are the ones who ought to be regarded as "normals," these arguments are in most cases those that have been presented to them and reflect the views of the leadership.

Conclusion

I have tried to show that the Chassidim can be viewed as a stigmatized community and that in this area they undergo similar tribulations to other deviant subcultures. To understand

the above, one must be clear about the incorporated conception of deviance. At the outset of this discussion I quoted from Becker's and Erikson's notions of deviance. To remind the reader of their perspective I briefly draw upon Kitsuse's conception, which also points to how deviants come to be processed. He states:

> Forms of behavior per se do not differentiate deviants from non-deviants; it is the responses of the conventional and conforming members of the society who identify and interpret behavior as deviant which sociological transform persons into deviants (1962:253).

Chassidim are reacted to as deviants primarily as a consequence of their appearance and religious and cultural beliefs. Because their dress and appearance are unconventional and bizzare (in Goffman's terminology "discrediting"), they are labeled as being "dirty," "fanatic," and are recognized to be "different." When the stigma people bear is discrediting to others, they experience a process of "stigmatization." Lemert Writes:

> Stigmatization describes a process attaching visible signs of moral inferiority to persons, such as invidious labels, marks, brands, or publically disseminated information (1967:42).

An outcome of being stigmatized is that Chassidim must endure certain difficulties, two of which were mentioned. First, the Chassid must learn to fend off threats directed at his self-image. Stated differently, the elicited reaction from non-sympathetic others do not correspond to the images the Chassid would like others to have of him. As was noted, Chassidic groups may try to structure situations so that their adherents would have minimal contacts with others not of their "own kind." Second,

in the case of employment, especially in instances where the employee must interact with the customers, it is likely that the Chassid will not be hired. This would be due to the general feeling that his appearance would elicit an unfavourable reaction from most of the customers. As a result, Chassidim are virtually forced to seek employment from other Chassidim or at least Orthodox Jews. This helps to create the impression that Chassidim are neither concerned nor interested about others and that they are clannish and think of themselves as "better than the rest." For example:

> Their way of life is very narrow minded and prejudiced. They say I shouldn't wear slacks on Shabbes. Who are they to tell me? Also they're not worried about others but themselves.

What has occured in Montreal and probably in other cities where different groups of Chassidim reside is that all Chassidim come to be accredited with similar labels. The public views the Chassidim as constituting a homogeneous group and therefore does not differentiate among the various Chassidic groups that actually exist.

CHAPTER II

WITHDRAWL AND ISOLATION

Introduction

It is reasonable to suggest that Chassidim will react to the labels that are pinned on them by others, and will try to offset the social psychological consequences that the reactions of others are likely to produce. One means available to the various Chassidic groups is that they could attempt to isolate themselves from the larger non-Chassidic community, thus minimizing their interaction, both social and cultural, with others who are not sympathetic to them and their ideas.

Both sociologists and anthropologists have been greatly concerned with the acculturation of ethnic groups. The concept of acculturation refers to the process of incorporating the culture of another ethnic group--at first this being the superficial acquisition of others' characteristics, but finally the formation of new perspectives. The literature strongly suggests that in almost all instances of interethnic contact, that members of one group have sooner or later learned the ways of the other, more dominant group. An often cited sociological theory in this respect is that formulated by Robert Park, commonly referred to as the "race relations cycle." Park regarded this cycle as the natural history of the contact of peoples, that is, the typical pattern of development when people of different cultural or racial origins meet (1950).

Since ethnic and minority groups do make an effort to maintain their cultural identity, special efforts are usually undertaken in this respect. Thus, private schools, newspapers, theatre groups, and other channels for cultural communication and expression, are often employed by the group. At the outset, at least, such efforts may very well be met with enthusiasm and success, and the solidarity in the group runs high. Various facilities may be organized, such as welfare associations, medical centres, which have the effect of infusing in the members of the minority a feeling of obligation to perpetuate the group. The cultural identity of the group is generally challenged when the younger generation is more exposed to acculturation than are their elders. The usual result is that the two generations do not share the same perspective, and this will often result in basic family changes.

For the most part, ethnic and minority groups do not fare well in their quest to retain their unique customs and traditions after contact is initiated with the more dominant cultural group. Although the group does not become totally absorbed by the larger culture, it nonetheless does lose some of its distinctive features which characterized it initially, such as language. In this light, Glazer and Moynihan have written:

> Ethnic groups, then, even after distinctive language, customs, and culture are lost, as they largely were in the second generation, and even more fully in the third generation, are continually recreated by new experiences in America (1963:17).

Thus, although the group will often retain certain selected features of its cultural heritage, these will often be cast in a

different form from the original, and will therefore take on new meanings for the members.

The Chassidic Jews offer us the opportunity to examine how an ethnic group, exposed to the culture of the larger society, has attempted to resist the Americanization of its distinctive way of life. The following questions should be asked: a) In which specific areas have the Chassidim sought to avoid contact with the larger pervasive non-Chassidic culture? b) Given that some contact is unavoidable, how have the Chassidim transformed these contact experiences so as to fit them in with their own cultural perspectives? and, c) What rationales, if any, have been put forth by the Chassidim to account for their deviation from the dominant culture by which they are surrounded?

Although an attempt is made to provide some answers to the above questions, the reader should properly regard this effort as only an initial exercise. While several contact areas are drawn upon, some of the illustrations are more applicable than others to the main questions asked. No single "contact area" is of greater importance than another, for only in their cumulative effects have they enclosed the Chassidim within boundaries which may be seen as protective devices from the influence of the surrounding non-Chassidic culture.

Language

People who can communicate with each other are able to develop shared perspectives and at least partially understand one another. The means through which these shared perspectives originate is language. This idea is well expressed by Shiboutani and

Kwan when they say:

> The learning of a new language is of fundamental importance, for language is a basic social institution. Linguistic symbols not only provide the avenues through which other transactions take place but are the vehicles of thought. Those who learn a new language learn to categorize their experiences differently and are introduced to a new world of objects (1965:472).

Thus it is not surprising that immigrants, upon their arrival to a new country, are immediately encouraged to learn the main language spoken. The learning of a new language is undoubtedly the first step of a subtle process by which newcomers are slowly absorbed into already established frameworks. It is by being familiar with and speaking the language that newcomers are able to acquaint themselves with the cultural perspectives shared by the other people around them.

In general, we find that Chassidim will not speak English unless the situation in which they find themselves calls for them to do so. In other words, the language in which daily discourse is undertaken is either Yiddish or in the case of many of the Chassidim from Hungary, especially the parents, Hungarian. If, however, contact must be engaged in with others who cannot speak Yiddish, most Chassidim will probably be able to at least make themselves sufficiently understood in English, and in Montreal, French, although less so than English.

The attitudes toward learning English are not uniform among the Chassidic groups or even within the groups themselves. For example, more Lubavitcher Chassidim will be able to speak English than Satmarer or Tasher Chassidim. This is largely due

to the efforts initiated by Lubavitch to contact Jewish youth and in order to effectively do so English has had to be learned. As well, Lubavitcher Yeshivos are more likely to attract students whose background has already exposed them to either some secular education or else other forms of contact with the English language, and hence these students are usually completely fluent in English. Also, as we will see later, more emphasis is placed on secular education in the Lubavitcher Yeshiva than is the case with the other Chassidic Yeshivos.

A good number of the parents in all the Chassidic groups do not permit their children to study secular and hence English subjects until a certain age. As a result, it is not uncommon to find Chassidic youth who virtually neither understand nor speak any English at all. An employee in one of the Yeshivos who was hired, in part, to teach English said:

> . . . first of all, half of the parents didn't approve of their children learning English at all. You have people who are born in Brooklyn, in Montreal, who can't read and write English. They can't even sign their name. The only language they speak is Yiddish and the second language, if any, is Hungarian. Most of the parents consider it goiyish, not English. . . .

A strong effort is made by both parents and teachers to ensure that the younger people will be able to both speak and understand Yiddish. Thus, during the course of my interviews conducted with Chassidim in English, it was not at all uncommon to hear the parents speak to the children only in Yiddish. Similarly at the Yeshivos the language in which religious studies are taught is Yiddish, and the students will always address their

teachers of religious studies only in that language. In the case of the Tasher and Satmar Chassidim, all the conversations of which I was a part, as well as those I sometimes briefly overheard were in Yiddish. Once while I was talking in English with a Tasher Yeshiva student, another walked by saying: "Voos is, dee'st shon fargesn Yiddish?" ("What, have you already forgotten to speak Yiddish?")

I do not mean to suggest that all Chassidim have made active efforts to avoid learning English or that all Chassidic parents have discouraged their children from learning the language. In general, whether or not Chassidic youth learn English has in part to do with whether they are male or female, the kind of family they come from, and most important, the Yeshiva or school they attend. But we may conclude that, in general, Yiddish is the everyday spoken language among both parents and their children, and the children with their peers. Thus, while English as a language is sometimes taught, it is not done so for literary purposes, but instead to accommodate the Chassid if and when he should be forced to interact with others with whom he will not be able to speak in Yiddish.

Secular Education

When the dominant group of the society provides schools, the process of acculturation is usually facilitated. It is most certain that the laws making education compulsory until a certain age have helped to ensure the comparatively rapid acculturation of the various ethnic groups in both the United States and Canada (Ibid.:477). What is taught in the schools may often conflict

with certain views held by the parents, for example, be it in terms of dating patterns or attitudes toward work, intergenerational conflicts have been commonplace in the families of immigrants. Since parents virtually have no say over what the curricula in the schools will include, they also have little or no control as to what their children will learn. Thus while immigrant parents have been eager for their children to receive an education, what is usually inculcated in the student along with academic knowledge has often been a source of conflict between the children and their parents (Friedenberg, 1959). With the Chassidim, on the other hand, we sometimes find that disappointment and tension vis-à-vis the curriculum exist between the parents of the students and those held responsible for ensuring an adequate secular education.

Most of the Chassidic schools offer a program in secular studies as part of the over all curriculum. The teachers for this program are hired on a part-time basis and are generally recruited either through ads in the newspaper or the teachers in the school who inform their friends about the available teaching positions. For example:

> [How did you find out about it?] (That teachers were required.) The newspaper. . . . Actually it was a little ad in the newspaper. They were looking for a part-time teacher and I was looking for a part-time job. I phoned up and the first thing he told me when I phoned up was, "You'll only be getting $3.50 an hour, if you want the job."

or:

> [We were talking about how you got to teach in the school.] Through another girl . . . who taught there half days.

The teaching qualifications of those hired are likely to vary from teachers who have both a university degree and a teaching certificate to those who are simply attending university with no teacher training. Since the job is part-time and in some cases only begins in the late afternoon, university students are often able to arrange their schedule so that their teaching hours will not conflict with their classes at the university. Regardless of the academic experience of the teachers, however, as Poll notes, "they teach only 'subject matter' and not 'the child'" (1962:73).

One of the striking features of Chassidic secular education is the extent to which the subject matter is screened. This often takes the form of explicit instructions that are given to the teachers, informing them of what they are not expected to discuss with their students. A teacher at an Orthodox girls' school, which also included girls from Chassidic families, remarked as follows:

> But at the beginning of the year the Rabbi made up a manual for all teachers. A section of this manual was devoted to explaining to teachers what we must not teach. . . . It said something to the effect of; everything that is contrary to Jewish religion must not be taught . . . such as evolution. Anything philosophical and contrary to Judaism must not be taught. Sex is absolutely out. If a teacher feels a serious need to communicate these ideas to the students, then she is to consult the Rabbi first, but under no circumstances is free discussion to be allowed in the classroom.

In some cases explicit verbal instructions are given by the principal. For example, a university graduate who was teaching

Chassidic boys from various shteeblech had this to say:

> He told me a few things that I shouldn't be discussing with the kids. [Like?] Things that would be conflicting with their religious beliefs. . . . Don't talk in terms of time-long periods of time because they just won't believe you. They all just sort of block it out or they'll challenge you . . . because the earth has been in existance for a certain amount of time for them and if you talk in terms of millions of years. . . .

In some schools there is an actual inspection of the reading material to ensure that both the written as well as pictorial contents will not suggest anything contrary to what the students are expected to be familiar with. In other words, on a secular level, certain areas of discussion will not only be purposely avoided but all possible references to that area, for example, women, will also be forbidden. An office worker in one of the Yeshivos who also sometimes helped teach, had this to say:

> Ah, now, when . . . the ---- Rebbe wanted them to learn English they had to learn even in the higher classroom certain books that were approved by them. For instance, if there was a picture of a woman, even a cartoon picture, anything, it doesn't matter whether she had a long skirt on or not, it had to be marked in black. And I told the ---- Rebbe that if I mark it in black the boys will be more curious but this had nothing to do with it. It had to be marked off. All the Rabonim saw that every single book that had illustrations, even for the youngsters, all of them were taken out and all references to women were taken out.

A final means used to limit the secular educational experience is to confine it to within the classroom--to the actual learning session between the teacher and the students. Although homework may be seen as a valid reason for the extension

of secular learning to outside the classroom, extrasecular curricular activities are usually disapproved. The following was recounted by a teacher whose students ranged between ages ten and thirteen:

> I wanted to take my kids to the Montreal museum and to the Redpath and it had to go through the Council and it was refused just like that--they just wouldn't allow it. Also I wanted to start a library. It was refused--ostensibly, you know, on technical grounds that, you know, there wasn't enough grounds on the school. . . . They didn't know which books I would bring in and they thought the threat was too great and it would be too much trouble anyways, so they said forget it. . . their list of priorities didn't include their kids reading anything like Hardy Boy mysteries or anything to get them interested in reading.

It is important to note, at this point, that the various Chassidic groups' attitudes to secular learning is by no means uniform. A direct consequence of this is that the curricula of the different Chassidic schools is likely to vary. This sharp variation may be best seen by referring to the secular programs offered in two local Chassidic Yeshivos, each under the auspices of a particular Chassidic group. Whereas Yeshiva X, albeit for specific reasons, offers an academic curriculum very similar to that of the Protestant schools, Yeshiva Y provides its students with virtually no secular studies program at all. While the former Yeshiva includes a high school program which can prepare those interested for University entrance examinations, the latter Yeshiva only nominally contains an "English Department," as is indicated by the following observation of a former teacher:

> I'll say there is no secular part of the school. There is more or less a front to get a grant from the government. When the government inspector comes in, all of a sudden the Gemoreh disappears and the books come out. This is a ruse. There's no secular education. . . . They're not interested in it.

