

DEVIANCE AND SOCIAL CONTROL AMONG HAREDI

ADOLESCENT MALES

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Abstract

The ultra-Orthodox (haredi) Jewish community includes the Hasidim and *misnagdim* who believe that they are the true followers of God's commandments, as He intended them to be followed when presented at Sinai, and as interpreted and codified by the Mishnah, Talmud, and other Rabbinic works. Little research has examined deviance within this group. This thesis delves into types of deviant behaviors taking place among haredi adolescents, as well as their causes, so that effective interventions, sensitive to the virtually unique needs of this group, can be implemented. Theoretical definitions of deviance are examined as they relate to this community and its emphasis on religious observance. Ultimately, deviance is defined as matters that can distract the individual from expected levels of religious observance.

Using Urie Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Model of Human Development, this thesis also explores the environmental factors contributing to a rise in deviant behavior in segments of the Montreal ultra-Orthodox community. From an analysis of data obtained from numerous interviews with community members as well as with mental health professionals familiar with this group, four contributing factors to the rise of deviant behavior among adolescent boys are identified. These factors test current haredi methods of maintaining strong cultural boundaries and may suggest that changes are necessary to cope with current challenges. The lure of mainstream culture is a strong draw for adolescents and advances in technology allow these individuals to easily engage in secret deviant behavior while remaining in good standing within the community. Moreover, the rigid structure of the school day with its long hours and intensive curriculum makes it difficult to accommodate the needs of all students. Changes in family structure, dynamics, and composition, as well as an increasingly stringent interpretation of religious law have also contributed to a rise in deviance. Finally, community financial weakness is explored as it relates to adolescence and a loss of religious identity.

Résumé

La communauté ultra-orthodoxe (haredi) comprend les Hassidim et les *misnagdim*, qui croient être les véritables disciples des commandements de Dieu, tels qu'Il désirait que ceux-ci soient suivis lorsque présentes au Sinaï, et tels qu'ils ont été interprètes et codifiés par la Mishnah, le Talmud et les autres ouvrages rabbiniques. Peu de recherches ont été effectuées au sujet de la déviance au sein de ce groupe. Cette thèse explore les différents types de comportements déviants observés chez les adolescents haredi, ainsi que leurs causes, afin que des interventions efficaces et adaptées aux besoins quasiment uniques de ce groupe puissent être appliqués. Des définitions théoriques de la déviance sont étudiées par rapport à cette communauté et à l'importance de l'observance religieuse que l'on y trouve. Finalement, la déviance est définie comme étant l'ensemble des éléments pouvant éloigner un individu de l'observance religieuse attendue.

A l'aide du modèle écologique du développement humain de Urie Bronfenbrenner, j'ai aussi exploré les facteurs environnementaux qui contribuent à un accroissement du comportement déviant dans certaines parties de la communauté ultra-Orthodoxe de Montréal. L'analyse des données obtenues à partir de nombreuses entrevues avec des membres de la communauté ainsi qu'avec des professionnels en santé mentale qui connaissent ce groupe, a permis d'identifier quatre facteurs contribuant à l'accroissement du comportement déviant des garçons adolescents. Ces facteurs remettent en question des méthodes haredi qui ont pour but de maintenir de fortes frontières culturelles et laissent à penser que des changements sont nécessaires pour faire face aux défis actuels. L'attrait de la culture de masse est forte pour ces adolescents et les avancées technologiques leur permettent d'adopter secrètement des comportements déviants tout en maintenant une bonne image à l'intérieur de la communauté. La structure scolaire rigide avec ses longues heures et ses programmes intensifs complexifie la tâche de répondre aux besoins de tous les étudiants. Des changements dans la structure familiale, dans ses dynamiques et sa composition, ainsi qu'une interprétation de plus en plus stricte de la loi religieuse ont aussi contribué à un accroissement de la déviance. Finalement, les difficultés financières de la communauté sont explorées dans leur rapport à l'adolescence et à la perte d'identité religieuse.

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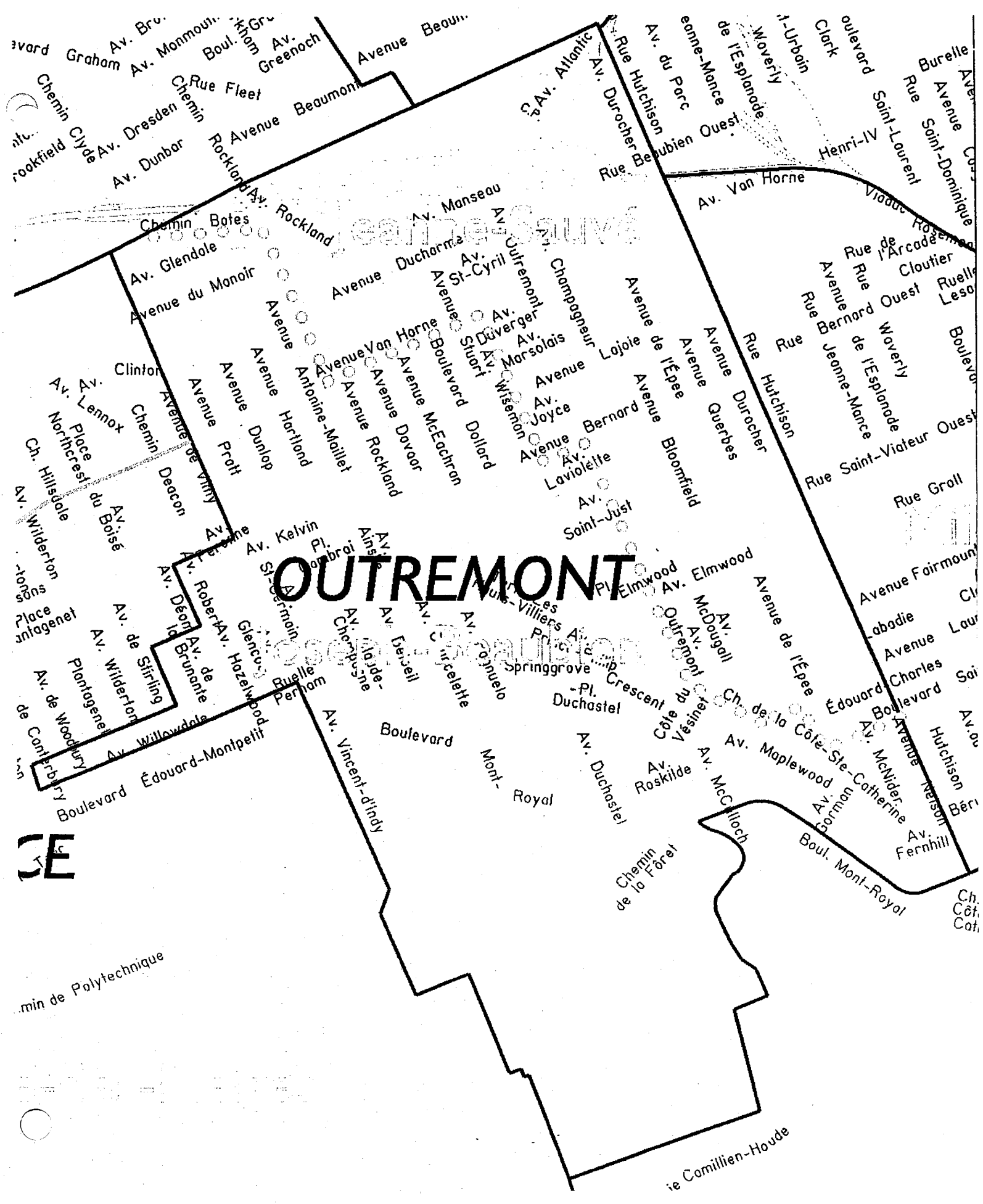
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OUTREMONT

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this exploratory research is to begin to gain an understanding of the nature of deviant behavior exhibited among the male adolescent members of Montreal's ultra-Orthodox Jewish community and the factors contributing to the increase of these activities (should it be determined that an increase is taking place). Once the types and causes of the illicit behaviors are ascertained and understood, effective interventions can be offered to a community struggling to deal with its troubled youth. Thus, it is hoped that this research can form the basis for appropriate interventions that would be within the scope of *halacha* (Jewish religious law) and based on values dear to this population.

Before delving into the issues of deviance, cultural boundaries and identity maintenance, it is necessary to provide at least a superficial description of ultra-Orthodox Judaism, its origins, and some of its values. The explanation that follows is not a comprehensive history but a brief synopsis of the rise of this movement to acquaint the uninitiated reader with this dynamic and resilient population, its main values and hierarchy.¹

Ultra-Orthodox Jews, or haredim, comprise just a small minority of the Jewish population,² yet they are visible and well known in the many urban centers in which they

¹ For a detailed description of haredi life see Samuel Heilman's *Defenders of the Faith* (1992) and Jerome Mintz's *Hasidic People: A Place in the New World* (1992).