Quite recently, however, Yeshiva Y has begun to teach its very young students English.

While the Yeshivas themselves vary with respect to their attitudes toward and their provision of secular studies, Chassidic parents also maintain differing views as to the importance of secular education for their children. These views do not only manifest themselves in whether or not secular classes will be attended by the children, but also the age period during which such attendance will begin. Many parents strongly feel that at least during their childrens' formative years, children should receive only an intensive religious education. Thus one parent, when asked when her son will begin to study secular subjects, remarked: "Well, not till he is eight or so. He can add and subtract . . . we play with coins at home . . . I teach him to write English from newspaper headlines." Some parents, on the other hand, although aware of both the possible positive and negative consequences of a secular education, decided that their children will participate in a secular educational program, albeit one that is "compatible" with their religious training. Consequently, for example, Chassidic schools do not stress the concept of evolution to any degree, since according to the Jewish calendar, the earth is 5730 years old and is thus not billions of years old. Finally, there are those parents who see no

beneficial gains to be had from a secular education and therefore insist that their children concentrate on religious studies during the entire school day. This general view was expressed by the parent who said: "I firmly believe that the only way to educate boys is to give them the best possible Jewish education. They won't learn any English subjects." While certain students will not study secular subjects in school, in many cases a tutor will be hired by the parents to give their children private secular instruction. Such instruction will be arranged so that it will not conflict time-wise with the child's religious education. An interesting phenomenon, not to be dealt with in this thesis, however, is that some parents have attempted to exert pressure on those responsible for the secular programs in their son's or daughter's particular school. Generally speaking, they have insisted that the quality of the program be improved, both in terms of the qualifications of teachers hired as well as the actual amount of time given over to secular studies.

While government law requires that schools provide their students with secular learning in order to receive financial support, the subject matter to be taught as well as the time alloted for the teaching are determined by the individual schools. Because the schools vary, especially with respect to the time allocated for secular studies, it is very difficult to make general statements about Chassidic secular education which will reflect the policies and attitudes of all the schools. What is applicable to all the schools, however, is that primary emphasis is placed on religious education. Secular education is incorporated

into the over-all curriculum only to the extent that it will not prove conflicting with what the child learns during the course of his or her religious training. At any rate, students are never encouraged to think in terms of actually attending university, and in fact active efforts are often undertaken to discourage such hopes. While most Chassidim agree that their children should receive some formal secular education, they also strongly believe that it should be a limited education. Chassidim are ultimately concerned that their children grow up to be frume un ehrleche Yiden (pious and honest Jews). In at least one respect, their conception of education differs from the one that prevails in our secular society. This idea is best expressed in the following quotation from a Lubavitcher:

> What does it mean to have an education? You see, when you say that you want to educate someone, what this means is that you want them to be a good Jew, a good human being. You want them to have yeray-shomayim, you want them to have respect. This is what it means to be educated. Now, if you're talking about learning a trade, being an engineer or something, then, that's something else. I mean you can be a good engineer--you can understand machines and computers, but that doesn't mean you're a good Jew. To learn an occupation, to learn a good trade, is not so difficult. . . . You shouldn't get the two confused.

Finally while most Chassidim have come into contact with the non-Chassidic world, so to speak, by virtue of their secular education, they have not done so at the expense of losing or even greatly modifying their own cultural distinctiveness.

The Media

Development of the media of mass communication has greatly increased contact between culturally and physically enclosed ethnic groups and those around them. This increased contact need not necessarily be physical in nature, for with television, for example, one could see and hear and even appreciate how others live without living that way yourself. The movie industry has successfully attracted wide audiences and has been one of the main channels through which new symbols are introduced to the public (Shiboutain, 1965:477). While the mass media have brought people closer together, they have also, at least partly, been responsible for inter- and intragenerational conflicts (Ibid.:485). I would like to examine Chassidic attitudes vis-à-vis certain forms of the media, for example, television, newspaper and movies, and show how their effects have, in most cases, been contained so as not to be socially injurious to Chassidic life.

It is almost a doctrinal feeling among the Chassidim that the effects of television on the family in general and on the younger children in particular can only be of negative influence. Thus as Mintz notes, the Satmarer Rebbe has banned the watching of television among his followers (1968:148). While most Chassidim will relucantly agree that there may be the occasional "good" television program, all strongly feel that the vast majority of the programs are potentially harmful to view. The following opinions of a Lubavitcher and Klausenburger respectively reflect the feelings of most Chassidim to television:

> The contents of many T.V. programs consist of either some type of sexual connotation;

> it's usually overloaded with sexual activity or many aspects of violence. And I feel a lot of it has to do with other religions, other forms of religious observances, the worship of the Church and other religious ways. . . . I don't feel it's to their benefit to see all the programs on television.
>
> Well the thing is this. With children you have a television in the house they would be absorbed in television, and even ourselves too; with television you don't look into a book . . . I mean that you get nothing out of and it's waste of time. And there's many unethical programs.

It is therefore rare indeed to find a television in a Chassid's home. There are however certain exceptions and even in these cases, only certain programs are viewed.

While newspapers and magazines may be found in Chassidic homes, parents tend to be extremely selective in their choice. Those magazines which are considered to have articles and advertisements directly referring or alluding to sex simply are never purchased. (This criterion is also applied to the Yiddish press, for as a Chassid pointed out: "As far as the content of the English newspapers, the Yiddish newspapers are every bit as corrupting and secular.")

> We get the Readers Digest and Time. They are the most kosher since they have few shmutz pictures. I never buy the Jewish newspaper because I don't want the boys to get hold of the romances.

While some families may subscribe to secular magazines and newspapers, be they in English or in Yiddish, they nonetheless make sure that these will not become accessible to their children. Thus, one parent, when asked if she permits her children to read secular magazines, remarked: "If they pick them up I would go

over to them and say: 'What do you have to read this for?'" As well, the Yeshivos try to ensure that the secular press will not be read by the students, and in the case of both the Tasher and Lubavitcher Chassidim, such forms of literature will be confiscated if brought into the Yeshiva or the dormitory.

In the case of movies we find that whereas some women, older girls and children will at times go to a show, participation in such an activity is unheard of for the men and Yeshiva students. Movies, however, are carefully screened beforehand with respect to their contents, thus eliminating those films which either deal with sex or murder and killing. It is not surprising, therefore, that children's movies and musicals are the ones most often attended. Movies are even sometimes shown at the Bays-Rivke--a girls' school affiliated with Lubavitch--for the children, girls, and even others in the neighborhood who may have no connections with Lubavitch, yet also there:

> What usually happens at the Bays-Rivke is that some of the Yeshiva boys will see a film beforehand and will censor it to see if there's anything objectionable in it.

While most of the Chassidim have not completely segregated themselves from the effects of the above mentioned media, their exposure to them, at best, is highly selective, as well as minimal. Let me now give some reasons offered by the Chassidim to account for their behavior with respect to the media. I will then discuss, briefly, some of the strategies of the Chassidic groups to see to it that members' exposure to the media remains highly limited.

It appears that the Chassid's underlying concern in all

engagements is whether or not the time spent is being put to what he considers to be a constructive use. This is not meant to imply that Chassidim consciously deliberate the extent of their involvement in each and every activity. Rather, given that certain expectations are made of the Chassid, will they be met if, for example he participated in "extra" activities? The expectation that a person's time be used effectively is made explicit in the following quotation:

> . . . it is just that a boys time should be taken up with studying. . . . The outside world thinks that Lubavitch is trying to shut everything out, whereas in Lubavitch you don't have time for other things, so that it isn't that it is forbidden. There is nothing wrong with reading a newspaper except for the fact that in the time that you are reading the newspaper you could have studied the Gemoreh.

While reading a newspaper or watching television may theoretically be possibilities in order to occupy one's time, the Chassid, however, asks: "How long will this take?" and/or "What do I stand to gain from this?"

> I like to read a lot. I know that if I get my hands on a newspaper I read it from beginning to end and that would take about three hours and I don't think it's worth three hours of my time to read the Star or to read any sort of newspaper. I think I would much rather spend my time reading a saifer where I know I would be learning something.

or:

> Do you really get anything out of watching television? I mean can you actually learn something from watching something stupid like westerns? . . . What I am asking is what is added to yourself by watching other people on T.V.? Now I can pick up this book (pointing to a saifer), and begin to read it and know that I am getting something out of it.

At times Chassidim give the impression that if the contents of the newspaper were somewhat improved they would become interested. Since, however, the news is highly repetitious there can be little reason to read it on a daily basis. Two Yeshiva boys expressed themselves in this way: "I don't think it's so necessary to read the same thing in the newspaper everyday. I mean most of the paper is taken up with stories of murder, rape, and advertising."

> I don't really need it. I mean what for? The news is repetitious. I don't feel that I gain anything from reading the paper. Sometimes when I'm at home and it's hard to study I'll read the paper, but I don't feel I'm losing anything by not reading it.

Since some of the media are highly accessible to those who are interested, how do the Chassidim try to ensure that "contact" with them will be minimal if established at all? I am not concerned at this point with the efforts made by the individual families; instead, I will show briefly that the manner in which the "community" is organized and the expectations made of those within it, helps to prevent, at least to a large degree, "contact" with the mass media. While these efforts are directed toward all, it is the younger unmarried people on whom most of the attention is centered.

Of primary concern are the Yeshiva students, especially those who reside at the Yeshiva dormitory. As has already been mentioned, secular literature is not permitted to be brought in by the students and it is indeed rare to see any of the students with radios. A former teacher at the Tasher Yeshiva, when asked

whether the boys were permitted to listen to the radio remarked: "Two or three sneak in with a radio. If it's found it's taken away or broken or something. They git rid of it." That the reading of secular newspapers is also forbidden at the same Yeshiva is indicated by this comment:

> No. No. Not at all. I sometimes brought in a couple of newspapers but there was one that said: "forget about it, because the boys aren't interested in current events." And they saw a Gazette and they threw it away.

The daily schedule of those attending the Yeshiva appears to be organized so that there is virtually very little free time available if any at all. Depending on the particular Yeshiva, the learning day may begin anywhere from five or six in the morning and end at nine or ten at night. The younger students will, of course, have a less strenuous learning schedule and thus begin at nine. Even then, however, many are likely to attend afternoon secular studies once their religious studies for the day are over. It is therefore not uncommon for younger students to come home from school at six or seven in the evening. Once the student arrives home or to the dormitory he will usually either continue to learn on his own, as is the case with those learning in the Bays-Medresh, or else will do homework. One Lubavitch mother said the following about her son's daily schedule:

> I think it requires an enormous amount of sheer physical strength. My sons leave the house at 7 a.m. to daven. They get back at 8:30, have a fifteen minute breakfast because school starts at 8:45. At 12:30 they daven minche (afternoon prayers). They get back for lunch at 12:45. From

> 1:30 till 4:30 they learn English. Then, without a break they learn Chumesh with Rashi from 4:30 till 6:00. Before they come home for supper they daven mairiv (evening prayers). We eat supper till 7:30 and then they go back again. From 7:30 till 9:30 they learn Chassides. When they get back at 9:30 they do their homework till 11:00 o'clock at night. Sunday they learn Jewish all day.

For those in the Yeshiva, then, and especially the older students, it is reasonable to suggest that their extra-learning activities, if any, are at best circumscribed by the demands of their time-table. That this is indeed so is suggested by the following comment by a Yeshiva principal:

> Well, if the boys at the Yeshiva decided to take time off and go and see a movie, something must be wrong with their scheduling, because I can't see in their week where they would have time. I mean they would be breaking school requirements.

Thus, due to the highly stringent time-table, Yeshiva students are expected to follow, there is little or no time available to either go to movies, read the newspapers or watch television.

Generally speaking, married men are considered to be better able to resist the influences of the mass media. An office worker at the Tasher Yeshiva, while talking about newspapers remarked:

> And the older people are allowed. Of course, the Rabonim (Rabbis) themselves are allowed to walk around. Once you grow up you can appreciate these things, you see, but they don't want the boys to turn to the ads.

Yet although married men are more or less free to spend their time after work as they wish, there is nonetheless a certain demand made on this time. For one, they are expected to recite

the evening prayer. While this may, if necessary, be accomplish at home, in most cases this ritual is performed together with others in the Yeshiva. As well, there is the expectation that one ought to spend part of one's day pursuing religious learning. Since most of the day is taken up by work, only the evening is left for this pursuit. It is therefore not unusual that many, if not most, of the mens' evenings are spent in the Yeshiva. Because it is expected that some time will be devoted to learning, and since little time is actually available, such activities as reading the newspaper, listening to the radio or going to a movie are either kept at a minimum or else completely avoided.

While the Chassidic groups may isolate themselves both socially and culturally, residential isolation is an additional alternative. This form of separation is impossible in an urban setting and, at best, Chassidim of the same group might only congregate themselves within a certain radius of a specific focal point--the Yeshiva. Thus while almost all the Satmarer live within a few blocks of the Yeshiva, that area of the city is predominantly Greek. It is inevitable, then, that there be at least visual contact between the Chassidim and Greeks. Residential isolation can occur only in a rural setting and the Tasher Chassidim are exemplary of this behavior.

The Tasher have established their Yeshiva in a rural setting, in Ste Thérèse, eighteen miles north of Montreal. The primary reason for choosing a rural area as the site for the Yeshiva is formally stated in a pamphlet circulated by the

Tasher Yeshiva:

> The concentration of thoughts, which is the basic requirement of efficient studies, could only be achieved in the undisturbed atmosphere of a small town, outside the turbulent life of a large city.

This reason is stated much less formally by a Tasher Chassid: "This city is too dangerous." [Are you talking about the traffic situation in the city?] "No, the immoral influence of the city."