² Heilman (1992) states that there are approximately 550,000 haredim worldwide. An annual growth rate of 5%, which the haredim are reputed to have, would mean that by 2003, the population should be close to double this amount.

choose to live. Literally translated as “tremblers,”³ the haredim believe that they are the true followers of God’s commandments, as He intended them to be followed when presented at Sinai, and as interpreted and codified by the Mishnah, Talmud, and other Rabbinic works written over a span of eighteen hundred years. They rigorously, and for the most part successfully, oppose acculturation to secular social patterns. The family, religious organization, social stratification and leadership are oriented to preserve group norms. Today’s haredim, composed of Hasidim⁴ and non-Hasidic *misnagdim*,⁵ represent the evolution of a group of Jews who have striven to repel mainstream culture and to insulate themselves against the pressure to assimilate into the mainstream population, while rigorously following the 613 *mitzvot* (commandments) from the Torah, the basis of religious Judaism.

1.1 The Emergence of the Haredim

Since the Diaspora resulting from the Roman conquest of Jerusalem and the destruction of the Herodian Temple in the year 70 C.E., there have been religious centers virtually everywhere in the world (Meijers, 1992). Intellectual knowledge was a valued commodity, and those with the capability to study the religious writings were encouraged to do so. Those intimately familiar with religious texts were seen as leaders of the community. Hundreds (if not thousands) of religious writings were produced over the centuries, commenting on the Hebrew Bible, codifying its laws, and setting guidelines as to how one should live.

³ See Isaiah (66:5) where the prophet tells the Jewish people “Hear the word of the Lord, you who tremble (haredim) at his word.”

⁴ Hasid literally means “pious.” Hasidim is plural and means “pious ones.”

⁵ See page 13 for a description of the *misnagdim*.

The actual beginnings of the emergence of the haredim as an identifiable movement dates back to the 17th century when the Jews of Poland and the Ukraine⁶ underwent a number of experiences that wrecked the prosperity that they had enjoyed for a number of centuries (Rubin, 1964). War and pogroms cost Jews their homes, belongings, and sometimes their lives. The Cossacks murdered many Jews during their rebellion of 1648-49,⁷ and those who survived were forced to flee the region. Unrelated but soon thereafter, large numbers of Jews living in the Mediterranean basin who had studied Kabbalah⁸ began to follow Shabbetai Tzvi, a Turkish Jew who proclaimed himself to be the Messiah. This movement spread quickly to Poland, where the survivors of the Cossack onslaught clung to the hope that the ultimate redemption was near. These hopes were dashed when Shabbetai Tzvi, summoned by the Turkish Sultan to account for his beliefs, accepted Mohammedanism rather than be tried as a traitor. The Cossack onslaught, coupled with the shattered hope for redemption, seemed to inhibit the survivors from making a new start for several generations (Rubin, 1997). Adding to the despair, ignorance was widespread (as many rabbinic centers were destroyed), a drastic change from shortly before, when Poland had been the intellectual center of Jewish scholarship (Rubin, 1964).

It was in this climate of despair that the Hasidic movement made its first appearance. The leader of the movement, the Baal Shem Tov (Master of the Good Name) or *Besht*, had simple teachings, namely, that, in man's quest to be close to God,

⁶ Following the destruction of numerous Jewish communities in Western Europe during the Crusades, many Jews migrated eastward and settled in Poland and Lithuania.

⁷ According to one estimate, more than 250,000 Jews from 300 communities were killed (Meijers, 1992).

⁸ Kabbalah, or Jewish mysticism, is a belief in the hidden meanings of sacred writings. It gained prominence during the 16th century and provided recipes to heal or protect community members. Part of their belief system was also to try to initiate a number of practices intended to usher in the Messiah, who, it was believed, was detained by sin.

sincerity was better than scholarship. Moreover, according to the *Besht*, the best way to attain this *deveikut* (closeness) was through a joy reached by serving the Lord. Joy was believed to lead to more good than the performance of any commandment; sadness, though never mentioned in the Bible as a sin, was believed to lead to evil more than the worst of sins. The downtrodden East European Jews rapidly accepted these ideas and their emphasis on optimism in such unhappy times. It is therefore not surprising that this became the dominant ideology among Jews in the Ukraine and Southern and Central Poland, the regions most affected by the Cossack massacres (Rubin, 1964). However, because of its emphasis on joy, the Hasidic movement did not end after the rebuilding of community life, nor did it remain isolated in the Ukraine and in Poland. It spread, quickly, embracing tens of thousands and becoming a massive folk movement. By the second generation, the Hasidic sect comprised a significant percentage of the Jewish population (Dinur, 1972).

The Jews who lived even further to the north, especially in Lithuania, were mostly unaffected by the Cossack attacks. They continued to live in relative harmony and still believed that Jewish learning was the dominant way in which to serve God. Led by Elijah ben Solomon Zalman, the Gaon of Vilna (1720-1797), the *Misnagdim*,⁹ literally "opponents" (of Hasidism) saw Hasidism as a threat to their value system. They had little respect for Hasidism, its leaders, or its institutions. For the *misnagdim*, authority came solely from scholarship, not from mystical spiritual sources or family ties. To them, Hasidim were perverters of Judaism who made their own changes to a tradition that was subject to rabbinic interpretation only (Heilman, 1992). The *misnagdim* continued to

⁹ Because their roots are in Lithuania, these Jews are also commonly known as *litvish*.

serve God through the rigorous observance of *mitzvot* that existed prior to the rise of the Hasidic movement.

Amid this disagreement about the proper way to be an observant Jew, a new phenomenon was beginning to take place: the increase in industrialization, urbanization, and mobility that changed the world in the 18th century. The industrial revolution ended the prominence of small, unattached communities. In the growing cities, traditions quickly became outdated, and faith was quickly replaced by reason (Heilman, 1992). As more Jews moved to the larger European cities and entered their non-Jewish environments, many assimilated and were lost, because they had to reduce their visible Jewish identities in order to enter mainstream society. Orthodox Jews sought to maintain their past traditions and, in varying degrees, to avoid, to escape, and to counter objectionable elements of the contemporary world (Heilman, 1992).

Within the Orthodox world, several groups emerged. The *maskilim*, or enlightened Jews, tried to find a middle ground between the pious traditionalists and the secular assimilationists. They strove to be loyal citizens of the new society, while simultaneously maintaining ties to the old religious world. Practically, this meant learning the language of the host society, possibly having friends who were not Jewish, and maintaining a profession that was not necessarily limited to Jews. The attitude of the *maskilim* could be summarized by the notion "be a person when you go out into the street and a Jew in your home."¹⁰

A group of contra-acculturationist Orthodox Jews rejected the notion that one should differentiate between one's life at home and in the street. Instead, they believed

¹⁰ Although originally made by Naftali Herz Wessely, an eighteenth century thinker, it was made well known again by the Hebrew essayist Yehuda Gordon.

that one had to remain a Jew fully and without compromise at all times. Both the Hasidim and the *misnagdim* strictly adhered to the Biblical commandments as interpreted by leading rabbis through the ages. They believed the partial assimilation of the *maskilim* was a precursor to complete assimilation, as the evil inclination of the secular world would ultimately force Jews towards complete absorption by the mainstream culture. The Bible (Leviticus 26:38) warns that those Jews who do not observe God's commandments "shall perish among the nations: and the land of your enemies shall consume you." This purported consumption would be in the form of assimilation.

Hasidism attracted those who felt one could establish a close bond with God through prayer, performance of *mitzvot* (commandments), and a relationship with a central religious figure. After the death of the *Besht* and his successor, Reb Dov Behr, leadership of the Hasidim dispersed and decentralized. As no central authority emerged, local Hasidic villages¹¹ increased in independence, each with its own leader, or *Rebbe*. The *Rebbe* of each Hasidic group acted as the central role model and sage and served as the backbone of the group. To this day, each *Rebbe* is revered by his followers and wields tremendous power. *Rebbe* literally means "teacher," but in this case, it connotes the leader of each Hasidic court or sect, who is believed to have remarkable powers because of his holiness, devotion to prayer, and lineage linking him to great *rebbe*s of past generations (Mintz, 1992). Their aid and advice is frequently sought by followers who ask for help in various areas relating to illness, the birth of a child, or economic difficulty. To Hasidim, a rabbi is not the same as a *rebbe*. The rabbi, of which there can be many in

¹¹ Hasidic groups are named for the towns in Europe where they originated, with "er" added at the end in most cases, as an adjectival form. Thus, the *Boyaner* Hasidim originate from Boyan, the *Belzer* Hasidim from Belz and so on.

one Hasidic sect, does not possess unique insight and extraordinary powers; he determines the parameters of law, i.e., what is permissible and what is not. Rabbis also serve as judges in civil disputes and officiate at religious ceremonies.¹²

Hasidim regularly conform to the strictest interpretation of religious law and can be identified easily by their physical appearance. Long beards and side curls, black clothing, and head coverings characterize Hasidic men. Women wear only long skirts and modest clothing, while the married ones shave off their hair or keep it covered all the time.¹³

As opposed to the Hasidim, the *misnagdim* advocated thorough study of religious texts as the way of shielding themselves from the outside world. Like the Hasidim, they also believed in following the rigorous interpretation of religious law. The *rosh yeshiva* (rabbi & head of the Yeshiva) leads the group and acts like the Hasidic *Rebbe* in many ways, though he is known for his scholarship, which is considered supreme, rather than his lineage or his ability to commune with God.

While originally quite different in ideology, the Hasidim and *misnagdim* recognized that they had more similarities than differences, and, given that many Jews were assimilating, the differences between them seemed rather insignificant. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the two groups grew closer and came to share many cultural values and physical resources. Today, the Hasidim and *misnagdim* together are known as the *haredim*, although the group does not refer to itself by this term but

¹² See Jerome Mintz, (1992) *Hasidic People: A Place in the New World*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, p.1-8 for a detailed description of the *rebbe* and *rabbi*.

¹³ The *misnagdish* women dress in a similar way to the Hasidic women. The men do not wear caftans or long side curls but generally dress in conservative suits with white shirts being common for boys over the age of 13.

rather calls themselves *erlicher Yidn*, or “Virtuous Jews” (Heilman, 1992). They do not see themselves as a separate sect of Judaism but as a special group that has maintained the true faith, while other Jews have departed from it.

The haredim are not a single monolithic organization but a number of diverse subgroups, each with a different leader and slightly different views on political and theological matters (Mintz, 1992). Some are pro-Israel, others are non-Zionist, and others are vehemently opposed to a secular Israeli government, indeed to any Israeli government in existence before the coming of the Messiah.¹⁴ They also differ somewhat in their willingness to interact with non-haredim and the extent to which they permit it. The Haredi population covers a spectrum that ranges from being relatively more open to modern ideas to being insulated and wary of outsiders and mainstream culture.¹⁵ Generally, non-Hasidic haredim and Lubavitch¹⁶ Hasidim are more willing to engage with outsiders, while most Hasidim, especially those from the Satmar¹⁷ sect, are more apt to shun outsiders.¹⁸ However, all haredim agree on total devotion to God’s word (Heilman, 1992).

To truly understand the haredi world, one must understand the importance of the Torah, which from their perspective is divine in origin, and the interpretation of its laws as described in the Talmud and other religious writings. These works do not merely supplement their lives but form the essence of their existence. Haredim see that their

¹⁴ Despite the differences of opinion regarding the secular government in Israel, all haredim believe in the holiness of the land of Israel.

¹⁵ I believe this point is crucial to understanding the haredim and it will come up again and again in this thesis.

¹⁶ Lubavitch is one Hasidic sect. See p. 20.

¹⁷ Satmar is a Hasidic sect originating from Hungary. They are known to be among the most restrictive and isolationist of the large Hasidic sects, especially in Montreal.

¹⁸ This is by no means 100% true. There are Lubavitch families who will not interact with outsiders and Satmar individuals who do. This should be seen as a tendency rather than as an absolute.

purpose in life is to serve God; everything else is secondary. All haredim must eat only those foods that have been prepared under close supervision by a rabbi or other trusted community member and must rigorously observe the Sabbath and other holidays. Contact between men and women who are not married is forbidden, and even married couples must refrain from physical contact two weeks every month.¹⁹ Men must pray in synagogue three times a day and are expected to spend free time studying. These laws and practices must be followed precisely, as they have been interpreted by generations of rabbis, and any alteration of a law is forbidden, as this would call into question God's directives.

The inflexibility of the haredim regarding their religious beliefs became even more apparent when Hasidic Holocaust survivors arrived in the United States and tried to rebuild their shattered lives. Before World War II, most haredim remained in Europe despite the growing anti-Semitic feeling. They felt that life was too promiscuous in the United States and that the risk of assimilation was not worth leaving the familiarity of Europe. They chose instead to remain in Europe, not knowing the future that awaited them.

1.2 The Establishment of the Haredim in North America

Several factors help explain the success in establishing haredi communities in the United States and Israel after World War II. Strange as it may seem, the destruction of Eastern European Jewry helped create the environment that allowed haredism to flourish (Heilman, 1992). With 90% of the Polish Jewish community and 70% of the

¹⁹ The laws of family purity state that during her menstrual period and the seven days following, no physical contact is permitted.

Hungarian Jewish community destroyed (Mintz, 1992), not even the most traditional Jews tried to rebuild life in Europe. Alternatives were sought in both (the soon to be) Israel and the United States. The Holocaust proved that no matter how hard one try to shed one's Judaism, the result was failure. Acculturation did not end the attempt of the Nazis to hunt down and kill even the fourth generation descendents of assimilated Jews.

This feeling - that all Jews were "in the same boat" - made the successful, established, non-religious Jews somewhat sympathetic to the haredi cause. Financial contributions, to keep a "small memorial lamp of Jewish life burning" (Heilman, 1992, p. 35) gave the recent haredi arrivals some support on which to build their communities. Tel Aviv secularists and socialists supported the Belzer *rebbe* after he arrived in Israel (Heilman, 1992). Generous government subsidies in the forms of housing stipends, family allowance, business and educational grants further provided the opportunities to build private, religious institutions. David Ben Gurion, the first Israeli Prime Minister, released several hundred yeshiva students from the obligation of military duty, as he assumed that there would be few more of these students in the future.²⁰

Finally, around the time that the haredim began to reach the United States in large numbers, the Civil Rights Movement was gaining popularity. It encouraged individuality, tolerance of religious and ethnic groups, and a belief that all Americans were equal under the law. The importance of this movement to haredi growth cannot be underestimated. Pressure to assimilate decreased, and it was acceptable to wear religious clothing outside of the home or synagogue. One could certainly argue that, without the

²⁰ The laws protecting those students - who now number the tens of thousands - involved in religious study remains an unresolved problem. Haredi influence in the Israeli parliament makes it very difficult for this law to be changed without risking a vote of non-confidence that could topple the government.

Civil Rights Movement, haredi life in North America would not have grown to the extent that it has. In an environment tolerant to difference, the haredim could now establish themselves safely and put their efforts towards solving the various problems that might hinder the growth of their way of life.

Fearing that they would fall into the trap of Americanization, change became the greatest enemy of Hasidism. If community members engaged in even the slightest secular behavior, this would be a deviation from the norms and might lead to more extensive deviance that could endanger group cohesion (Poll, 1962). As a result, the haredim tried to insulate themselves from the mainstream culture. They even rejected the Jewish institutions already established in the United States as being unfit, and they set about creating their own synagogues, slaughterhouses, schools, summer camps, and so forth. Furthermore, the haredim employed various strategies to keep their memberships intact and to prevent members from seeking out the less burdensome ways of life available in the outside world.

1.3 A Note on the Lubavitch Hasidim

Several characteristics render the Lubavitchers unique among the other Hasidic groups. Their men appear slightly different from most other Hasidim because they do not have long side curls, and they wear black fedoras instead of the hats favored by other Hasidim. Lubavitcher men also wear regular suits, saving their caftans for the Sabbath and holy days. But most importantly, the Lubavitchers actively proselytize and attempt to bring non-religious Jews closer to their form of Judaism. This strategy took shape during the 1967 Arab-Israeli war, when the Lubavitcher *Rebbe*, Rabbi Menachem

Mendel Schneerson, began a campaign urging his followers to ensure that as many Jews as possible to don *Tefillin* (phylacteries) each day. He believed that the observance of this commandment would aid the Jews in Israel in their war. Efforts to spread their outreach activities have resulted in the establishment of Chabad²¹ houses (drop in centers) in dozens of countries worldwide, mitzvah tanks (trailers really), educational classes, internet sites, phone in services where one receives advice at any time, and public celebrations of religious holidays.²²

Although other Hasidic groups go to extremes to avoid having their members interact with outsiders, Lubavitchers believe that proselytizing strengthens the identity of both the individual and the community. By discussing and arguing with others about the significance of Orthodoxy and the Lubavitch movement, they must think about the facts and the arguments themselves, and this reinforces their identity (Shaffir, 1993). If more people are convinced that the groups' way of life is correct, then it must be. It is not known how many people actually choose to change their lifestyle and take up this new way of life. Even though Lubavitchers may concede privately that most Jews neither practice Orthodox Judaism nor share their beliefs about the *Rebbe*,²³ they still publicly proclaim that they are making great strides in this area resulting in an increased identification and commitment to Orthodox Judaism (Shaffir, 1993). The visibility of Lubavitch (they can be found on hundreds of college campuses and other extremely

²¹ Chabad is an acronym for *Chochma* (wisdom), *Binah* (understanding), and *Da'at* (knowledge) – the three basic principles of Judaism explained by the first Lubavitcher Rebbe. Chabad and Lubavitch are used interchangeably, and refer to the same Hasidic sect.

²² Recently, Belzer Hasidim, under direction from their Rebbe, have begun an outreach program, especially in Israel. This program differs from the one that the Lubavitchers attempt. You will not find Belzer Hasidim on university campuses.

²³ The Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson, died in 1994 without having appointed a new Rebbe, creating some controversy within the Lubavitch sect. Some believe that he will return as the Messiah while others do not. See David Berger (2001) for a complete discussion on this matter.

exotic places) and their willingness to interact with outsiders differentiates them from other ultra-Orthodox Jews.