An undated press release from the Yeshiva, signed by the Public Relations Director, notes that the Yeshiva was erected at a cost of more than $1,000,000--$500,000 of which was granted by the Canadian Government in the form of a long term loan, and that teaching activities began in April 1964 under the auspices of Grand Rabbi F. Lowy. It goes on to note:

> The building houses a synagogue, accomodating 600; a library; ten classrooms; a dormitory consisting of 50 separate rooms; two kitchens; and all the facilities necessary to serve the entire student body. Around the Yeshiva, there are 18 bungalows which house the various Rebbes and teachers and teachers employed by the institution.

While the Tasher Rebbe and some of his followers have moved to Ste Thérèse, the majority have remained in Montreal. What has been set as the goal, however, that is, the provision of an "undisturbed atmosphere" for bocherim learning at the Bays-Medresh level, has been accomplished. The Tasher Yeshiva is sufficiently physically isolated so that its student body, approximately 125-150 in number, is hardly likely to come into lengthy contact with non-Chassidim and non-Orthodox Jews.

While the evidence indicates that isolation from the

surrounding culture is the means employed to contain the unfavorable reactions from "outsiders," it is impossible for the Chassidim to withdraw entirely from the larger non-Chassidic community. Thus there are certain areas of everyday life in which Chassidim will, for one reason or another, have to come into contact with others not of their own kind.

Contacts with the Larger Community

Unlike the Chassidim in Williamsburg who have successfully established Lee Avenue as a commercial centre along which virtually any item may be purchased, the Chassidim in Montreal have been less fortunate in this respect. Because the size of the Montreal community is considerably smaller, there are less economic opportunities for the Chassidim to work with their own. As well, there are less stores either owned or run by Chassidim of any particular group which the members of the group may patronize. Although some stores are operated by Chassidim, for example, fruit stores, butcher shops, bakeries, candy stores, for certain other desired items, the Chassidim must do their buying at and come into contact with non-Chassidic establishments. These desired or necessary items not only include the dry cleaners or electrical repair shops but specific professional services as well. For medical, legal, or even social assistance, the Chassidim are dependent on the non-Chassidic public, since the educational systems organized by the various Chassidic groups do not call for university training.

Another area in which some Chassidim will have to inter-

act with a non-Chassidic public, albeit a primarily Jewish one, lies in the area of fund raising. The financial assistance which the Chassidic school receives from the government is hardly sufficient to meet the budget required to carry out the curriculum. Also, because the Chassidic schools do not devote the entire schoolday to secular studies, they do not receive as much governmental assistance per student, as say, a Protestant school. As a result, the various Chassidic groups must turn to the public for either donations or contributions in kind. Although money collections and the soliciting of contributions have become a highly organized process with most of the Chassidic groups in that certain people devote their entire time to this matter, at some point or points in the process, physical contact must be established with at least some of the donors.

A third boundary situation in which Chassidim must establish some contact with non-Chassidim concerns the recruitment of teachers for secular studies. Whereas the Chassidim are able to produce trained specialists in matters pertaining to religious affairs, for example, ritual slaughterers, Rabbis, scribes, they are unable to train their own to become recognized teachers of secular studies. The reason for this inability lies in that secular education is never accorded as much importance as is religious education and thus secular training is often reluctantly offered, and only till a certain level. In only exceptional cases do some Chassidim receive a university education. Thus the Chassidic groups are forced to seek acceptable teachers from the non-Chassidic public.

Although I have merely listed a few of the possible boundary situations, future work in this area will try to uncover some of the possible interactional strains that may develop within these situations. Thus analytically there can be a formal typology of boundary situations as well as a substantive typology of interactive situations. It may be that certain Chassidic groups face particular problems not encountered by the others, although certain types of situations may be commonly considered as dangerous.

While I have mentioned that Chassidic groups try to enclose themselves from the larger non-Chassidic community, Lubavitcher Chassidim make numerous efforts to reach out and influence the entire Jewish community. This is primarily due to the ideology of Lubavitch which urges its followers to spread themselves out to contact Jews and interest them in Yiddishkayt. Several examples may be cited as to how Lubavitcher attempt to institute this goal. In the following chapter two examples are chosen: a) efforts by Lubavitch to take on newcomers to the Lubavitch movement and, b) the Teffilin Campaign. The main focus in the next chapter, however, is on how newcomers to Lubavitch try to fit themselves in and are fitted in by others to the mainstream of everyday life in the Lubavitcher community.

CHAPTER III

NEW RECRUITS

Introduction

Not all Chassidim are necessairly from a Chassidic background. Some Jews, be they from Orthodox, Conservative, or even Reform families, may for one reason or another decide to become more concerned about their Judaism and to interest themselves in a Chassidic group. Of the various Chassidic groups in the city, Lubavitch has both been the most concerned and has taken the greatest initiative to establish a relationship with other Jews, to instruct them in some of the more basic aspects of Judaism. For Lubavitch males this has mainly taken the form of the Tefillin Campaign, and for the women, many charitable functions and probably most importantly, The Institute for Brides and Grooms. As a result of these efforts by Lubavitch, individuals and families of non-Lubavitch background have expressed both an interest and willingness to become a "part" of this Chassidic group.

The following chapter is not concerned with the psychological motives of individuals which prompt them to "join" or "affiliate themselves" with a Chassidic group--in this case, Lubavitch. Our primary emphasis is addressed to the following questions: How and where do potential Lubavitcher learn about being Lubavitcher? How do they learn to conduct themselves socially so that their presence in the group does not remain conspicuous for too great a time? What are the actual things that

newcomers are expected to learn? Where does this learning take place? For example, does Lubavitch set up teaching classes for this purpose? In other words, is it possible to speak about a social learning experience, common to all new recruits, by which they become initiated into and integrated with the remainder of the people in that group?

Although the present discussion is confined to Lubavitch it is quite likely that other Chassidic groups--the Satmarer and Tasher, for example--also attract individuals who eventually come to be considered to think of themselves as Chassidim of that group. I chose Lubavitch both because to my knowledge there were more recruits in that group than in any other, and also since contacts with Lubavitcher Chassidim were more extensive than with any other group. What follows is in a sense a preliminary report, as my discussions and interviews with "newcomers" to Lubavitch have been limited to only eleven individuals. All however, have been recruited to Lubavitch within the last ten years, and appear to be regarded by others as Lubavitcher.

All but one of the respondents was born a Jew and of the eleven (five males and six females) seven were born in Montreal, one in Toronto, two in the United States and the other in Israel. All had attended High School, while five had also completed at least four years of university. Only four, however, claimed to receive a formal Jewish education. All but two of the recruits claimed that their parents' home was kosher, but usually continued to mention that this did not necessarily mean that their parents were <u>frum</u> (religious). All but one of the recruits

are presently living in Montreal, while the one exception, although originally from Montreal, was presently residing in the United States.

What the Recruit Must Learn

The new recruit, depending on his or her background, will initially have to become familiar with and eventually learn much new information. The contents of this information can be roughly separated along two related paths: 1) that which familiarizes the recruit with matters pertaining to religious behavior, and 2) that which brings him into awareness of what will be expected of him in social conduct. The extent to which any new religious practises will have to be learned by the recruit, for example, can be seen to depend on their previous religious training. Thus a female recruit, while speaking about kashres remarked:

> I didn't really have that many questions, because . . . when it came to kashres, I had done enough of it in my house before so I didn't need to ask questions about it in terms of my husband and myself.

While in some instances what must be learned may be similar for the men and women, there are, nonetheless, certain features which are either of more importance to or else have more relevance to either men or women. Consequently, what the male and female recruits must familiarize themselves with is discussed separately.

The basic prerequisite for the male is that he learn to and practise being an observant Jew. This ideal was clearly expressed by two newcomers to Lubavitch:

> Well, first of all the idea is not to become a Lubavitcher. The idea is to become a more observant Jew, and this is what

> Lubavitch is after. . . . What is important is that someone becomes a Jew.
>
> Well, to a certain extent, you have to answer the question by saying and by answering the prerequisite question: "How does one become an Orthodox Jew?" because in no sense is being a Lubavitcher any less. . . . As a basic minimum the question of becoming a Toireh mitzveh Jew is certainly a prerequisite.

While eventually he will come to learn about the customs and traditions that are unique to Lubavitch, initially, at least, he must commit himself to begin to behave in the manner of an Orthodox Jew. At the outset this may take the form of beginning to pray on a more regular basis than in the past, putting on phylacteries (Tefillin) and attending synagogue. Generally speaking, the individual decides for himself which mitzvehs he will more readily observe. For example:

> I remember when I stopped writing on Shabbes. I didn't do anything else. I didn't daven, I listened to the radio, I answered the telephone, but I didn't write.

Since an Orthodox Jew is responsible to observe 613 mitzvehs, the attainment of this goal is seen as an everlasting process hardly to be reached by anyone save for a chosen few. Thus the new recruit sees himself and is seen by others as residing at a particular level of Orthodoxy, with the goal being to progress to a higher level:

> . . . what you do with a person is you recognize that every person is on a level and his job is to get to the next level. Not to get ten levels ahead and not to get on someone else's level, but it's his particular level. . . . For a person who doesn't keep Shabbes at all, maybe for that person to give up smoking on Shabbes puts that person on a different level.

A newcomer to Lubavitch put it this way:

> If you make up your mind to daven everyday, this is a big step. . . . But if you are at the point where you do all the davening, then you job is, perhaps, to daven with a little more attentiveness. There's no limit to what a person can do. Of course he should never be satisfied with where he is. . . . I'm putting on Tefillin in the morning. When you're starting out this is in itself a very major step. Maybe you want to say "I want to put myself in the mood to put on Tefillin." This is how some people do it. Some Lubavitcher don't put on Tefillin until about ten o'clock in the morning. They've been up since six preparing themselves for it.

Thus while he is learning the many aspects of Jewish law, the recruit is expected to incorporate as much of it as he sees feasible for the time being into his everyday life. As he continues in Lubavitch, however, he is also expected to become more observant, for example, by committing himself to perform additional mitzvehs and/or performing the same mitzvehs more sincerely. An instance of the former is found in the following:

> . . . and we just decided to do one thing at a time. We started benching. That was the first thing we did. Then we stopped driving on Shabbes. Then we took one additional step; we built a suckeh. We started keeping kashres properly. We stopped turning on the lights on Shabbes.

That one may become more sincere and serious in performing the same mitzveh was expressed by the following newcomer to Lubavitch:

> Since I got married, I've taken a lot of the things more seriously. I didn't care too much the time I was learning before I was married. Now it seems more important to me . . . I put on a taless when I daven and I guess I'm more serious. I think more of what I say when I daven than I did then. The urge to learn is there a little bit.

While the male recruit is learning to become a more observant Jew, he must also learn to display before others additional evidence to indicate that he indeed is more than "mildly interested" in becoming part of the Lubavitcher movement. In other words, just as he must show concern for religious practises, so must he show awareness for those matters pertaining to social conduct by which others may judge the extent of his committment. Thus the new recruit must learn how to convincingly present himself to others.

One manner by which the above is effected is that the recruit davens and learns in the Yeshiva as often as time will allow. What this, in a sense implies is that the recruit will learn to allocate his spare time such that others will begin concur with this allocation. For example, whereas before, several hours may be spent in going to, seeing, and coming from a movie, such blocks of time are now very rarely, if ever, spent in such fashion. Instead, one may now devote these few hours to helping out in the Tefillin Campaign. Along with presenting oneself at the Yeshiva, the recruit may profitably take an interest in Lubavitcher Chassidim in other cities in America and other parts of the world. Such an interest is climaxed by a sincere reverence of the Lubavitcher Rebbe along with efforts undertaken to attend Farbrengens as frequently as possible, during which time the Rebbe's siches are heard. A third approach is that the recruit's appearance to other Lubavitcher be such that it is deemed proper and acceptable. Thus while he may wear jeans and a T-shirt in his home, it would be most unwise to appear in this

manner in the Yeshiva. Similarly, while it may not be absolutely essential to wear a "regular" dark-colored suit or jacket, it is probably to the recruit's advantage not to become obsessed with the latest styles in men's clothing and to pursue them.

While the new recruits primarily concern themselves with learning the Toireh, and the commentaries thereon, less emphasis is placed on such learning for the women recruits. Thus, while it is common for the woman to learn some Chumesh, it is rare indeed for her to advance herself beyond this stage. Instead, more emphasis is laid on acquainting and familiarizing the woman recruit with those laws that are important for her, as a female, to know. In this respect two sets of laws are those which pertain to kashres and to nidde. Generally speaking, it appears that the woman recruit must devote herself to learning certain information which will be of practical importance in helping her to manage her home and to present herself as a woman interested in Orthodox Judaism.

Of primary importance in keeping a kosher home is the necessity that all food products, as well as those utensils in which the food is cooked or served, must be pure. Thus this involves learning not only how to ensure that a particular food is kosher but also where such food may be purchased. For some who were not too observant in the past with respect to kashres it may mean that certain foods will have to be substituted with others that are known to be kosher. For example:

> I wanted to know what butcher they take from and fish and things like that. . . . Some things were hard. Like I used to use these cheeses, this Kraft sliced cheese, and now

> there's a Kosher cheese and it's about twice as expensive as this one. I'm not a stingy person but somehow I couldn't. I wouldn't mind spending money on something that's healthier; it's hard especially since I thought both were the same.

Also since many new Kosher products continually appear, while the kashres of some that have already been on the market may be questioned, is all the more reason to suggest that "learning about kashres" can indeed be a mentally difficult experience for the female recruit. The following quotation helps to illustrate the above:

> And probably there were a few things that I had bought that I found out later on that they were no good. . . . You bring in a product sometimes, and you find out about it and all of a sudden someone will tell you that this product is really dairy and it's not really Kosher. So it's a matter of learning every single day and always watching what you bring into the house, because there'll always be something new that they'll change and you don't know when they're gonna change a product in the market and put something in that is not Kosher. So you always have to keep your pantry up-to-date and watch for these things.

Along with those laws pertaining to kashres it is considered essential that the female recruit learn about those laws related to the maintenance of the purity of the home by attendance at the mikveh and the observation of those laws which accompany such attendance. With respect to these laws, both the husband and wife may possibly have to change their sexual habits, for the Code of Jewish Law maintains that during the time of the wife's menstrual flow or even for seven days after it has ceased and until the woman has immersed herself in the mikveh, sexual contact is not permitted.

What is perhaps most difficult for the woman recruit to accept is that at least certain changes will be expected in her appearance. If it is agreed that part of one's social self-conception is derived from how one thinks he appears to others, then it is easier to understand why a change in one's appearance is difficult to learn and become accustomed to. First, as a person who is interested to become observant, the female recruit will be expected to cover her hair at all times. This may simply be done by wearing a kerchief but more often is practised by clipping one's hair and wearing a shytl. As the following quotations indicate, cutting one's hair and wearing a shytl may come to be performed by the recruit, although perhaps reluctantly, and in some exceptional cases, not at all.

> . . . before I was married my husband wanted me to cover my hair so I did. I didn't think it was a real big deal. Now I do. Well, not really, I mean, it's nice if you have your own hair, 'cause I used to have my hair very long. I used to love long hair and you know, always nice, clean, and shiny and bouncy. So you can't do that with a wig. I mean a wig, after all, is a wig. I have a long wig also which I wear whichever way I want, but it's not the same.

In one case a shytl was refused to be worn, and is related in the following:

> I mean we have a few cases. There are some who are as old as twenty-five--I mean after it's been established that they should wear a wig they won't put it on. . . . These people feel, for one reason or another, that they will not be pressurized and therefore they're not going to wear that wig. One girl that came to Lubavitch said she would do everything but not wear the wig. She said she'll keep all the laws but not that one.

The female recruit will also be encouraged to conform to certain standards of Chassidic dress--that her dresses be long-sleeved, high-necked and that they be of approximately knee-length. While it may be difficult at first to meet these expectations, especially since for some it may entail purchasing a new wardrobe, the change does gradually occur. As in the case of the male recruits, it is possible that by at least conforming to the external features of Chassidic dress, the woman is able to express the sincerity of her intentions to the others. Thus, although when in the privacy of her home she may not be meticulous about the length of her sleeves, for example, when in the presence of others, the recruit does attempt to present herself so that she is seen to be dressed appropriately. Excerpts from conversations with two recruits help to illustrate the above:

> [Did you have to change your dress?] Well, it came about gradually. At first I didn't think anything about it. No one told me anything, but I gradually heard and learned that they wear their sleeves three-quarter length. At first I didn't know. Even when I knew, somehow I don't feel it would be wrong if I came in short sleeves. Up until last year I would sometimes go. I have a lot of short sleeved dresses and I don't feel undressed if I wear them. Although lately . . . all of a sudden . . . it just comes over you and you feel that in their presence at least . . . this is how I should be dressed and I would feel uncomfortable if I did otherwise. . . . Now I try. If I know somebody is coming over, I try to wear longer sleeves. When I do housework I have to wear a sleeveless dress and I'm often embarrassed if the bell rings and you have these men collecting, so I feel I'm not dressed properly.

and:

> Well if I go out and forget my hat I go back and get it, or if I go out and realize that I'm wearing a dress that might be bothersome to someone I will go back and get a sweater. I don't want to be disrespectful.

Most of what the recruit learns deals with laws, customs, and traditions which are either specific to Orthodox Judaism or particular to the Lubavitch movement. As we will soon see, the recruit is able to learn about these practises from others in Lubavitch and because they are, for the most part, straightforward, apply them to his own everyday behavior either when alone or in the presence of others. Yet not all that the recruit is expected to learn is factual and hence certain areas of adjustment may present more difficulty than others.

One such difficult area of adjustment concerns time and the change in orientation with respect to it that must be developed. The newcomer learns that others consider time to be precious and that efforts are made to spend it productively. More importantly, he learns that certain activities are regarded to constitute an unproductive use of time, some of which may have been actively engaged in by him earlier on. That time begins to take on a different meaning for the recruit is illustrated in this quotation:

> [. . . giving away your T.V., did it have something to do with the fact that most Lubavitcher don't have T.V. sets?] No. But the fact that there was in some way a religious motive, even the fact of not wanting to waste time is a religious motive, because you want to make and do the most of your time. You consider your time very precious, and we just felt that many times we just watched and we felt very badly afterwards. We watched a program,

> get involved in some kind of a program, and felt that we could have spent our time doing other things. Life is short.

The recruit must learn how to properly allocate his time. More specifically, he comes to realize that certain activities are regarded as either too time consuming or else not compatible with someone of his demeanor and consequently begins to desist from them. Generally speaking, the males, for example, begin to take on the attitude that movies simply take up too much of one's time and that this time may be put to a more valuable use. For example:

> . . . and you have to recognize that to go to a movie for three hours and to spend a half hour getting back, that's four hours. Now . . . time is generally too valuable to find a block of time like that that's available.

or:

> You're not supposed to go to a movie. . . . If you had the time you could do good with others or with yourself. I mean, you can learn or do a good deed or go and put on Tefillin with somebody.

Because the recruit begins to think of himself as a pious Jew and wishes to be so regarded by others, certain activities, which may lead others to question the sincerity of his presented image, are halted. It is therefore not surprising for the recruit to sell his television set if only because the contents of many of the programs are contrary to what a religious Jewish person should see and hear.

Male and female recruits expect and are expected to become aware of certain information which, for the most part, was probably unknown to them beforehand. How, then, is this infor-

mation obtained by the recruit? It is to these questions that I address myself in the next section.

Who Teaches the Recruit

Since male and female recruits are essentially concerned with learning different, although related, kinds of information, it is reasonable to consider the means by which they come to learn this information.

Since the centre for religious studies is the Yeshiva, it is here that the male recruit will gain most of the essential knowledge. The Yeshiva also serves as a general meeting place and thus it is only by attending the Yeshiva that the recruit will come to meet and become friendly with other Lubavitcher. It is from those in the Yeshiva that the recruit will not only learn Toireh but also in a more informal manner, Yiddishkayt. Thus, attendance in the Yeshiva is an absolute necessity.

Generally speaking, what the male experiences is learned through two types of communication channels. First, there are what may be called the "formal channels," which in part consist of arranged learning sessions between the recruit and another, during which time something appropriate to the former's level of understanding and/or interest is studied. This "other" who in a sense becomes the recruit's lerer (teacher) may in effect be anyone in the Yeshiva who a) is willing and able to devote some evening(s) to study with the recruit and, b) is more knowledgeable than the recruit with respect to what will be learned. Along with this "learning session" the recruit is also able to instruct himself by reading the literature published by Lubavitch.

The second types of channels are "informal" in that pieces of information are not gathered by way of institutionalized means, as mentioned above, but rather by a variety of measures that are largely due to chance. For example the recruits may be sitting next to or near some learned individuals who are discussing a particular passage in the Bible and will purposely, though perhaps discreetly, attend himself to that conversation.

Typically, the recruit becomes more involved in Lubavitch by attending the Yeshiva either to pray or learn but usually both. In some cases he learns with someone whom he meets on a regular basis. For example:

> So he said [Rebbe] among other things . . . when I came back to Montreal I should get involved with this bocher. I used to go to study with him. You see, we lived way out in ABC and the Yeshiva was here, so there wasn't really that much contact except when I would go down to study. . . .

and:

> I started out by hooking myself onto someone and then found a teacher. You know, the Pirkay Oves says twice, get yourself a teacher. The first time it means that you should always make certain that there's someone around to instruct you. The second time it means that even if you are the most learned person in the community, you should find some aspect in which there is someone else who is better versed than you are and that you should study with him.

In other cases, however, for perhaps several reasons, the recruit does not meet with someone regularly, but nonetheless attends the Yeshiva with the intent of finding someone with which to learn:

> [Do you ever go to the Yeshiva to learn?]
> Yes, not as much as I should, but I do.
> [About how many times a week do you go?]
> Informally about a couple of times a week.

> [Do you learn in classes or by yourself?]
> By myself--I try to grab it and whatever teacher I can find around there.

Learning, however, can also come about informally, that is, through spontaneous contact with other Lubavitcher. For example, a group of men including the recruit may decide to canvass on behalf of the Tefillin Campaign, and in the process of reaching their destination discuss an aspect of the Rebbe's siche. The same may occur if the recruit travels with other Lubavitcher to New York to attend a Farbrengen. For example:

> . . . I would always go with a carload of people, and you know, I always used to say I got more out of the coming and going. Just general talking. . . .

At times by simply "sitting around" in the shul or in the Yeshiva, together with others, the recruit is able to learn from the general discussion and gossip.

> You know what a Farbrengen is, not only in New York, but you get a number of people sitting around a table. There's a little bit of cake and a bottle of whiskey, just talking. I can get a lot more out of that than a whole saifer of maamorim or a whole Farbrengen in New York.

or:

> ... . but you'll also have a lot of people just sitting around and talking. It's a curious thing. . . . But I don't know. In a sense among Misnagdim that would just be a horrendous thing. How can you just sit around and talk? And yet, that's a very important thing, just sitting around.

It is important to note, that for the recruit in particular, these informal gatherings not only bring him into contact with other Lubavitcher but, also serve as an information centre, from

which he can draw facts about others and volunteer information about himself. As well, it is here that he acquaints himself with what others consider to be worthy news for discussion and is able to familiarize himself with their perspective vis-à-vis this news. The following, by a recruit, in part illustrates this last point.

> For example, the latest thing with the moon, the going to the moon. So Rabbi Goren, the Chief Rabbi for the Army instituted some changes in the prayers. The Rebbe came out with a blast. About a number of things, there's always something to talk about. It's learning, but in a sense it's it's . . . what is a Farbrengen? One of the claims of Misnagdim. . . . What do the Chassidim do? They get together . . . and they sit and talk. . . . And yet that's a type of friendship. It means a lot, and that's as much a community activity as a bazaar is and perhaps even more.

The male recruit, then must come to initiate contact with other Lubavitcher and with their assistance gradually learns what they consider for him important to know. As we will see in the coming section, contact is also established by meeting people at the various simches to which the recruit comes to be invited. When one newcomer was asked how he learned about Yiddishkayt he replied: "Study, contact. Just those two things. Studying and being around people who practise." For the most part, however, studying and meeting others is confined to the Yeshiva. While female recruits are sometimes known to visit each other at home, this practise hardly occurs with the men. For them, as for the other men, the Yeshiva and the shul become the central meeting places. For example:

> . . . they [women] come over to our house or my wife goes elsewhere. This type of things happens a lot more with the women than with the men. I can't imagine . . . going over and visiting someone at his house. I just never do. Whereas getting together at the shul is a sort of a standard thing.

As is the case for the men, the learning process for female recruits can only begin after some contact is initiated with others. Yet while men can meet each other in the Yeshiva, there is no such common meeting place for the women. Consequently other means will have to be found by which female recruits can become acquainted with Lubavitch women. Also, whereas men are expected to set aside some time for praying and studying, and too often come together for these purposes, no such provisions appear to be made for women. In other words, her primary concern is to care for her home and family, thus leaving her less time to actually be in the physical presence of other women. It is therefore not surprising but rather to be expected that female recruits have substituted "aural presence" for physical presence and maintain contact with one another via the telephone.

Before contact can be maintained, however, it must first be initiated. This may sometimes take the following form: the recruit expresses to someone that she is interested in learning and is referred to a Lubavitch woman, who in turn makes arrangements for the recruit to learn. For example:

> I was working . . . and the first year they were always employing Yeshiva bochers, and I happened to meet one of the bocherim from the Lubavitcher Yeshiva. And I was discussing with him my desire to learn, because I wasn't able to go out of town to learn, and time was slipping by. And he

> mentioned the possibility of my learning privately with one of the Lubavitcher women and this person was. . . .

During these learning sessions something appropriate to her level of understanding is studied, depending on the recruit's background. Usually, however, the newcomer will be taught Chumesh, as well as laws related to kashres and purity. Thus one female recruit, who was to some degree observant, remarked as follows:

> So like at the beginning . . . she didn't want to push, because she wasn't trying to get me religious because at the time that I was going to her I was already shoimer Shabbes, and I was kosher, . . . but there were certain things which I wouldn't have eaten after. So as far as trying to push any religion, no, she wasn't. But we just got to Chumesh and that was it, and we'd get carried away a little bit here and a little bit there. . . .

Another recruit interested in learning about religion, but at the time not observant, related as follows:

> I used to go about once or twice a week. And she started learning with me, laws and things like that. And it started like that and then I got really interested, you know. [What sorts of things did you learn?] We used to do Chumesh, you know. . . . But we did mostly laws, because that's what I needed at the time.

Since not all recruits receive private instruction, how then do they learn about certain Jewish laws? As we will soon see, this may be accomplished by means of meetings and telephone conversations, although another carrier of such information may often be the husband. Since he is encouraged to learn with another Lubavitcher, he gradually becomes familiar with those laws which are important for his wife to know and relates them to her. This process was described as follows:

> The husband is usually encouraged to learn with another Lubavitcher in the evenings and they go over these things and they come across it and they ask questions and their questions are answered. It's this gradual process of learning that goes on, and they become familiar with the law.

In some instances the process of learning may be very sudden:

> . . . I mean there were a lot of things. When she first came . . . she didn't even observe nidde. She didn't go to the mikveh. And that point we just couldn't let go, so I spoke to her husband and she started to observe that and she goes to the mikveh.

A popular means by which recruits come to meet others is by attending a group meeting. If the recruit's husband prays at the Yeshiva, it is extremely likely that she will receive an invitation. Meetings for the women tend to take on the same social importance as attendance in the Yeshiva does to the men, for it is also at these gatherings that women can learn and find out about Jewish laws and customs. A recruit who attended the Neshay Chabbad meetings remarked:

> Sometimes we have, it's a learning session, and we'll have a speaker, who if there's a certain holiday coming up on the laws, or the Rebbe's Farbrengen, and things like that.

However, meetings may also serve as occasions during which one can informally discuss with others certain difficulties or questions that may arise. They offer the recruit an opportunity to become aware of where others' interests lie, the kinds of problems they have and the measures taken to find solutions. A recruit, in reference to meetings, said:

> Well, you ask them questions and they answer your questions, and you ask them for advice and opinions about how things

> are done, and then you have, well, just being in contact with these women, I guess you sort of come into contact with them. This is one way in which you sort of grow into the batter more.