1.4 The Montreal Community

The Montreal haredi population lives primarily in Outremont and the surrounding areas. Hasidim from the courts of Satmar, Belz, Skver, Bobov, Klausenberg, Munkacs, and Vishnitz live there, together with the *misnagdim*, or non-Hasidic haredim. Generally, the Hasidim live in the Eastern part of Outremont, particularly on and around the streets of Jeanne Mance, Hutchison, Durocher, and Querbes. The *misnagdim* tend to live in the Western part of Outremont, particularly around the De Vimy area, on Barclay, Ekers, Bedford and Goyer Avenues. Community members generally refer to the *misnagdish* area as "uptown" and the Hasidic areas as "downtown."²⁴ A few blocks separate these two areas, where some haredim live. Two other regions with significant haredi populations are Snowdon, particularly around Westbury Avenue, home to the Lubavitcher Hasidim, and BoisBriand, north of Montreal, where the Tasher Hasidim reside in their own, self-imposed ghetto. A relatively new community is being established by Hasidim in the town of Saint Agathe, north of Montreal. Many haredim also spend their summers in the town of Trout Lake some forty miles north of Montreal.

A large number of haredim came to Montreal from Eastern Europe immediately after the Second World War. Another influx came in 1956, when Jews escaping the Communist revolution in Hungary arrived in Montreal. As most haredi children and

²⁴ A "downtownner" means a Hasidic person, and someone heading "downtown" is headed for the Park Avenue area, not downtown Montreal. An "uptown" family generally means a *misnagdish* one residing in the De Vimy area.

adolescents living in Europe in the 1940's were killed, there are relatively few elderly haredim, as it is these teens who would be becoming seniors in the past few years (although this will presumably change). Since 1985, the majority of immigrants have come from the United States.

A 1997 survey of the community in and around Outremont estimated approximately 6,250 haredim living there. The average household size was 5.06, more than double the average of the Jewish community at large (2.46) or the general Montreal population. Half of the households (50.1%) contained five or more people, while almost 10% had ten or more individuals (Shahar, 1997). These demographics are typical of haredi communities, where marriage at a young age, absence of birth control, and a high community values placed on having children create some of the highest birthrates in the world. An annual growth rate of approximately 5% translates into a doubling of the population of every fifteen years (Eisenberg, 1995).

A follow up study, completed in 2003, estimates approximately 6,660 Hasidic and Yeshiva²⁵ families in Montreal²⁶ (Shahar, 2003). Because many who marry leave the city to live elsewhere, the rate of population growth is lower than might be expected. Approximately half of the community is less than 15 years of age, compared to less than 20% for the overall Jewish population meaning that resources for children are in high demand.

The Lubavitch, Satmar, Skver, Belz, and Tash Hasidim all have their own educational systems comprising garderies (pre-schools), elementary, secondary, and post-

²⁵ For the purposes of the study, Yeshiva families are equivalent to *misnagdish* ones.

²⁶ This number is reached by multiplying the mean household size times the number of households for the following groups: Belz, Satmar, Skver, Yeshiva, and Other Hasidic. Lubavitch and Tash are included in the Shahar study but not in the above figure of 6,660 because they are not included in this study.

secondary schools. There do not appear to be enough families representing the other Hasidic courts to make their own schools viable, so they generally send their children to one of the other Hasidic schools, usually Belz, Skver, or Satmar. In addition, two yeshivas, Yeshiva Gedola and First Mesifta, serve the non-Hasidic boys. Bais Yaakov (Beth Jacob) Academy serves the non-Hasidic girls.²⁷ Boys and girls are educated separately from the earliest possible age, and in all the schools, the children are taught by members of their own gender by the start of seventh grade, at the latest.²⁸ The community also has its own summer camps, recreational facilities, social services, and voluntary ambulance corps, whose response time is reputed to be far faster than that of Urgence Sante, the public ambulance system. Many synagogues, most of which are small, simple establishments, serve the community. A *Beit Din* (religious court) rules on religious disputes, so that the secular court system can be avoided and the issues can be resolved according to Jewish law.

Although a tightly knit community living closely together, the haredim are only a small percentage of the Outremont population, and this has led to some tension with non-Jewish neighbors in recent years. Subjects of controversy have included synagogue expansion, haredi operated chartered buses, and haredi installation of an *eruv*.²⁹ The Montreal haredi community is also extremely close to the New York communities, with many former Montreal residents living there. A chartered bus runs between New York

²⁷ Boys' schools are called yeshivas while girls schools are referred to academies or seminaries in the case of post high school learning.

²⁸ Beginning in preschool, Hasidic boys are taught exclusively by males. The non-Hasidic schools vary as to when they will no longer allow women teaching boys and vice versa.

²⁹ An *eruv* is a complicated system by which a string or wire is installed around a neighborhood for the purpose of allowing Jews to carry objects on the Sabbath, which would otherwise be forbidden.

and Montreal nightly and allows the haredim to travel back and forth in a private, religious environment and at a lower cost than that available to the general public.

Although the different groups of haredim have much in common with each other, and unite to fight what is perceived to be a secular common enemy, there are significant differences between them as well. Levels of observance, as well as attitudes towards a variety of subjects differ in many areas. For example, some haredim are in favor of a Jewish State, many are neutral towards it, and others are vehemently opposed to its existence. Some haredim will eat foods that others will not, participate in activities that others will not, and allow into their homes things that others will not. To outsiders these differences are often small, but to the community they can be significant. Perhaps the best way to see the community is on a limited spectrum that ranges from extremely isolated and limited to somewhat open and interactive with mainstream society. Interpretation of religious law differs (again within a limited spectrum), and the way that some observe commandments is unacceptable for others. One should keep in mind that there are differences and disagreements among the haredim. There is no one single rabbi to whom all will look for guidance or for solutions to their problems, or who interprets religious law to everyone's satisfaction.

1.5 Statement of Problem

Despite the best efforts of haredi community members, anecdotal evidence suggests that there has been an increase in perceived negative activities among children and adolescents in the haredi community worldwide, particularly a loss in religious identity. In some ways, the community has responded. The entire issue of *The Jewish*

Observer (November, 1999), a publication of the *Agudath Israel of America*³⁰ movement, entitled "Children on the Fringe...and Beyond," examined children at risk from a religious perspective. Numerous conferences have examined the issue, but little research on the nature and causes of deviant behavior has been done. In the Montreal religious community, which is the focus of this research, some individuals or families with difficulties are using more mainstream services to help them, but most have failed to do so in the past. This shift represents a change in behavior for this community and may reflect more serious problems with which the community is struggling, as well as the recognition that some problems can be overcome with outside help. This may also indicate that the strategies used by the community to indoctrinate youth into their ways and maintain control may not be as effective as they once were and that new strategies may be needed.

It would seem that the increase in worrisome behavior has taken place both in the schools and at home, and it involves children of virtually all ages. While some of these negative activities meet the general description of conduct disorder, as listed in the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders IV*, others, which violate religious values, are not generally associated with the criteria specified in the DSM IV. The diagnostic criteria for conduct disorder include "a repetitive and persistent pattern of behavior in which the basic rights of others or major age-appropriate societal norms or rules are violated" (p. 90). Such norms include aggression to people and animals, destruction of property, theft, deceitfulness, truancy, and running away. The DSM states that at least three of these criteria must be present for a diagnosis.

³⁰ *Agudath Israel* is a movement founded in 1912 by Orthodox Jews in an effort to mobilize Torah loyal Jews.

This definition does not offer room for a group of people to insert their own interpretation of behaviors that pose a risk to their children. However, for the purposes of this study, these must be taken into account, because the community may see such behaviors as serious infractions that they wish to limit, indeed more serious than some behaviors listed in the DSM IV. Specifically, those children who choose to stop practicing their religion to the standard community norm are of paramount concern to community leaders. So are those who show a decline in respect for parents and community elders, rebelliousness at home or in school, or a tendency to increase their exposure to mainstream culture. For this reason, the negative behaviors as perceived by the community will be studied as deviance, rather than as conduct disorder. Community leaders, parents, and teachers have speculated about causes for these apparent changes in behavior, but no empirical data exists with which to begin to explore the roots of the problem or to offer possible solutions for deviant behavior.

This research will attempt to explain what kind of deviant behaviors are taking place among the adolescent male haredim and to determine if, and to what extent, change in these behaviors is taking place. In addition, the factors contributing to this phenomenon will be determined, in order to ascertain what kinds of interventions can assist these individuals and whether the community needs to make changes to meet the evolving needs of its members.

1.6 Review of the Literature

What follows is not intended to be a comprehensive review of all literature written on the haredim or even what has been written on the haredim in Canada, but

rather, a review of the pertinent works that relate to deviance within the haredi world. It is my hope that this review will expose the lack of literature related to haredi deviance that this dissertation will begin to fill.

There is an abundance of ethnographic descriptions of ultra-Orthodox Jewish life. Written by sociologists who immersed themselves in the haredi communities, these studies describe in great detail religious values, practices, and growing political influence (e.g. Solomon, 1962; Shaffir, 1974; Mintz, 1992; Heilman, 1992; Meijers, 1992; Landau, 1993; Kranzler, 1995; Rubin, 1997; Bloom, 2000). These ethnographic works provide comprehensive descriptions of the haredi populations, with particular emphasis (except for Bloom and Shaffir) on the two largest concentrations of haredi Jews, Jerusalem and New York. They depict highly complex and resilient populations that have managed to survive and thrive despite various threats to their continued existence from assimilation, anti-Semitism, and financial strains. Descriptions of economic activities, isolation strategies, patterns of rituals, methods of indoctrinating the young and relationships with other segments of society are detailed and thorough. Most of the ethnographers devoted some time to ways in which social control is maintained (as described earlier). Patterns of deviant behavior are generally absent from these studies except as they occur in relation to the maintenance of religious standards. Three notable exceptions are Heilman (1992), Rubin (1997) and Bloom (2000).