As the above quotation suggests, contact at meetings may lead to additional contact at other times. Meetings not only serve to bring recruits and others together, which in itself is essential, but also may be seen as crucibles from which newcomers draw upon to receive certain kinds of information. It is not surprising, therefore, that considerable energy is spent in encouraging the recruit to attend a particular group's meetings. Expressed efforts are made to welcome the recruit and she is encouraged to become actively involved in it. For example:

> . . . I was very active in a group called Bnos-Chabbad . . . and we were very interested in establishing this group and arranging lectures and arranging for speakers and meeting times and writing up the meetings afterwards and sending them out to the various girls. And I became active that way, and I think, though, in general, that's what they try to do. . . . Lubavitch is very good for drawing people in. . . . They seem to have a knack for this type of thing, and they make everyone who comes into the group really feel at home, and part of the group, mostly by working for the group.

Since most of her time is spent at home and because many of her "problems" must be attended to immediately, the recruit uses the telephone both to maintain contact with her friends and as a means to solicit definite information. For example, the recruit must quickly learn where to buy certain items and which items she may buy, so that they are satisfactorily kosher, and therefore often telephones others to find these out. In general, two types of persons may be called: first, someone whom the

recruit has come to trust and considers more knowledgeable in matters of religion than herself, and second, a recognized authority of religious affairs for example, a Lubavitcher Rabbi. Two quotes from recruits are used to illustrate the above.

> Like if I had a question to ask. I would call X or anyone else. Mostly X. She was the one I sort of turned to all the time, at the time when I was first married . . . if I had a question I would just ask . . . I still do. I mean, sometimes it happens you spill milk on a fleishike cup or something and you don't know what to do. You call up.

> Ya, there were always questions. First we had an Orthodox Rabbi . . . and then we began to consult another Rabbi, a Rabbi from Lubavitch. We usually consult him about questionable things.

In the case of Kashres, for instance, a Lubavitcher woman implicitly suggests how recruits may have sudden questions answered:

> . . . we have two Rabbis who are on the Vaad Hair Board that is the Rabbinical Council. Now they serve as a sort of . . . centre of information. Even if I do want to get an O.K. on something or want to know something and more detailed information on how come or who's the one who's giving the hechsher there, and so on and so forth, I'd call Rabbi Y or Rabbi Z, who, being there on council, will be able to give me all the information. So usually if they had a question that could be answered like generally, like meat, or what have you, like mustard, . . . they would get in touch with these Rabbis.

Current news about food products is sufficiently important so as to be mentioned during general conversation, be it over the telephone or elsewhere. It is therefore unlikely that the recruit will not be kept informed about such matters. Although she will often ask others where they buy certain foods, others will consider

it their duty to inform her on such matters.

Not all information is communicated to the recruit verbally. That is, although she may be expected to become aware of specific matters, information about them may be communicated to her visually. In other words, by seeing how others behave so does the recruit learn. For example, while attending a simche she does not have to be told not to mingle with the men; all other women are physically separated from them and so must she be. A similar type of learning occurs with respect to clothing. Dresses are expected to be long-sleeved, high-necked, reaching approximately to the knee. The recruit is not explicitly told that she must conform to this style of dress, but nonetheless is supposed to pattern her wardrobe so that it meets the approval of others. Thus, by seeing how other women behave, and in some instances imitating that behavior, the recruit comes to learn how to conduct herself when in the visual presence of Lubavitcher or other orthodox men and women.

Both male and female recruits must first come into contact with Lubavitcher if they are interested in learning and finding out about Yiddishkayt Lubavitch style. Contact is essential, for it places the recruit in a medium wherein he may become attuned to the ideas and attitudes of Lubavitch. For men, this usually takes the form of attending the Yeshiva both to daven and learn; for women, on the other hand, presenting themselves at meetings and other organized affairs. Initial contact between recruits and Lubavitcher inevitably leads to a variety of occasions and situations during which the two continually meet.

It is through these 'contact situations' that the recruit gradually learns about Lubavitch, and about Yiddishkayt.

Until now I have suggested that once the recruit expresses an interest in Lubavitch there are matters which he or she must begin to learn. (As we will also see, there are patterns of behavior which the recruit must unlearn.) I have also tried to show how this learning process is typically initiated; that is, who does the teaching and under what circumstances. We may now ask another question: Who is responsible for these recruits? Or, to ask a slightly different question: Are there any provisions made by Lubavitch to assist the recruits as they try to adjust to what, for some, at least, is a radically different "way of life"?

Whose Are the Recruits

Recruits are generally expected to fit themselves in to whatever activities are available at the time. In other words, efforts are immediately directed toward bringing the recruit into contact with other Lubavitcher, instead of separating him from them for at least a certain period of time. To conclude, however, that the recruit does not receive at least some special attention is incorrect, for someone must take a special interest in him, if only to extend an invitation to a meeting, or some other activity. Indeed since it is considered a mitzveh to show concern for someone expressing interest in Yiddishkayt it is very likely that most, if not all, Lubavitcher would be willing to lend assistance to the recruit. But there is no institution-

alized procedure wherein formal measures are taken to introduce the recruit to Lubavitch or orientation seminars whose sessions are hoped to be of assistance to the recruit. This lack of formality precipitated the following comment from a female recruit:

> . . . but I think they should put out something like a guide to a housewife, because you do things and you don't realize that you should do them another way. You think you're perfectly kosher and it really isn't. I feel that when people come in, they come from varying degrees of background. Some know what it's all about and some know nothing. I think that there should be some sort of a guide, certain basic things; like how that stove should be set up and how the sink and what happens when it's all right.

There are, however, organized strategies which are intended, at least initially, to serve as a means of introducing the recruit to others in Lubavitch. Lubavitcher, in general are highly interested in newcomers, and it is not often only left to a few energetic individuals to establish contact with prospective recruits.

If it is seen that a particular person shows interest or can be persuaded to become interested in any aspect of Yiddishkayt, an effort is made for someone to contact that person and perhaps become more friendly with him or her. For example:

> . . . maybe someone will come over to me and say: "You know, Mrs. so-and-so has shown a tremendous amount of interest in this particular group or this facet of Lubavitch and perhaps you could become closer with her; you know, to invite her and to become friendly with her. . . .

or:

> Almost everything that exists in Lubavitch is almost as efficient as the X faculty here in its total disorganization. There's an ad hoc, you know, if someone calls up so-and-so: "Well, I don't know, why don't you call up so-and-so," until something gets done, which in a sense is as bad as it can be but it seems to work. . . . You end up after a while finding out that certain people are involved and want to be involved, they can be pushed into being involved.

Meeting groups as well as other activities are provided by Lubavitch and are sufficiently diverse in nature so that recruits will find at least one to their liking. The choice of interest areas for both women and men, respectively, extend to several regions as is indicated below:

> Well it ranges from all age groups. . . . The young ones have the messibe . . . and they have all different things that they can be connected with. They have learning groups of one sort or another for all ages. They have for the older girls, for the younger girls, for the newly married women, for the older women, they have groups which are affiliated directly with the Yeshiva, you know, parent-teacher groups, and chapters connected with the Yeshiva, and those that make the rummage sales and the bazaars and the teas to raise money for the Yeshiva and Bays-Rivke. They have . . . the drama group that puts on plays each year, and so there seems to be a lot of groups and an awful lot going on during the course of the year. (female interviewee)

> There aren't enough days in the year for any person who wants to volunteer his services. No matter what capabilities a person has . . . they will put his efforts to good use in many different fields, and it's principally not money raising because money raising is done by organized people. . . . Different people have

> different interests. Yes, there are some people who are interested from the very moment they are interested in the camp. There are other people who are interested in the Bays-Rivke and other people in the Yeshiva. (male interviewee)

It is important to remember that these contact situations bringing together recruits and others serve a double purpose. First, they are a means by which more intimate contact may be developed involving recruits and Lubavitcher. But second, and just as important, such situations are in themselves occasions during which certain information may be informally sought out by the recruit, and "consciously" given over to him by other Lubavitcher. A Lubavitcher woman, discussing a side effect of rehearsals for the drama group, remarked:

> It's funny that a lot of the people who became actresses in these plays, were of a very different background, really from having very little to do with Lubavitch, but just like drama they didn't mind getting into a play. And at the end, the warming up toward Lubavitch, and the airing of questions and views, was, I think, more successful in this drama group than in any of our direct attempts through these study groups. Since they had met, I think, two or three times a week and they grew on each other and they were playing for the same cause, and it has been one of our most successful ways of airing views, ways and means and so on.

Another channel by which Lubavitch is able to initiate or maintain contact with newcomers is by inviting them to a variety of ceremonial functions carried out, for the most part in Montreal. More specifically, I am referring to such religious ceremonies as Bar Mitzvehs and weddings. Such functions occur on a fairly regular basis and the recruit comes to be invited to these affairs.

A female newcomer, when asked if she and her husband were invited to weddings, for example, quickly affirmed:

> Always. They have a standard list those Lubavitcher. Every family has this list. That's the way they work it. . . . They invite, like, you know, the usual crowd. And they invite that standard crowd all the time to these affairs.

Recruits are also encouraged to attend Farbrengens in New York during which time the Lubavitcher Rebbe will deliver a number of siches on a variety of subject areas. Farbrengens are usually held on days kept sacred by the Lubavitcher Chassidim, for example, the day the Alter Rebbe was released from a Russian prison. Even if the recruit, for whatever reason, does not participate in a Farbrengen, he or she is nonetheless urged to communicate with the Rebbe by mail.

A final instrument by which newcomers may come into contact with Lubavitcher or newcomers to Lubavitch, is by inviting one or a few Yeshiva bocherim over for Shabbes. The Lubavitcher Yeshiva also caters to bocherim from the United States who, during the course of the year, live in the dormitory. On Shabbes those from out of town are invited by the ballebatim to spend the day with them. If interested, newcomers may also invite Yeshiva bocherim to spend Shabbes with them. Yeshiva bocherim, perhaps more than anyone else, are constantly attuned to the many reports and stories emanating from 770 Eastern Parkway, which often include some miraculous tales concerning the Rebbe, and especially for the newcomer serve as an excellent source from which to learn about the Rebbe and about Yiddishkayt.

Lubavitcher Chassidim try to ensure that newcomers will fit themselves in and will be hooked into the various activities and ceremonies organized by them. While different kinds of activities are available for men and women, their ultimate objective, that is, involvement with Lubavitcher and others who are concerned about Yiddishkayt, is similar. To try to reach this objective, recruits must experience a process of learning. It is interesting to suggest that in the case of married couples, the female is likely to find this learning process a more difficult experience to become accustomed to than will the male. While the male attends the Yeshiva, he inevitably comes into more contact with other Lubavitcher on an informal level than is likely to be the case for his wife. Due to his regular attendance of the Yeshiva he is also more likely to become involved in an organized activity, which will also at least partially commit him to be with other Lubavitcher. Thus the male recruit slowly becomes enmeshed in a network of Lubavitcher relationships and comes to be with other Lubavitcher regularly. His wife, on the other hand, will likely be occupied with the children, especially in the evening when her husband has left for the Yeshiva. In most cases the female has less opportunity to be with other women of Chabbad. It will probably take her longer to develop an intimate relationship with another she meets at a meeting than is the case for her husband when he meets someone in the Yeshiva, because the time interval between her meetings is greater than the time elasped between his being in the Yeshiva. A Lubavitch woman who has had considerable experience both in helping and

observing recruits, noted the following:

> . . . a lot of the newly married couples who have one or two children who feel that their husbands have become quite entwined with the Yeshiva. Some of them [males] will go to the Yeshiva to study in the evening. Some of them will go out on a Tefillin Campagin. . . . Now these women are stuck home with the kids. They don't go out together hardly, to a social function or so. . . . What I've noticed is that the men conform a lot faster and a lot easier and at a much less dreadful process than the women do. The women usually take . . . at least twice as long as the men, at least, and it's with its aches and pains, so to speak. And I've seen this time and time again whereby women sort of have it in in some way for what their husbands are doing and sort of can't go along with it all the way. They will, perhaps in the end result, you know, after they've struggled through it point by point, but it's much harder on them.

Although it is probably not intended that female recruits have a more difficult and strenuous time in their efforts to adjust to Lubavitch and Yiddishkayt, it appears that this is in fact the case. Lubavitcher claim to be willing and anxious to welcome and assist newcomers who allege to be interested in Yiddishkayt, and seem to be prepared to do so both for males and females. It may be, however, that both the formal and informal expectations made of the men with respect to religion, also indirectly assist them in weaving themselves on to an already existing fabric of social relationships.

Comment

Some readers will naturally be disappointed and will argue that nowhere did I define what it is that constitutes a

Lubavitcher Chassid, or even more generally a Chassid. Others will insist that I did not answer the question as to whether there exists a certain transition line between a recruit and a Lubavitcher such that once the line is crossed one sees oneself and is seen by others to change in a predictable direction. I agree that the answers to such questions are vital, especially if we decide to understand sociologically who is a Chassid, and how one comes to be regarded by others as Chassidic.

In this chapter, however, I have briefly tried to show what is expected of a person who decides, for whatever reason, to become an observant Jew, and what this intention indicates to Lubavitcher Chassidim. I have also suggested that there is a typical pattern for both male and female recruits in how they come to learn and be taught about what other Lubavitcher expect of them. Finally, I dealt with techniques used by Lubavitch as a means to draw together recruits and Lubavitcher and suggested that these contact situations were crucial if Lubavitch was to maintain contact with the recruits, in order to preserve their interest in Yiddishkayt.

What has in a sense been intimated all along is that the recruit must simultaneously undergo processes of socialization and desocialization. In other words, he is expected to learn to conform to a particular behavior pattern, but must also quickly discover those elements of his previous behavior which are no longer compatible with his new image and erase these from his future conduct. In the process of learning and unlearning, the recruit begins to present himself to others, and consequently

to himself, in a different manner. There is a gradual transformation of perspectives as the recruit tries to orient himself to a new reference group. As Shiboutani notes, ". . . a newcomer in a community comes to assume the outlook shared by his new associates and to redefine himself from this standpoint" (1965:504). It is generally expected that members of minority or ethnic groups will come to share the perspectives of the so-called dominant group. Much of the sociological literature has borne out this expectation and has implicitly suggested that the process of assimilation in most cases takes on an expected direction. In the present case, however, the "direction" of assimilation is altered to produce what may be called "reverse assimilation."