Samuel Heilman (1992) describes his visit to various Haredi groups in Israel and deviance among various haredim, including the Hasidim of Belz and of Reb Arelach. An informer from the Belz community stated that it was well known that haredim sneak off to read in the library items not obtainable within their local communities. Other haredim

engage in far more ominous behavior, even visiting prostitutes, doing so late at night when their chances of being discovered are diminished (Heilman, 1992). However, even this deviousness was seen with a positive spin, as keeping deviant acts secret protected the community by keeping breaches private. As one informer put it: "As long as people felt constrained in their behavior, even if that constraint was for a few only a matter of managing the impression they made upon others who counted, these were nevertheless limits that the other Israelis did not feel" (Heilman, 1992, pp.106-7).

While the deviant behavior is not accepted, from this statement it appears that those whose inappropriate behavior was conducted in private were at least tolerated. Heilman does not state that the individual was expelled from the community or that any other sanctions were imposed. It is impossible to generalize from this one brief anecdote, but the message seems to be that, if you act quietly and bring no harm to the community than no one will bother you. This seems quite surprising. Obviously if a deviant acts in secret, no one will know. But if it is known that an individual is prone to visits with a call girl, for example, then minimally, his status in the community should be diminished, and his opportunity for honors likewise reduced.

In his description of the Reb Arelach Hasidim, an offshoot of the Satmar Hasidim, Heilman (1992) describes rebels who use their youth as an opportunity to explore, rather than to embrace the tradition with youthful exuberance. Rebellion took a number of forms; intellectual, behavioral, or ideological. Intellectual deviance includes thinking improper thoughts, or reading forbidden things, like the secular press or novels, or even worse, pornography or university books. Behavioral rebellion could take the form of not wearing the proper caftan, coming to activities late, or eating with gusto. Within the

yeshiva, deviance can be expressed by sitting at the greatest possible distance from the rabbi and seeming to be uninterested in what is transpiring around them, while eating nuts and pistachios, the “quintessential expression of Israeli youth” (Heilman, 1992, p. 163). Ideological breaches, the most serious form of revolt, was to allow another world to penetrate one’s spirit and become an outsider, either another kind of Hasid, a member of an anti-Hasidic group, or part of contemporary society (Heilman, 1992). Heilman states that several young men actually left the Reb Arelach altogether (p. 163). He concludes by stating that efforts have been made to rein in those who deviate but with no success thus far. No further elaboration of the kinds of behavior being manifested, the extent of them, or the strategies used to try to bring them back are found.

Rubin (1997) described his return to Williamsburg, a predominantly Satmar section of Brooklyn, twenty years after originally researching the community. This enabled him to describe how the community had changed and to speculate on where it is headed. He concluded that “control today is considerably weaker than it once was” and that there is “evidence of a growing set of problems, including drug abuse, mental breakdowns, even sexual deviance, virtually unknown in earlier Satmar” (p. 231). This information, provided by mental health professionals and other knowledgeable community members, is not elaborated upon.

The most elaborate account of mental illness in the haredi world and its effect on the community was written by two psychiatrists, David Greenberg and Eliezer Witzum (2001). They live and work in Jerusalem, and they discuss some of the difficulties of working with this population as well as some of their findings. Of particular interest is

their description of Obsessive Compulsive behavior, sometimes manifested in extreme religious zeal, which can sometimes be seen as deviant behavior.

Jerome Mintz (1992) describes many Hasidic groups and their struggles and successes in establishing themselves in America after the Second World War. While not discussing deviance, he does address mental health issues and how Hasidic use of mental health professionals has evolved over the years. Any form of mental illness in one family member – depression, neurosis, autism, Down's Syndrome, phobias, and so forth – were kept secret, lest the whole family be viewed negatively by the community. Since the 1980's, Mintz describes more haredi individuals trained to handle such issues. He claims this is partly because certain *baal teshuv*³¹ joined Hasidic groups after they had obtained their professional degrees, and partly because some Hasidim began learning some skills to be able to assist their own community members. Mintz notes that there is an increased willingness for Hasidim to use seek help from a mental health professional, especially since a growing population means an increase in the absolute number of cases requiring counseling, psychological help, and in-patient treatment. This would seem to show an acknowledgement of individual and family issues that can hamper one's observance of the strict Hasidic lifestyle. However, most Hasidim will look to their rabbi as a final authority on whether, when, and under what circumstances one can receive help.

Stephen Bloom (2000) tracked a group of Lubavitch Hasidim who moved to Postville, Iowa in order to open a kosher slaughterhouse. Within his account of the tension that developed between the Hasidim and the Iowans, Bloom describes several

³¹ A *baal teshuva* is a repentant sinner, someone who returns to an Orthodox way of life.

individuals whose behavior was not the norm for boys of Lubavitch background. Their behavior included alcoholism, sex crimes, robbery, and attempted murder. Bloom offers a detailed description of what this individual did both while living in New York and Iowa, but little in terms of causes or the extent of such behavior. Bloom did make two points. First, that haredim have in fact been involved in deviant and illegal activity, something assumed to affect all societies and cultures. More importantly, he has shown that at least one perpetrator was willing to discuss his behavior with a researcher.

The struggles of adolescent Hasidic girls and some of the deviant behaviors in which they engage have been examined. Wellen-Levine (2003) conducted a qualitative study of teenage Lubavitch girls in Brooklyn to describe some of the religious conflicts in their lives, including issues of appearance, dress, alcohol use, and dating. While it is a detailed description of some of the coming of age struggles experienced by girls, it offers little insight into the world of yeshiva boys. However, it is the only volume dealing primarily with what could be categorized as deviant behavior in the Hasidic world and perhaps points to a new direction in which ethnographies might be headed.

Literature describing ultra-Orthodox children at risk and ways of helping them is on the rise. Publications containing parenting advice, suggestions for teachers, and coaching for prevention and guidance written by community members are growing more plentiful. These brief articles offer concrete recommendations to help children showing signs of troublesome behavior, and, perhaps more importantly to the haredi communities, those who seem to be leaving the faith. While no empirical explorations of negative behavior among the ultra-Orthodox Jewish community have been published in Montreal or elsewhere, a variety of literature states how the haredi way of life can be protected

through rigorous separation from the mainstream community and offers advice for parents in dealing with children who exhibit difficult behaviors³² (e.g., Falk, 1998, Gans, 1994). While these authors take into account the negative influences that may penetrate community boundaries from the outside, they fail to consider many of the internal risk factors that threaten even insulated communities. Russell and Blumenthal (2000) created a practical guide for detecting and intervening with religious children who are in crisis to a community with little knowledge of such matters. While useful in helping teachers and parents identify those who may be at risk, its purpose was not to discover changing trends in haredi Judaism that may affect the numbers of children leaving the community.

It is well documented that signs on walls are a common way to disseminate information. This is certainly true in the haredi world, where signs give the community notice of upcoming marriages and celebrations, recent deaths, housing, transportation, job opportunities and so forth. Posters around Montreal in September, 2003 stated the Rabbinical Court's objection to families having internet access in the home. Others advise parents to ensure that their daughters dress modestly at all times, update grocery items that may or may not be kosher, and advise of upcoming visits from leading rabbis (See Appendix A for some examples of posters found in the Montreal haredi community).

Despite the growing body of literature describing the problems and offering solutions, empirical studies backing up the reports are rare. As stated by Twerski (1997) "no accurate surveys on Orthodox teen drug use exist" (p. 42). Shaffir (1997) stated "though exact numbers are unavailable, but remaining in the minimal range, defecting

³² These works deal with the haredi population in general and are not specific to the Montreal community.

haredim have increased in recent years" (p. 209). Clearly, the environment is changing, but no empirical research has examined it.

As with other haredi communities, research on the Montreal community describes the ways of life and efforts to separate itself from mainstream culture. Far less research has been done on the Montreal community, given that it is much smaller than either the New York or Israeli populations. Shaffir (1974, 1995, 1997) described two Hasidic communities, the Lubavitchers and the Tashers as different groups of Hasidim with vastly different strategies for survival. The Lubavitchers are described as a highly accessible group who actively proselytize; the Tasher Hasidim moved outside of Montreal to isolate themselves from everyone else. Numerous other articles have been written on the Montreal community, but they tend to describe individual communities, relationships between the Hasidim and the French Canadian population or specific events that have taken place. For example, the 1988 dispute between the city of Outremont and two Hasidic congregations over zoning laws has been the subject of numerous articles and publicity.

Quantitative research on the Montreal ultra-Orthodox community is even more limited. A 1997 study obtained demographic information on the community, as well as thoughts related to political and economic outlooks (Shahar, 1997). The survey looked solely at those individuals living in Outremont, the area of Montreal home to many, but not all of the haredim. A follow up study, completed in 2003 (Shahar, 2003), provides data on the "*frum*"³³ Montreal community's demographics. While this study encompasses a broader range of Jew than his previous one, data is divided into specific

³³ *Frum* means "pious" and is a term used to identify those Jews who are strictly observe the Sabbath and laws of Kashrut.

communities such as Belz, Satmar, and Yeshiva so that information about one or several groups can be ascertained. Furthermore, the study attempts to explore some of the concerns of parents regarding care of children and of the elderly although the nature of childhood behavior as it might relate to this study was not within the scope of the study.