Once an individual is seen as showing an interest in Yiddishkayt efforts will be undertaken to encourage and support him in this pursuit and draw him closer to the Lubavitch movement. Yet such encouragement and support must first be preceded by establishing contact with the person. The Tefillin Campaign has been utilized for this purpose and will be discussed next.

The Tefillin Campaign

In the last two years, Lubavitch has been involved in what they refer to as a Tefillin Campaign. The objective of this campaign, very simply, has been to persuade as many Jews as possible of the tremendous importance of Tefillin in Jewish life. Thus all Jews, regardless of their particular feelings toward traditional Judaism, have been encouraged to "put on" Tefillin. Although all Lubavitcher appear to take an active interest in

this campaign, it is the older boys (bocherim) of the Yeshiva who have essentially been responsible for the proselytizing activity that has surrounded it. Such proselytization has mainly taken the form of setting up "Tefillin booths" at various socially strategic locations, for example the Y.M.H.A., as well as simply inviting individuals to the Yeshiva to partake in the mitzveh of putting on Tefillin.

The Tefillin Campaign is unique to Lubavitch. Campaigning is done only when the bocherim have some spare time, but even so, efforts have been coordinated so that special areas of the city are canvassed at certain times. Once a person agrees to put on Tefillin, after not having done so for an extended period, he will be encouraged to perform the mitzveh on a regular basis. In some cases, bocherim have actually visited certain persons every day to make sure they have put on Tefillin. Hopefully, what eventually results, is that a person no longer requires the presence of the bocher as a reminder to perform the mitzveh and comes to do it on his own.

Although the bocherim are the most actively involved in this campaign, all Lubavitcher are encouraged to take an active personal interest. In this respect, a Lubavitcher school teacher remarked as follows:

> I'll be very open with you. At the beginning I was very skeptical about it. I mean, why should anyone believe that people would begin to put on Tefillin again? But then slowly I began to hear stories and also saw new faces at the services. I thought: "Maybe the idea isn't so far fetched after all?" You know I'm a teacher at. . . . So one day I decided to take along with me a pair of Tefillin. This

> was done secretly and I would approach a few boys and say: "Excuse me, may I know if you have already put on Tefillin today?" I knew beforehand what their answer was going to be and then I would say: "Would you mind if you took five or ten minutes to put on Tefillin?" They would usually say yes, mostly because I was the teacher. Maybe they thought I would be easier on them in French class. But then, more and more students would come to put on Tefillin. . . . Anyways I decided I wasn't going to make a secret out of putting on Tefillin. So I went to the principal and reminded him that according to the law the school day was supposed to begin with some form of religious service. He said that he was aware of this but since he wasn't religious he didn't enforce this rule. I asked him if he would mind if I would organize it for the Jewish students and he was pleased with the suggestion. Then every morning at eight o'clock those who were interested came to school early to put on Tefillin, and quite a number of students came. . . .

While not every Lubavitcher will feel that he is the most capable person to encourage other Jews to support the Tefillin Campaign, he will nonetheless make some effort to do so. An individual who occasionally came into contact with youth illustrated his efforts to contribute to the campaign:

> [We ended by talking about the Tefillin Campaign. Do you try to get most of the people who come in here to. . . ?] No, I don't even speak to most of them about it . . . I'm bashful and I don't have the right approach and I don't know what to say, so I keep my mouth shut. But if the opportunity presents itself I try to put in a good word. To the youngsters it seems that I have some influence, so I try. Sometimes I succeed. [The guys who were in here before, how did you get them to put on Tefillin?] It started with a friend of theirs who's now on vacation. . . . He came in and I wanted him to put it on himself and he didn't have any but he said that he could get some from his friend and that he would get them in about a week. So finally, one day, I remembered to bring

> my own in. Then he came and I asked him to put them on here and he hesitated and he said all right, and I put it on with him. The next day he came back with a friend and they both put it on, and three friends came and all three put it on. . . . They put it on and if a friend of theirs is in the store when they're putting it on, they convince him to put it on. . . I give them a little discount to encourage them.

The Tefillin Campaign has today become the symbol of Lubavitch and has been organized and administered only by the Lubavitcher Chassidim. One Lubavitcher, for example, stressed that the Tefillin Campaign was a Lubavitcher undertaking and that the Satmarer Chassidim, "had nothing to do with the campaign." A pamphlet printed by the Lubavitcher in Montreal titled Tefillin reads in part:

> As the days of May 1967, drew to a close, the Jews of Israel found themselves in iminent danger. . . . At this ominous moment in Jewish history, Rabbi M.M. Schneerson--the Lubavitcher Rebbe, proclaimed that the mitzveh of Tefillin contains the ingrediants to help nullify the impending catastrophe. . . . In some cities, including New York, Tel Aviv, Los Angeles, London, Miami, Melbourne, and Detroit, mobile Tefillin units on trucks and vans are being utilized. They travel from one neighbourhood to another allowing an even greater public the opportunity to perform this mitzveh.
>
> In Montreal, the religious leaders of the community proclaimed that starting Parshas Yisroi Feb. 17, there will be a strengthened effort to make the Jewish populace aware of the importance of this mitzveh. Lectures and newspaper articles are being devoted to this subject. Hospitals and organizations, offices and homes are some of the places where visitations have accomplished undreamed of results. Many, inspired by this, have decided to continue putting on Tefillin daily; thousands are responding to this call as the campaign steadily expands.

CHAPTER IV

THE CHASSIDIC COMMUNITY

What has till now been treated in a very general and uncomplicated manner, that is, the existence of a Chassidic community, will, in the coming research, have to be focused on more specifically. For example, is it possible to draw around the Chassidic community distinct social boundaries so as to distinguish those within from the rest without? Or, are there certain general and/or specific criteria by which people are judged with respect to their degree of membership? An additional and related area of focus concerns those features of Chassidic dress by which these Jews come to be identified either as Chassidic Jews on the one extreme or else as "fanatics," "strange," and "different," on the other. Some preliminary thoughts on both areas are provided below.

Who is Included in the Chassidic Community

When we ask who is to be included in the Chassidic community, we are also questioning whether the various social boundaries surrounding the community, and isolating it from the larger non-Chassidic society, are sufficiently distinct so as to enable differentiation of those who are "inside" (to be included in the community) and the others who are not. To put the question somewhat differently--are there definite criteria for membership in the community?

It is erroneous to conclude that the community is

comprised only of Chassidic Jews. Yet even if this were so, we would nonetheless be forced to grapple with the question, Who is a Chassid?--a question to be posed from a sociological perspective, within a symbolic-interactionist framework. An understanding of how the Chassidim define and conceive of themselves is important in analyzing the Chassidic community. Poll (1962), on the other hand, does not incorporate such a perspective in his analysis. For instance, in his discussion of the social stratification of the Williamsburg Chassidic community, he does not have an analysis of how people come to be seen as fit to be included in the Chassidic community.

The Chassidic community consists of a number of groups, each with its own loyalty and devotion to a particular Rebbe. We can focus on the question of group membership from one of two approaches. We may begin by comparing the criteria of the various groups for including within their ranks 'new' members and the expectations, made of them. Or, we can completely disregard or at least pay little attention to differences among the Chassidic groups, and begin by assuming that the membership criteria are uniform among all the Chassidic groups, and then formulate generalizations for the community as a whole. The first approach is more useful, for it will provide a more realistic portrayal of the community while simultaneously describing some of the main social differences among the various groups.

The Lubavitcher Chassidim, for example, actively attempt to interest as many Jewish people as possible in Yiddishkayt with the intent of bringing these people into closer harmony with

the ideals of Lubavitch Chassides. During the initial stages, however, the individual who expresses an interest in Lubavitch is not expected to proclaim an absolute committment to its ideals, which would mean dissociating himself from his previous social life. To a great extent, the person is able to adapt himself to the many changes at his own desired rate.

In the case of the Satmarer and Tasher Chassidim, on the other hand, it appears that the demands made of the group on interested outsiders are more strict. There is no campaigning by either the Tasher or Satmarer Chassidim to interest other Jews in their religious heritage. Because closer conformity to group norms is insisted upon by these Chassidim than by Lubavitch, be it in education, dress, or friendship patterns, we may assume that the "inside" and "outside" groups can be more easily distinguished than they can be in Lubavitch. A Lubavitcher student, when asked about the difference if any, between the Lubavitcher and the Satmarer pointed out:

> . . . well it's not such an easy question to answer but essentially we express our Chassides in a different way. Their Chassides is in a large part expressed by their clothing. . . . Their Rebbe believes that it is of the utmost importance to dress in that way. Our Chassides, on the other hand, is more concerned with ourselves going out and trying to interest new people to or with our ideas. . . .

I do not mean to create the impression that whereas the Lubavitcher Chassidim are a closely-knit group, the opposite holds true for the Satmarer and Tasher. In all Chassidic groups there seems to be a nucleus of individuals or families who are regarded by others, and in a sense regard themselves, as being the pillars of

the community. Such people are sometimes looked upon as being more Chassidish than the rest, especially by newcomers into the Chassidic way of life. These people are not necessarily from a Chassidic lineage which extends back several generations. Instead this nuclear group consists of either those very learned members whose scholarship is well-known to all and/or of those who assume important social positions within the group. The latter includes those who occupy the leadership roles in the Yeshiva, whether it be in the form of educating others or ensuring that the Yeshiva is supported financially. As for the women, those who are actively involved in community affairs are also seen as leaders.

In all the Chassidic groups there are usually a fairly large number of people who are in some way associated with that group but who generally do not think of themselves as Chassidim. It is interesting, that while some of these people are regarded by others as Chassidim, they do not regard themselves as such. Thus one individual who was referred to me as having recently become a Chassid, announced quite candidly at the outset of our discussion: "But I wouldn't say I'm a Lubavitcher." When asked, "Do you think you may eventually become a Lubavitcher?" he replied:

> I don't know. It's very difficult to talk about the future and say that I have more of a chance in terms of probability of becoming a Lubavitcher than someone that has no contacts. I'm sympathetic. You see the main aspect of becoming a Lubavitcher is a stern rapport with the Lubavitcher Rebbe and I've never had any personal contact with the man.

Some of these associated individuals are ones who have found personal fulfillment in leading a religious life and incorporating within it the customs and traditions of a particular Chassidic group. They find it satisfying to pray at the shul of that group and are usually to be found there on a more or less regular basis. In this respect a person who prays regularly at a Chassidic Yeshiva remarked:

> . . . there are a lot of people who go to the Yeshiva who are not Chassidim. They go because they oppose the formalism of another shul. . . . But people go to the Yeshiva because there is more of a community feeling.

Another category of people who are in some way "attached" to a Chassidic group are those who have at some point or on a continuing basis sought the advice of the group's Rebbe. Such individuals have usually had some acquaintances in the group beforehand and have in this manner come to hear about the Rebbe's insights concerning all aspects of life. The advice sought need not necessarily pertain to religious matters. In all cases, however, will the blessings of the Rebbe be requested. As acquaintance of the Tasher Chassidim, discussing the Tasher Rebbe, remarked:

> . . . anytime you want advise you can go to ask him. He doesn't only give advise on religious matters--he gives advise on business matters. There are very prominent business individuals in this city who are non-Chassidic, who are not religious who go to see the Tasher Rebbe.

A third category of people are those who simply offer an annual financial contribution to the Yeshiva, be it in monetary form or in kind. Quite frequently they have no other

contact with the Yeshiva for the remainder of the year. These people are not always Orthodox Jews and they have their own unique individual reasons for contributing. A Chassid very aptly described these people as follows:

> . . . there are diverse reasons for their donations and there are diverse reasons for their small affiliation, small feeling to the Yeshiva. There are different things--a person feels for the Yeshiva in his home town . . . there's a European person who was frum or his parents were frum or just being in America he has strayed, but when he sees a Lubavitcher coming into his business he is reminded of his father, his grandfather and it gives him a tug at his heart. . . .

In general it would be true to say that in each Chassidic group the boundaries differentiating the various degrees or levels of committment to Chassidism are not clearly drawn. Some individuals may be regarded as residing for the moment at a very high committment level whereas others are seen as having no attachment whatever to any particular Chassidic group. In between these extremes is a "grayish" mass of individuals, both in terms of their degrees of attachment to a Chassidic group as well as the group's recognition of their involvement. The following quotation illustrates the latter point, stressing the idea of varying degrees of involvement:

> . . . I would call a Lubavitcher someone who starts along any one of these paths, who believes and wants to get there. Not someone who got there. . . . Someone who believes and has this feeling about the Rebbe and has a sort of understanding of what Chassides is and would like to live his life this way, even though he's at step number one. Along each of these lines, to me, he's a Lubavitcher. There's a popular word in our community,

> shtickl Lubavitcher, that's cropping up . . . and it's probably because there are some people, like we have a neighbour across the street. He wouldn't do a thing of business without asking the Rebbe, and if the Rebbe's answer would be contrary to his own, he'll still do it, because the Rebbe said so [that is, he will follow the Rebbe's advise]. Yet he doesn't study any of the Rebbe's Chassides. He doesn't keep a lot of the laws that the Chassidim would want him to, to be called a Lubavitcher. And I don't know, if someone would ask him: "Are you a Lubavitcher?" if he would like to be called one. More or less, he's still to me qualified at step number one of Lubavitch, because he has this intense feeling for the Rebbe and this belief that the Rebbe will advise him right.

Visibility of Chassidim in the non-Chassidic Community

The distinctive feature of the Chassidim that most immediately distinguishes them from others is their manner of dress. Chassidim as a group become clearly recognizeable to others who are not Chassidim through their dress, and this helps to account for the particular reaction of outsiders to these Orthodox Jews. At this point, however, I merely wish to note some of these features of Chassidic dress. Aside from describing the differences between male and female dress, it will also be necessary to distinguish the appearance of the Lubavitcher males from the Chassidic males of the other groups.

The most prominent feature characterizing the male's appearance are the payes and the beard. In many instances the hair is actually cut as close to the scalp as possible leaving behind only the earlocks. The males are expected to grow beards and in almost all instances do so. The full beards are not grown

according to the latest fashion and are untrimmed.

For the most part, male Chassidic attire consists of a long black coat (kaftan), or a dark-colored double-breasted suit (usually black), and a hat, often a biber hitl which is large-brimmed and made out of beaver. Although I have generalized to a great extent, since as Poll notes, different classes in the Chassidic community will wear clothing fitting to their status and rank, and since certain kinds of clothing are worn only by certain Chassidic groups, my interest is simply to present some of the external symbols of the Chassidim by which they may be identified by the larger non-Chassidic public.

The Lubavitcher dress has been more greatly adapted to Western customs. Although they wear beards, the length of their payes is kept to a minimum. In general, the kaftan is rare in Lubavitch and instead the Chassidim will wear suits and at times even sport jackets. The hats worn by the Lubavitcher are usually of the fedora variety with the brims down. Generally speaking, it is more difficult to recognize females, as there are fewer clues to be gathered from their appearance which will identify them as being with a Chassidic group. But there are nonetheless certain features of the Chassidic woman's appearance, which when taken together are likely to reveal her as a Chassidic woman.

The most conspicuous feature of the woman's clothing is the length and style of the dresses. The dresses are usually loosely-fitted, full-sleeved and reach approximately to the knee. Although make-up and lipstick are sometimes put on by some of the women, the larger majority refrain from doing so as they are

expected to appear modest. One woman remarked as follows:

> . . . they wear them not that long, but they wear them over the knee. . . . As far as make-up is concerned hardly any of them will wear it. Some of them will wear lipstick but most of them, they can't be bothered with it. You're not supposed to be attractive to other men. . . . Like I said, the dresses and the sleeves, long sleeves, well long sleeves . . . like they're very very modest.

Along with the style of the dress, there are two other features of the woman's appearance. One is the shytl or wig, and the other is the stockings. Chassidic women, after marriage, are expected to crop their hair and either cover it with a kerchief or else with a wig. At any rate, the head is always expected to be covered. Chassidic women will also wear stockings all the time. These may range from nylons, on the one hand, to thick stockings (hose) on the other.

A few Chassidic women when asked if they could recognize other Chassidic women by their dress, denied they could do so. They felt their appearance was not different from others who were not Chassidim and that a sufficiently large number of other women dressed as they did. Thus one Chassidic woman remarked:

> No, I couldn't , not unless I knew her because the quality of dress which distinguishes a Chassidic woman, for instance, if she wears three-quarter length sleeves and her skirt's at the knee or an inch below the knee, however she chooses to do it, there are hundreds of other people who might be wearing the same thing.

The majority, however, felt it possible to recognize other Chassidic women by virtue of their appearance. This feeling was perhaps best summed up by the following quotation from a Chassidic housewife:

> Well, a woman, well, you'd see her wearing a kerchief, for instance, and her hair pretty well all covered up and you figure. You sort of have to add up the clues. And she'd be wearing long-sleeves as well, and so you figure . . . and the stockings, you know.

The unmarried females of Chassidic families can be recognized in a similar way as the married ones. Although their dresses are of no special color, they are of a certain shape and length and thus tend to set the wearers apart from the others. Given that hose-stockings or long-colored-stockings will form part of their attire, they can be recognized as being part of a Chassidic group. I would therefore disagree with Poll when he says:

> The unmarried Hasidic woman is not distinguishable from members of the larger community as are Hasidic men with their beards, side-locks, and distinctive clothing and the married Hasidic women, who wear wigs. . . . (1962:43)

The initial conceptions we form of others is often influenced by the manner in which these others first appear to us. As Goffman has so ably pointed out, information about a person may be gleaned from him by others by virtue of his dress and general demeanor. And as has already been mentioned the Chassid's clothing contribute to a stereotype or label that is conferred on him by the larger non-Chassidic public.

Comment

The Chassidic community in Montreal, and probably in other cities, is essentially divided along two main lines--- Lubavitch and Satmar. Closely affiliated with the Satmarer

Rebbe, however, are various other Chassidic groups, for example the Tasher and Beltzer Chassidim. Although they each have their own Rebbes, they nonetheless regard the Satmarer Rebbe as the greatest Tzaddik of all. While once in Williamsburg, Brooklyn, on the Sabbath, A Beltzer Chassid remarked to me: "Yes, it's true, I am a Beltzer Chassid, but Saturday, Saturday you come here to the Rebbe (pointing to the Satmar Yeshiva). Saturday the Satmarer Rebbe is 'the' Rebbe." (Translated from Yiddish)

Mintz notes that various degrees of tension exist between followers of the many Chassidic courts (1968:148-151). In Montreal at least, one dispute which tends to set the Satmarer to harshly criticize Lubavitch, and vice-versa, are the sides taken by the respectives Rebbes concerning the Arab-Israeli War of 1967. Whereas the Lubavitcher Rebbe initiated the Tefillin Campaign to ensure both a spiritual and physical victory for the Jews, the Satmarer Rebbe unlike the Lubavitcher Rebbe, failed to see the victory as evidence of God's presence, but instead insisted that victory was due only to the strength of the Israeli Army. Presently the dispute is still latent in the sense that both groups have apparently adopted a "live and let live" attitude. An individual who till very recently was closely associated with the Tasher and Satmar Chassidim, felt that the tension between the Satmar and Lubavitch Chassidim had, at this time, reached a high level:

> . . . Menachem Mendel Schneerson [the present Lubavitcher Rebbe] is regarded by the Satmar group as being some sort of an apikoires. There's actual hatred not between the Rabonim themselves-- they don't

> talk about it--but there's hatred between the Satmar Chassidim, the boys and the adults against the Lubavitcher Chassidim. There's a real hatred--they're ready to fight.

Those who are somewhat knowledgeable about the Chassidim in Montreal today recognize the existing differences between the Satmarer and Lubavitcher Chassidim. These people frequently express the opinion that Lubavitch is today responsible for the general heightened interest in Chassidism and that inevitably the Satmarer, due to various societal pressures, will have to undergo some changes in their group structure and norms. The following quotes refer to the two above mentioned notions:

> Well, in Montreal, I would think Lubavitch is a little bit stronger that the Satmar. Lubavitch is stronger, Lubavitch is more progressive; Lubavitch is attracting now more of the unorthodox to become orthodox; Lubavitch goes out on a Tefillin Campaign; Lubavitch is proselytizing Jews; Lubavitch is achieving a tremendous success; Lubavitch will outlast, they will succeed, they will live whereas the others will probably die out, because the others are very closed minded. And Lubavitch are slowly swelling in numbers. . . . Lubavitch, today, is probably carrying the true torch of Chassidism. There's no doubt about that.

> . . . there are all kinds of groups that, let's say the Lubavitcher, are changing at a much faster speed. The Satmarer are still very stubborn, very dogmatic. They don't let anything or anybody into their midst, but I still believe, that they won't have the strength . . . that their Chassidic way of life will have to change and they realize that and that is why they are so stubborn--they are frightened. . . . I mean I may be right or wrong but they will have to change because we already see many many changes in their lives since they arrived in Canada. The pressure of 1968 and 1975 is much stronger. You have to remember that

they are small groups, very small groups.

As has been noted, however those not familiar with the Chassidic movement tend to classify all the Chassidim together and fail to recognize the dissimilarities among the various Chassidic groups.

CHAPTER V

ACQUIRING THE DATA

When the idea of studying the Chassidim was first suggested, by Professor Spector, I had only some preconceived notions about these people's way of life, some of which as I was to find out later, were incorrect. I neither knew any of them nor did I know anyone who could have introduced me to them. I had heard, however, that Chassidim spoke mostly Yiddish, and since I am able to speak, read, write, and comprehend the language quite fluently, I was able to make the study of the Chassidic community my area of research.

My first contact with Chassidim was during July, 1968. I was employed at the time at a summer camp in the Laurentians and learned that several Chassidic families regularly spend their summer vacations close by (fifteen minutes walking distance). By then I had already decided to do research on the Chassidim, but since I didn't know of anyone who might introduce me to even one of them, I decided to present myself on my own. As I worked in camp during the day and evening, I usually made an effort to be present at the Shacharis Service, which began at approximately seven o'clock in the morning. If I was unable to attend the Shacharis Service, I would try to be present for the Mairiv prayer. Although I was not able to visit the Chassidim everyday, my irregular appearances began to elicit more than a cold or unwelcome-like stare. After a few days, some of the people would nod to me to signify an "Hello," and one night, prior to

the Mairiv service, most of the bocherim approached me individually and extended their arm for a handshake.

During the course of the summer I became acquainted, but never "good friends" with a few of the bocherim who were mainly followers of the Klausenburger Rebbe. For example, when the morning service was complete one or two of the bocherim would offer to walk with me back to camp. These short strolls were excellent opportunities to solicit information about Chassidim in general and especially Montreal Chassidim.

While I was in shul my conversations with others or brief comments to them were only in Yiddish. Once outside the shul, however, for example on the way to camp, my company and I conversed only in English. In retrospect, it may be that this was in large measure the reason they offered to join me, for the language they spoke among themselves was Yiddish. I presented to them an opportunity to speak English.

The main value of that summer was in the way it served as a "training ground" for research on Chassidim and only secondarily as a source of data. By observing Chassidim and interacting with them, I began to familiarize myself a little with Chassidic customs and their origins, but more importantly with certain aspects of Chassidic behavior. For instance, I learned that a Chassid's grip in a handshake is limp and which, if not known, may be a source of embarrassment to the observer. I quickly discovered that to discuss with the bocherim the general topic of girls resulted in strained conversation for both the Chassidim and myself.

Upon returning to Montreal I began to visit the different Chassidic areas in the city. I found the location of the Satmarer Yeshiva and reasoned that the Satmarer Chassidim were likely to live in its vicinity. I would simply walk up and down the streets around the Yeshiva, at first hoping to at least see Chassidim, and then in some way, to engage in conversation with them. I would make certain that whenever I took a break it would be in a store operated by Chassidim. First, this would provide a better opportunity to pose a few questions to the owners, since my purchasing something was an accepted reason for being in the store. Second, I could observe whether Chassidim came in to buy goods, how many would come, the language in which they communicated, and the nature of the interaction itself.

I would also try to daven at the various Yeshivos, and would usually alternate between the Lubavitcher and the Satmarer. I quickly realized, however, that to continue to observe the different Chassidic groups in this particular fashion was highly impractical. First, it meant being with each Chassidic group only once per week, as I also had other work to attend to. Second, and very simply, this was a poor strategy with which to encounter Chassidim, as they would see me only irregularly and even then, only for a short time. I therefore decided to concentrate my efforts around one group at a time and for a variety of reasons selected Lubavitch.

Meeting Lubavitcher bocherim was relatively simple. I knew that as soon as I entered the Yeshiva in the morning one of them would immediately approach me and ask: "Excuse me, but have

you already put on Tefillin today?" I would always agree to put on Tefillin and then thank the person for having given me an opportunity to do so. Before I left this person, I would always make sure to introduce myself and hope that he would offer his name in return. Since such was always the case, my number of contacts at Lubavitch continued to increase. When I saw the bocher during another occasion I would take the initiative and approach and ask: "Hi, what's new?"

I decided at the very outset that at least initially I would have to conceal from others what my aim was. I would not make it explicit to Lubavitcher that I was in the process of collecting data about them to write a thesis. I therefore adopted the following strategy: if I were asked what my reasons were for coming to the Yeshiva I would reply that a) I was becoming a little more interested in Yiddishkayt and b) I was a student at university and "simply interested in the kinds of things Chassidim do." I wanted to find out whether objections would be raised if it were known that my involvement was partly due to an academic pursuit. At the same time, however, I wanted it made clear that my interests did not for the moment lie into transforming myself into an observant Jew. Fortunately, for the most part, Lubavitcher did not react unfavorably to my stated motives, although some were somewhat suspicious as to my real intentions.

Securing data about Lubavitch and Lubavitcher specifically, but other Chassidic groups as well, came through two primary means. During the late fall and winter I arranged to meet with a bocher studying at Lubavitch. These meetings were to be

twice every week--Tuesday and Thursday from nine-thirty till about eleven in the evening. Although these meetings were planned for formal learning purposes, for example, reading the Tanya or the Rebbe's siches, most of the time was devoted to general discussion about Chassidim. These discussions helped immensely toward securing information about the academic organization of the Lubavitcher Yeshiva, the Tefillin Campaign, as well as other areas. This particular bocher was well-known to all the rest of the Lubavitcher bocherim and through him I met many others. Second, in October on Simches Toireh I introduced myself to a Lubavitcher in the Yeshiva and asked if at some time I might speak to him about Lubavitch. He agreed and at the same time introduced me to his wife, who was it turned out was interested in sociology. I would sometimes meet at their home for a general discussion about Chassidim with an emphasis on Lubavitch. This woman, Mrs. X, was an interesting as well as reliable source of data, often taking me into her confidence.

I received from Mrs. X a list of family names whom she considered to be newcomers to Lubavitch and managed to add to that list with the help of the interviewees. By February I was known by sight to a fair number of Lubavitcher. The bocherim in the Bays-Medresh knew that I was learning with Y and many, when passing me in the Yeshiva or on the street would ask, "How are you?" Since Y was responsible for enforcing curfew in the student dormitory, our learning session was held in his room. Thus the bocherim and I would again see one another and often we were able to chat. As well, I had attended a Farbrengen in

New York in January and this seemed to be at least some indication to a number of Lubavitcher that my interest in Yiddishkayt was more than a fleeting one. When Lubavitcher saw me again in Montreal some would inquire about my impression of the Farbrengen. During these brief encounters I would quickly ask if I might meet with them in the near future to speak about Lubavitch. In almost every case they agreed, and I would immediately write, in their presence, their name, telephone number, and address. Thus the number of Lubavitcher I came into contact with continued to increase.