1.7 Conclusion

A brief exploration of the literature describing the haredi community reveals a lack of empirical data describing the kind of deviant behavior taking place among virtually every segment of the population. Types, frequency, and reasons for it are also absent. However, as more research on the haredim becomes public, more will be learned about this group, its strengths, and challenges.

Montreal, with its relatively small, yet densely populated haredi community provided an excellent environment for this research. The community is small enough to be a tightly knit group yet large enough to allow for a variety of interview subjects with different perspectives and experiences. Because so little information on the area of haredi deviance has been written, it is essential that this research be grounded within a proper theoretical framework that will allow meaningful results to expand our knowledge.

Chapter 2

THEORETICAL CONCEPTS

2.1 Introduction

The following section will review several theoretical concepts that relate to researching deviance and social control. While some of them can be relevant to any social group, this discussion revolves around specific application to the haredi way of life. Social control refers to the processes by which a community keeps its members under control and prevents them from seeking out other ways of life. With a lifestyle that is so strict and demanding, the haredim depend on various methods to maintain order. Deviance is the behavior or interpretation of behavior that is inappropriate or unacceptable to community norms. The haredim consider deviant many behaviors that others may accept as normal. A clear haredi definition of deviant behavior is one goal of this research. The ecological model of human development will be explored, as it will form the basis for the examination of the causes of haredi deviance. Finally, risk factors, those aspects of one's life that increase the likelihood that one will engage in risky behavior, and boundary maintenance dealing with the protection from external threats will be discussed.

2.2 Social Control

The result of the strict haredi regulations on food consumption, sexual behavior, work, secular education and outward appearance is an extremely rigid lifestyle with little room for deviation. Without the ability to coerce conformity physically, the haredi

community has resorted to a number of strategies to keep its members from assimilating to the secular world, and therefore ensuring the survival of the group. As stated by Richard Lapierre (1954), "The ability of a group to control the behavior of its individual members does, however, have profound effect upon the survival prospect of the group" (p.184). Four primary methods have been identified to keep control over a community: Prevention, rewards, socialization process, and external reinforcement (Rubin, 1997).

2.2.1 Prevention

Prevention is the deliberate attempt to remove the temptation to transgress by eliminating the opportunity to do so. The absence of exposure to television, movies, and most other aspects of secular culture limit the opportunity for its penetration. The physical isolation of some Hasidic groups³⁴ and the tendency for virtually all haredim to live in highly concentrated groups helps keep outside influences from entering the community.³⁵ To avoid the urge for inappropriate contact between members of the opposite sexes, teenagers are answerable for their whereabouts at all times, and complete privacy between members of the opposite sex (other than spouse or primary kin) is forbidden. One of the effects of the haredi distinctive physical appearance is to keep one away from undesirable places and people (Rubin, 1997). Essentially, community, prevention and tradition provide a certain amount of immunity to members.

³⁴ For example, in 1957 many Skverer Hasidim began moving out of New York City to New Square, some 60 miles to the north, in order to isolate themselves from the perceived negativity of the large city. In the 1960's, the Tasher Hasidim of Quebec chose to move some 25 kilometers north of Montreal, for similar reasons.

³⁵ Haredim also live in tightly knit groups because it is forbidden to use cars on the Sabbath and holidays. One must therefore live within walking distance of one's synagogue.

This immunity may also explain the limited influence on children by the aspects of secular society that they do glimpse. As most haredim live in cities, at least a minimal amount of secular culture that is not considered appropriate for their children is nonetheless seen by them. Such things are usually dismissed as being *goyish* (for the non-Jews) and permissible only to those who do not have the privilege of following God's commandments. There is never any doubt expressed as to whose way of life is superior when a child is outside the home.

Within the closed world of the haredi home and yeshiva, additional strategies are used. To ensure that children are taught nothing that might conflict with their religious values, the content of secular courses in school is vigorously scrutinized before being presented in class. Because few haredim possess post-secondary educations, less religious Jews or non-Jews are hired to teach the secular material. Before commencing, some teachers are given, in writing, instructions clearly delineating what may and may not be used in the classroom (Shaffir, 1993, 1998). These directions describe not only what materials may be used but which topics of discussion are forbidden as well. These include boyfriends/girlfriends, sexual reproduction, radio, television, movies, religion, women's lib, Zionism, Israel, Hebrew, and evolution.³⁶

2.2.2 Rewards

A comprehensive series of rewards offers great satisfaction to those who conform completely to haredi norms. Haredi communities offer the individual in good standing a great deal of emotional support, and, should it be necessary, material support as well.

³⁶ See Shaffir (1993) for a complete list of instructions given to the secular teachers at the Satmar and Tasher schools in Montreal.

Opening one's home to guests and to those in need is a highly valued *mitzvah* that most community members do willingly and thoroughly. New families and those in need can benefit from tremendous hospitality and support. Religious organizations are open to those who promise complete conformity to strict norms (Poll, 1962). Welfare organizations distribute goods and services to the needy who enjoy a solid reputation of conformity to group norms. All of the institutions created to serve the haredi community prevent members from having to venture outside community boundaries in both positive and negative ways. Having these internal organizations prevents outside contact, but a free loan society, *g'machim*,³⁷ and exclusive schools can be used to isolate those who deviate. The sick and elderly are cared for by the community, as caring for parents is strong value of the haredi community. One indirect result is that this care establishes their dependency on the group for support and therefore promotes conformity (Poll, 1962).

Punishments in the form economic, physical, -or psychological sanctions keep community members from deviating. Economic sanctions may comprise the withholding of physical resources from those who are deemed unworthy. One may no longer benefit from the aforementioned *g'machim*, or a business may be boycotted which leads to economic ruin if one is dependant on the community for patrons. Normally physical sanctions will not be actual beatings,³⁸ which might draw the involvement of secular authority, but may include the barring of an individual from a religious organization or, in

³⁷ *G'machim* (a Hebrew acrostic meaning dispensing kindness), goods, in the form of cribs, strollers, wedding dresses, extra beds, furniture and the like can be borrowed, sometimes from strangers, free of charge. See Landau's *Piety and Power* (1993) p. 262-263 for a detailed list of items available to community members.

³⁸ There is some evidence that beatings take place within the community but this seems to be quite rare. Graetz (1998) describes groups of men "on patrol" (p.191) who help "solve" problems of marital battery and men who refuse to give their wives a *get* (Jewish divorce).

extreme cases, the expulsion of a group member completely. Psychological sanction is perhaps most effective, because one's self image is a reflection of his status within the group. Gossip and ridicule serve to discourage deviation, while public honors distributed in the synagogue or being singled out by a Hasidic *Rebbe* at one of his ceremonial meals recognize one's religiosity. A person who has received leftover food from the Hasidic *Rebbe's* own hand has received one of the most coveted honors in the community (Poll, 1962). Synagogues and *mikvehs* (ritual baths) are regular places where gossip is exchanged and where a deviant can be shunned.

2.2.3 Socialization

The key to the social control system is the socialization process (Rubin, 1997). Children are brought up in strict adherence to the religious commandments, and are taught to revere the *Rebbe* or *rosh yeshiva*, and the community as a whole. The system of indoctrination and socialization gears children towards group conformity. Youths are raised learning to enjoy a *Rebbe's* speech, holiday celebrations, and the special Sabbath activities. Also, there is no double standard among the *haredim*. Adults do not violate the norms they wish to inculcate in their children. Thus, the child encounters in the behavior of adults no contradiction to what he is being taught (Rubin, 1997).

In contrast to the many opportunities and positive forms of instruction offered to youth are other exposures and experiences purposely omitted from the socialization process. Haredi youth are rarely given the opportunity to make important decisions on their own. A Hasidic *Rebbe* or rabbi makes many of the important decisions not made by one's parents. In some Hasidic groups, even the choice of a spouse is left to the parents.

Therefore, should a youth actually contemplate making a break with the community, he would almost certainly be rejected by his friends and family. In addition, he has little experience in making the decisions necessary in starting one's life anew. The sheer shock of entering the secular world, coupled with a lack of the basic skill necessary to find work, make defections rare but not non-existent.

Hasidim maintain that there is an additional component to the socialization process. For over two hundred years, a rich oral tradition has flourished in Hasidic courts, beginning in Europe and continuing in America and Israel. Teachings, parables, legends, and storytelling are an integral part of religious and social life. The tales serve as a technique of social control by making explicit what is deemed acceptable and unacceptable behavior. In the legendary tradition, the commandments provide the background of context and custom. The tales make it clear that those who break the law are punished and that their transgressions are the cause of their misfortune (Mintz, 1968). The tales captivate children from the earliest possible-age and reinforce lessons learned from parents, teachers, and *rebbe*s.

2.2.4 External Reinforcement

Finally, events in the surrounding culture are used to support haredi efforts at social control, particularly when they may be contrasted positively with the values and goals that haredim share. When others with whom a value is shared fail to achieve it while the haredim succeed, the effect is to confirm to the haredim the validity of their handling of a situation (Rubin, 1997). For example, the higher rates of intermarriage, divorce, and extra-marital affairs evident in non-Orthodox Jewish world prove to the

haredim that their way of life, with strict procedures for courtship and marriage, is superior.