The data on the Tasher Chassidim was gathered primarily by participant-observation. In December I visited the Tasher Yeshiva and when asked by them if I was interested to teach English, indicated in the affirmative. However, I never did receive the teaching position. In April, 1969, I once more offered my services to the Yeshiva, and was hired to work in the office as a typist. Briefly, my work entailed writing and answering letters on behalf of the Yeshiva. I worked five days a week, each day from nine till five, except for Friday when I stopped at two. For the most part, I worked together with two Tasher, who because of their particular positions (one referred to himself as the External Minister of the Yeshiva) came into contact with almost everyone in the Yeshiva, as well as other Chassidim not from Tash. Consequently I, too, came to know most of the people in the Yeshiva and was able to learn from them about Chassidism, Tash and themselves. While I was not able to hold extensive conversations with the bocherim (both they and I were discouraged from

doing so) I did familiarize myself with the organization and division of labor of the Yeshiva. Essentially I was seen by the Tasher as a person who had suddenly become concerned about Yiddishkayt (and even if I was not, then I ought to be). This impression was probably created when I indicated during the very first day that I was interested in learning something about Yiddishkayt. It was decided that one-half hour of my work day would be devoted to learning with Mr. Q. This never happened, although Mr. Q. always encouraged me to buy English translations of religious books.

Although my work called for writing letters, I was also seen as someone who could be a source of information about secular matters. Consequently I was always asked a variety of questions by both the ballebatim and bocherim on topics ranging from drugs in the university to news reports. Their very inquisitveness, however, gave me the opportunity to ask them questions, for just as they were interested in events that took place outside the Yeshiva, I was curious about issues that were directly related to the Yeshiva.

The Tasher Chassidim were never informed that I was collecting data to write about them. They categorized me as someone concerned about Yiddishkayt and I tried to present myself as such. I strongly suspected that they would be reluctant to give any information about themselves, especially if others were to read about them, and my suspicions were well founded. The Tasher knew, however, that I was studying sociology. This was indeed helpful as it tended to legitimate the kinds of questions I

often asked. I was sometimes questioned: "Why do you want to know about that?" and would answer: "Well, it's just my academic background, that's all."

At one point the two Chassidim with whom I worked most closely suggested that I write my thesis about Chassidim. This happened when I informed them that I could no longer work in the Yeshiva on a full-time basis as I had to begin collecting data for my thesis. I told them my thesis would probably centre around pool halls. One of them, formerly a Conservative Jew, was familiar with the stereotypic image of the pool hall (the other had never heard of the game) and convinced the other that the pool hall was not a place where someone like me should spend time. The other quickly agreed. Both decided I would be far better off writing about the Chassidim. Although I merely consented to consider their suggestion, on the following day both had changed their mind. One maintained that he did not want his name to appear in print. The other said that Goiyim would have the opportunity to read about Chassidim and conclude that "the Jews is funny." Also he believed that due to my limited knowledge of Yiddishkayt, I would not know which were the important matters to deal with.

My primary source of data were the Chassidim themselves. I also found it extremely useful to speak with people who came into contact with Chassidim during the course of their work. One such group of people whom I interviewed were teachers in Chassidic schools. Six teachers were formally interviewed, of which four were not from a Chassidic background. Two of these four taught in

a school where Chassidic girls were a minority of the school population. Although not themselves Chassidic, they provided information about Chassidic students and/or the organization of the school which teachers from a Chassidic background would often bypass or briefly mention. At the very least, the non-Chassidic teachers provided information which could at some point be a basis for discussion with a Chassid.

The two data gathering techniques employed throughout the study were participant-observation and interviewing. During the first few months, while I was simply trying to gain entrance into the Chassidic community, I relied heavily on participant-observation. When, on the other hand, my interests led me to require actual case histories, of recruits for example, interviewing became the primary mode of data collection. At no point did I conduct standardized interviews; that is, a set of questions prepared in advance and always asked in the same order and with the same wording. Instead I preferred to conduct "unstructured interviews" whereby certain topics were intended to underlie the discussion but in such a manner so as to allow considerable flexibility.

Interviewing seemed the most efficient way possible to gather information from recruits about their experiences in Lubavitch. These interviews were supplemented with comments interviewees made before our discussion "officially" began and after it was over. When the initial telephone call was made my strategy was to "sound out" the interviewee with respect to how much time they were willing to set aside for the discussion.

If they indicated it would be less than two hours I would suggest that one possibility would be to meet twice, each time for a short period. If, on the other hand, they were willing to spare as much time as I required, I would ask at the end whether it would be possible to meet again for a very short time to clarify certain points if some of the discussion was not entirely clear.

When I called up the person, I first mentioned my name and the name of the individual who referred me to them. I tried to make it clear that I was planning to write a thesis about Chassidim and that one aspect of the study was to focus on individuals who were not from a Chassidic background but who had come to affiliate themselves with Lubavitch. Since another such individual (and again I gave the name) indicated that they were in this category, would it be possible to meet with them? I interviewed eleven recruits (five males and six females) and also three Lubavitcher, who because of their involvement in community affairs, were familiar with the kinds of difficulties recruits would be likely to face.

In some instances, recruits immediately indicated that their knowledge about Chassidim was minimal and that their comments would be of little use. Usually their impression was that I was interested in discussing matters related to the philosophical aspects of Chassidism. I assured them that their cooperation would be most helpful and in all cases but one they agreed to meet. (In this one case I was referred to Mr. and Mrs. - - -. When I called and introduced myself, Mrs. - - - mentioned she had

heard about me from her friend and that her husband felt that the information I was seeking was too personal. She apologized that it would be impossible to meet with them.)

All discussions were held in the recruit's home, mostly in the evenings. If I wanted to meet with both husband and wife, I would do so on separate days or at different times during the same day. I always made certain to telephone the recruit a few hours before I was to meet with him or her. At this time I would also ask if I could use a tape recorder during the discussion as this would greatly simplify matters when I tried to recall the nature of the discussion. I stressed that the information would be kept in strict confidence and that the discussion would be erased from the tape as soon as it was elsewhere recorded. I felt that the advantages in totally retaining the interview would outweigh the information the interviewees might hold back. The replies were either that they did not mind or that they would be cautious in what they said. Only one recruit asked that I leave the tape recorder behind but suggested that if taking notes would be helpful to me that I could do so. As already mentioned, I tape recorded the discussions, but placed the tape recorder in such a position that it was out of the interviewee's sight.

Interviews with the recruits were conducted in English as this was the language they spoke best. A good understanding of Yiddish, and to a lesser degree Hebrew, were essential however, since a number of the phrases they employed were in these languages. In order to understand the intuitive meanings of these

phrases, it was important to comprehend both languages. While working at Tash or visiting the Satmarer Yeshiva I tried to speak Yiddish as often as possible. (If someone began a conversation or made a comment in English, I answered in that language.) My reasoning was that by speaking Yiddish I would be more approachable, since the Chassidim in these two places spoke mainly Yiddish among themselves. In Lubavitch, however, English was the primary channel of communication with both the bocherim and the ballebatim.

At no time during the research did I try to create a situation in which a Chassid would be morally obligated to cooperate with me. At one point, however, I considered making a financial contribution to a Yeshiva and at the same time ask the recipient some questions about the Yeshiva. I was discouraged from adopting such techniques and followed the advise. If, on the other hand, a situation presented itself where it seemed "natural" to help out, if possible, I did so. Such, for example, was the case when Chassidim at Tash asked that I mail their letters in a Montreal mail box.

In conclusion, while collecting the data I had to learn to regulate myself to the Chassid's timetable as well as meet some of the expectations that were implicitly made of me. For example, my personal social activities had to be arranged in such a manner so that they would not too greatly interfere with the times best suited for Chassidim to meet with me. I had to remember to keep on hand a yarmulke, for to arrive at a Yeshiva or Chassid's home without it would be highly inappropriate and

embarrassing. When in the presence of Chassidim my style of dress had to be respectful and my manner of speaking had to be a little more refined than usual. Finally, and most important, Chassidim had to be reminded periodically that simply because I was made aware of a particular Jewish law or custom, I would not necessarily adopt it and alter my own personal way of living.

GLOSSARY

The spelling follows the manner in which the words are pronounced in Yiddish. I have not hesitated to make use of the glossaries provided by Mintz and Poll in their respective books on the Chassidim. Thus those translations from Mintz are preceeded by one asterisk (*) and those from Poll by two (**).

*Apikoires (Greek). Skeptic; an unbelieving Jew.

Bellebos (Hebrew). A householder; an owner. (Ballebatim. Plural.)

Bar Mitzveh (Hebrew). The initiation of a Jewish boy into adulthood at the age of thirteen.

Bays-Medresh (Hebrew). A place for prayer and study.

Bays-Rivke (Hebrew). The name of the Lubavitcher girls' school.

**Bekeshe (Yiddish). A long Chassidic coat made of silk or silken material.

Benchn (Yiddish). Saying grace after meals.

Biber hitl (Yiddish). A large-brimmed hat made of beaver; not worn by Lubavitcher Chassidim.

Bnos-Chabbad (Hebrew). Literally "daughters of Chabbad"; name of Lubavitcher girls' club.

Bocher (Hebrew). A young boy; an unmarried male. (Bocherim. Plural.)

*Chabbad (Hebrew). Abbreviation of Chochmeh (wisdom), beene (understanding), daas (knowledge); the Lubavitcher movement founded by Rabbi Shneur Zalman.

Chassides (Hebrew). Teachings of Chassidism.

Chassidish (Yiddish). Chassidic-like.

Chazayrim (Hebrew). Literally "pigs." Dirty, unclean.

Chumesh (Hebrew). The five books of Moses.

Davenen (Yiddish). To pray.

Farbrengen (Yiddish). Literally, "to spend time"; a Chassidic gathering.

Farshmeert (Yiddish) Ragged.

Fleishik (Yiddish). Referring to meat or meat products.

Frum (Yiddish). Pious or observant.

*Gemoreh (Hebrew). That portion of the Talmud which discusses the laws of the Mishna.

Goiyim (Hebrew). Non-Jews. The word may include derogatory implications for non-Jews and Jews alike.

Goiyish (Hebrew). Gentile "like."

Hechsher (Hebrew). Rabbinical license; permit.

In droisn (Yiddish). Outside.

Kaftan (Yiddish). Black overcoat; a Chassidic garment.

**Kapotte (Yiddish). A long overcoat, usually black, and not as fancy as the Bekeshe.

Kashres (Hebrew). The dietary laws.

Lerer (Yiddish). A teacher.

Maamorim (Hebrew). Essays.

Mairiv (Hebrew). Evening prayer.

Mashgiech (Hebrew). Supervisor of religious laws, for example, in the preparation of kosher food products. (Mashgichim. Plural.)

Messibe (Hebrew). A social gathering; party.

Mikveh (Hebrew). Ritual bath.

Minche (Hebrew). Afternoon prayer.

Misnagged (Hebrew). Opponent of Chassidim. (Misnagdim. Plural.)

Mitzveh (Hebrew). A prescribed religious observance; a good deed.

Neshay Chabbad (Hebrew). Literally, "the women of Chabbad." Refers to the women's groups of Lubavitch.

Nidde (Hebrew). Related to the precepts governing a woman's conduct during her menstruation period.

Oisnam (Yiddish). Literally, "exception."

Parshas Yisroi (Hebrew). Literally, "Chapter of Jethro."

Payes (Hebrew). Earlocks.

Pirkay Oves (Hebrew). A book of Mishne in the Talmud.

Rashi (Initials for Rabbi Shloyme Yilzchoki). Most well-known Jewish commentator of the Bible and Talmud. Lived in the eleventh century.

Rebbe (Hebrew). The religious leader of a Chassidic group.

**Rov (Hebrew). A religious leader of a congregation who was ordained by religious scholars and who had great familiarity with the Jewish law and conducts himself in a traditional manner. (Rabonim. Plural.)

Saifer (Hebrew). Literally "book." A book of religious content.

Shabbes (Hebrew). Sabbath.

Shacharis (Hebrew). Morning prayer.

**Shich un Zocken (Yiddish). Literally "shoes and socks." Shich are slipper-like shoes, and Zocken are white knee-socks into which the breeches are folded. They are a Chassidic status symbol.

Shmutz (Yiddish). Literally "dirt." Usually refers to something obscene.

Shoichet (Hebrew). Ritual slaughterer. (Shochtim. Plural.)

Shoimer Shabbes (Hebrew). Literally "guardian of the Sabbath. "One who observes the Sabbath.

*Shteebl (Yiddish). A Chassidic house of prayer, usually consisting of one room. (Shteeblech, Plural.)

Shtickl Lubavitcher (Yiddish). Literally, "somewhat of a Lubavitcher." A rank not as high as a Lubavitcher.

**Shtickl Rebbe (Yiddish). Literally, "somewhat of a Rebbe." A rank not as high as the Rebbe's.

Shtryml (Yiddish). A fur hat worn on the Sabbath by married men; a Chassidic status symbol; not worn by the Lubavitcher Chassidim.

Shul (Yiddish). Synagogue.

Shulchn Orech (Hebrew). Code of Jewish Law.

Shytl (Yiddish). A wig worn by women after marriage.

Siche (Hebrew). Intimate discussion.

Simche (Hebrew). A party; festive occasion

Simches Toireh (Hebrew). The last day of Suckos celebrating the end of the yearly cycle of reading the Toireh.

**Suckeh (Hebrew). A temporary booth or tabernacle built for the Holiday of Tabernacles.

Taless (Hebrew). Prayer shawl.

Taless-Kotn (Hebrew). Literally, "small prayer shawl." Worn by a religious Jew either under the shirt or jacket.

Tanya (Aramaic). A book dealing with the philosophy of the Chabbad movement. Written by Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Ladi.

**Tefillin (Hebrew). Phylacteries; a religious object worn by an observant Jew every day, except on the Sabbath and religious holidays, during the Morning Service.

Toireh (Hebrew). Usually refers to the entire Jewish law.

Tzaddik (Hebrew). An extremely righteous man; usually synonymous with Rebbe.

Tzechazert (Yiddish). Unkempt.

Tzeshmeert (Yiddish). Ragged.

*Tzitzes (Hebrew). Fringes sewn at the four corners of the taless and taless-kotn.

Yarmulke (Yiddish). A skullcap.

Yeshiva (Hebrew). Rabbinical school.

Yiddishkayt (Yiddish). Literally, "Jewishness." Refers to a Jewish way of life within traditional Judaism.

Yeray-Shomayim (Hebrew). Literally, "fearful of heaven."

Yud-Tes-Kislev (Hebrew). Literally, "19th day in the month of Kislev." This is the date of a Lubavitcher "Farbrengen" commemorating the release of the Alter Rebbe, Rabbi Shneur Zalman, from a Czarist prison in 1796.

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