When examining what has changed among adolescent haredi male behavior today, one must scrutinize whether the methods at maintaining social control remain effective. Should there be an increase in the number of individuals who are choosing to drop out of the community, the methods used to sustain group devotion need to be examined and possibly altered. Despite the strength of the community's cultural boundaries, change does take place over time, and aspects of mainstream culture are incorporated into the community. The Internet, which is used by many to conduct business and study Torah, also has the potential to connect the user to a host of inappropriate material.

2.3 Boundary Maintenance

While the preceding discussion refers primarily to factors stemming from within the group, many potential risks can come from outside a specific community. The haredim in particular are concerned about the penetration of outside influences, and go to great lengths to insulate their communities.

Defensive adaptation is the phenomenon by which a society attempts to preserve its cultural identity in the face of perceived external threats (Siegel, 1970). Threats can come in several forms: urbanization, acculturation, urban-rural relations or industrialization, all of which can potentially lead to assimilation. Members of defensive societies see a hostile surrounding environment around them as well as destructive or depriving actions emanating from it (Siegel, 1970). While the group may have only

limited resources with which to confront the apparent threat, many have engaged in aggressive confrontation despite the inadequacy of their assets. Many activists and militant groups demonstrate that limited resources do not necessarily impede a group from active defensive behaviors.

The probability and intensity of boundary maintenance mechanisms increase with the solidarity of the social system, as well as with the extent of the perceived threat (Loomis, 1960). One should note, however, that defensive adaptation does not necessarily entail complete withdrawal from the larger society. Haredim actively resist mainstream culture even though most live in the midst of urban societies and interact with it in many ways.

Defensive adaptation consists of several components. Cultural Integration refers to the key values that form the integrity of the group. A tightly integrated system means that a wide range of customs is related to a few values. Group members in such a system are unlikely to disregard one custom or practice, as it would necessitate sacrificing key values associated with the custom. With the exception of a few key values around which the group revolves, the individual is often subordinate to the group.³⁹ Many efforts are undertaken cooperatively, the same leaders are used to settle disputes for all group members and goal-oriented work is emphasized (Siegel, 1970).

Objects and rituals that call for loyalty and accent ethnic identity symbolize core values (Siegel, 1970). For example, uniforms, badges, flags, rituals, and language strengthen community bonds and provide an intense feeling of group identification. A

³⁹ For example, in some Hasidic groups, each family is expected to contribute towards the construction of a new giant synagogue, despite the financial impact on some families. Also, if a teacher were needed in a small Hasidic community, a family could be sent from a larger one without regard for the potential trauma imposed on it by the move.

casual glance is usually all it takes to identify who belongs to which group. Specifically colored clothing, some sort of headgear, or particularly modest clothing are favored by various cultures. In addition, clothing may only be required to be worn by certain group members, be it the men, women, children, leadership, professionals, or others. Insulation by means of language is found among several Christian sects, as well as by Hasidic Jewish groups who predominantly speak Yiddish. Groups can identify insiders and outsiders merely by who speaks a particular language. Certainly, by walking through a neighborhood, one can easily identify the haredi men and women by their modest dress, beards, side curls, white shirts, and long caftans.

Centralized authoritarian leadership, usually in the hands of men, speeds decision-making and allows a group to mobilize quickly against an external threat that could go unchecked by lengthy democratic proceedings. Centralized authority is legitimized by the urgent need for solutions to daily problems, and special training or knowledge often gives members of this office special status. Although some leaders may inherit their power, all must consistently validate their right to exercise their duties (Siegel, 1970). Certainly, the Hasidic *Rebbe* and other leading rabbis regularly direct their followers, answering difficult questions, determining policy, and finding solutions to new problems. In addition, they motivate their followers to continue, and even increase their level of religious observance.

Communities use social sanctions to encourage conformity to group standards. This would include strict repercussions should a member not observe a particular ritual or dress a certain way. For many ethnic groups, refusal to identify with customs, ritual, and dress is tantamount to rejecting the very essence of the group. As wayward practice

could have a detrimental effect on others in the group, the individual who rebels against his culture could be shunned, excommunicated, or be forced to move out. While not common judging by the data gathered for this study, excommunication within the haredi can take place. Haredi families have been known to "disown" children who leave the faith, not allowing them to return home for fear of the stigma it will bring the family.

A system of comprehensive socialization - with separate schools and institutions - allows youths to be indoctrinated with community values. This is more than merely setting up physical boundaries between group members and outsiders. Not only do separate institutions prevent (or at least make far more difficult) the penetration of foreign cultural elements, but they also ensure that only those who are deemed appropriate have contact with the children. Many religious groups, including the haredim, have gone to great lengths and great expense to set up their own educational institutions. Private recreational centers provide safe environments where children can relax, play, and "hang out" outside of the school. Many of these institutions were created with the knowledge that children would find their own alternatives if they did not have a healthy place to go. The same can be said for day camps, social services, and in some cases, medical services.

Finally, interactions with outsiders are controlled, especially with regard to young and impressionable children. The fewer the interactions with non-group members, the better. Separate institutions help meet this goal, but an attitude where one does not associate with those unlike oneself is also stressed. Interactions that must take place, such as between merchant and patron, tend to be specifically related to the business at

hand, and not to personal matters. If sensitive issues are broached, members respond with "ready made answers which are meant to deceive" (Siegel, 1970, p. 13).

In addition to the previously mentioned concrete defensive strategies used by groups to protect their boundaries, an attitude whereby group members feel that their way of life is constantly under attack is maintained. Feeling that one is always at risk from the penetration of outside culture leads to behavioral controls and training for self-restraint (Siegel, 1970). If one is perpetually on guard, the risk is minimized.

Groups with a high level of boundary maintenance are still exposed to outside contacts, even if only to fill the need for goods and services (Loomis, 1960). Properly indoctrinated group members can relate to outside members without risking their ethnicity. For inter-ethnic interactions to remain stable, there must be an understanding that governs contact allowing "articulation in some sectors or domains of activity, and a set of proscriptions on social situations preventing inter-ethnic interaction in other sectors" (Barth, 1969, p. 16). Interacting with someone of another ethnic group implies a recognition of limitations on shared understandings, separate values and judgments. Interaction will therefore be limited to areas of common understanding and interest, thus protecting the cultures from confrontation. Barth (1969) stated "if a group maintains its identity when members interact with others, this entails criteria for determining membership and ways of signaling membership and exclusion" (p. 15). Barth seems to be saying that interaction is actually the litmus test for determining if boundaries are effective. By maintaining a degree of cultural independence, and not conforming to other common characteristics despite the possibility of drawing attention to oneself, one has proven capable of maintaining boundaries. The cultural boundary remains as long as the

group members recognize other members of the group and interact only on a superficial basis with "outsiders." As long as the primary interactions take place with members of one's own group, ethnic boundaries are maintained. Barth may be suggesting that boundaries, not the structures enclosed by them, define ethnic groups. Ethnic boundaries remain despite the flow of personnel across them, because they are based on characteristics that are independent of social situations and cannot easily be forgotten.

Despite the level of interaction, minimal contact over a lengthy period of time can result in a shift in behavior. Cultural drift (Herscovits, 1966) refers to the accumulation of minor variations in a behavior, language, or cultural trait that, when combined, may result in the shifting of a behavior. Change results when certain deviations from the established norms are adopted by a number of people, thereby initiating and continuing a tendency that can become a trend. Thus, if a number of people in a cultural group begin using slang or dressing differently, the culture has shifted, at least minimally. Combine enough of these changes and a culture may begin to look significantly different despite efforts to the contrary.

2.4 The Ecological Model of Human Development

Many theories have been posited to explain children's risk for antisocial tendencies. Biological theories focus on the genetic transmission of antisocial behavior, while social theories emphasize the influence of the group on the individual. Developmental theorists stress the importance of healthy family relationships, social bonding, and internal controls. Various studies prove the importance of each of these

theories, but no one fully links the complex nature of childhood development and the multitude of factors at play.

The ecological model of human development gained prominence with the publication of *The Ecology of Human Development* by Urie Bronfenbrenner in 1979. His theory stipulated that development is defined by the way in which an individual interacts with his environment at a number of different levels. According to Bronfenbrenner:

The ecology of human development involves the scientific study of the progressive, mutual accommodation between an active, growing human being and the changing properties of the immediate settings in which the developing person lives, as this process is affected by relations between these settings, and by the larger contexts in which the settings are embedded. (p. 21)

These emphases on “immediate settings,” as well as the “larger contexts” in which the individual is placed, form the essence of Bronfenbrenner’s theory. The child begins life with the ability to grow, structure, and restructure the environment in which he resides. The child grows in a family, which lives in a neighborhood and attends a school in the larger community, each of which exerts its influence on the individual. Bronfenbrenner divided the ecological environment into four components, the micro-, meso-, exo-, and macro-systems, which together act like a series of concentric circles around the individual. Changes in each system have the potential to increase risk factors for the developing child. This “ecology of childhood” (Fraser, 1997) is formed by these central systems.

The micro-system is quite small for developing children and refers to the environmental aspects that are most powerful in shaping a child’s psychological growth (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). This level is closest to the developing child, where actual daily interactions take place, usually beginning in the home with one or two caregivers

(Garbarino, 1992). As the child grows, the micro-system may grow and include other classmates, peers, neighbors, extended family, colleagues, and contemporaries. It is the expanding capacity to do more that is, according to Bronfenbrenner, the essence of child development (Garbarino, 1992). In the haredi world, the micro-system would follow this process of increased interactions. The mother would normally be the primary caregiver, but the effect of the typical very large family would mean less time with mother and perhaps significant time in the care of an elder sister. The extended interactions would remain rather small. Because of the nature of haredi communities, a child's neighbors would also be his peers and classmates. Rigorous boundaries would prevent the social circle from including non-haredim, and it not unusual to be taught in school by a parent, uncle, cousin, or grandfather.

A meso-system is a system of micro-systems and is defined by the relationships between micro-systems that the developing person experiences, such as the family, school, place of worship, and community center. The number and quality of connections define the richness of meso-systems. Minimal linkage places the child at risk. For example, a lack of a connection between the home and the school can lead to academic incompetence (Garbarino, 1992). Because of the tight nature of the haredi community, connections between the home, school, and synagogue, the three primary meso-systems, are usually very strong. Parents and teachers frequently pray together, and the fact that most families live in close proximity to one another provides many opportunities for interaction.

The exo-system refers to those settings that do not involve the developing person as an active participant, but in which events occur that affect the developing person

(Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Examples of exo-systems include school boards, parents' workplace, or a sibling's classmates. In the case of the haredim, it would also include edicts by leading community rabbis affecting what is acceptable behavior. Posted signs or notices might be used to advise a child of decisions taken by religious leaders regarding how one should conduct himself or what additional studying program he should attend.

Finally, macro-systems are the consistencies that exist at the level of culture or sub-culture as a whole and include underlying belief systems and ideologies (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Macro-systems are the meso-systems and exo-systems that form the blueprints by which society decides how things should be done. Biblical and Talmudic principles and the leadership of a *Rebbe* or *rosh yeshiva* guide the haredi macro-system. The strict nature of the haredi lifestyle has already been discussed.

An ecological transition occurs every time a person's place in the ecological environment changes due to a change in role or setting (birth, entering daycare, new sibling, changing jobs etc...). Each ecological transition is both a consequence and instigator of developmental process (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). The more positive these transitions are, the healthier the individual is said to be.

However, the potential for risk exists at each system level. At the micro-system, risks can include physical, sexual, or emotional abuse, neglect, or lack of necessary resources. Lack of parental involvement in a child's activities that take place outside the home may place the child at risk at the meso-system level. Exo-systems can adversely affect a child if a parent is laid off work, or if a school board decides to close a local school in favor of busing children to larger, more distant ones. Finally, if a culture allows

racist or sexist values to flourish at the macro level, women and members of minorities may be disadvantaged. The haredim recognize that risks exist in every community and that theirs is no exception. While my conversations with them lead me to believe that there is less violent crime and drug use among haredim than among the general population, divorce is increasing in frequency. While still significantly lower than the general population, the rise in divorce, coupled with large numbers of children, means that many more children are growing up in single parent homes now than was the case in the past. As this parent and professional stated:

(a) I'm seeing a rise in divorce, aren't you?

(b) We know that the number of divorces in the orthodox community is increasing.

As with deviance, which a specific community can define anyway it wishes, interactions can also be classified by an individual and community as being either acceptable or not. This is the case among the haredim whose attempts to isolate themselves limit their interactions with those who differ from them. However, the ecological model's premise that development is defined by interaction works, regardless of how extensive those interactions are. Though they limit their involvement with the mainstream culture whenever possible, the haredi communities are themselves a macro-system with their own values, ideas, and beliefs. In the case of adolescent haredim, they still interact on all of Bronfenbrenner's levels; each will affect one's upbringing and behavior.

Bronfenbrenner's model of development, with its emphasis on the environmental factors affecting an individual over matters such as temperament and heredity, was useful as a basis for exploring deviance in the haredi community. It allows for the analysis of

tangible structures within the community, whether it is the school, family, synagogue, or larger, mainstream world. Each of these areas is one where change can be implemented if so desired, as opposed to biological models which do not.

2.5 Risk

Risk factors are those elements in a child's life that increase the likelihood of engaging in risky or troubling behavior. Anti-social behavior tends to occur as a result of an accumulation of risk factors (Rutter, 1979, Garbarino, 1999). Risk factors have been categorized in a number of ways (Offord, 1989, Lerner & Ohannessian, 1999 for example), but each emphasized individual characteristics such as personality and resiliency, as well as the different systems that surround the person, such as the family, community, and school. Three trends in childhood theory have contributed to current definitions of "risk." Bronfenbrenner's ecological model pushed researchers to consider an individual's environment far more than had been done previously. Families, peers, and the community have been proved to influence a child's development (Lerner, 1993, Baruch & Stutman, 1994). The rise in research related to early interventions shows that early childhood interventions can overcome some of the negative effects of poverty and other disadvantages, with results that suggest that the impact of early intervention can last for many years (Burt, Resnick, & Novick, 1998). Finally, specific problems of adolescence - such as delinquency, substance abuse, dropping-out, and pregnancy - have been seen as having common, rather than separate causes (Dryfoos, 1990). This is significant, as it marks a shift to the recognition of clusters of problems, rather than

individual problem behaviors. These factors have focused researchers on types and levels of risk needed to assess future problems.

Some theorists (Zuckerman, 1979, Zuckerman, Eysenck, & Eysenck, 1978) have seen risky behavior as a normal phase in the developmental process, especially for adolescents who see these years as a time to try new things, to increase their autonomy and responsibility, and to ultimately take some chances. Dangerous or risky behavior provides a rush or thrill, thus making them appealing to many children who are still developing their capacities to reason. Children who live in cultures with broad socialization patterns are more likely to take risks, because their behaviors are not as constrained as in cultures with narrow socialization practices. While such an assumption of risk allows for some dangerous behavior to be seen as normal development, an attitude that the child will "grow out of it" may fail to distinguish truly problematic actions from those that will cease on their own as the youth matures. In addition, many adolescent behaviors do not lend themselves to this kind of analysis. Most adolescents do not continue to smoke for the thrill of seeing whether they can avoid developing lung cancer, and few engage in unprotected sex to see if they can beat the odds of contracting a sexually transmitted disease.

Another approach to risk focuses on a child's environment, rather than on his or her actual behavior. Youths are thought to be at risk not because of specific behaviors they present, but because of the risky environments in which they live. Neighborhoods with high levels of crime, unemployment, drug use, that are short on good housing and appropriate adult role models increase a child's risk to engage in dangerous activities (Burt, Resnick, & Novick, 1998). Based on this theory, interventions would have to

target neighborhoods and communities. While successfully removing the stigma from the individual, this theory is nonetheless not free of problems. The potential exists to stigmatize all children living in a particular community, even though many children from this very community do not succumb to troublesome behavior. It may also fail to recognize the dangers of children from "better neighborhoods" that may pose many risk factors of their own. Finally, this theory fails to take into account the protective factors that make children more resilient to risky behavior. To the haredim, environment is extremely important, and they tend to live in near one another for several reasons, one of which is to control the environment. As the haredim in Montreal live in one neighborhood, either all or no haredi children would be considered to be at risk, depending on how one categorized that neighborhood. Such a broad generalization would not seem to be adequate for this community.

A third approach sees risk defined by the personal characteristics that an individual exhibits (Burt, Resnick, & Novick, 1998). These traits are used to predict the likelihood of future negative behaviors. Antecedent characteristics could be economic or neighborhood factors. Physical or sexual abuse, neglect, or the existence of drugs in a family could constitute risk factors as well. Poor report cards, social service, or youth protection reports can also be used to target those children who need intervention the most (for example, those children unable to read at the end of grade 1 could be identified to receive help). As will be seen, not only individual characteristics, but family traits are explored before haredi children marry.

A final approach to understanding risk waits for difficult behaviors to occur before identifying those children "at risk" (Burt, Resnick, & Novick, 1998). Because this

approach is defined by behaviors that have taken place and not on those that might take place in the future, there is no focus on prevention, except that of keeping behaviors from worsening. By identifying "at risk" children in this way, there is no chance of intervening with children who may not develop problematic behavior as interventions only take place with those exhibiting "at risk behaviors. However, by the time children are identified as being "high risk," they may be beyond the point where effective intervention can be provided (Burt, Resnick, & Novick, 1998). Such an approach also tends to focus on current problems and not the antecedents that may have caused them.

The potential increase in perceived negative behavior among the haredim may be attributed to changes in the interactions described by Bronfenbrenner (1979) which increase the susceptibility to risky behavior. Ultra-Orthodox children operate within the same four levels of interaction as others. The haredi way of life creates its own unique challenges and opportunities within each level of this model that are to be the focus of this research. For example, close contact and late hours spent with their rabbi offers another adult within their closest system of interaction, the micro-system. Conversely, long hours spent away from home can limit involvement with one's own family and may be considered a risk factor.

2.6 Conclusion

The haredim employ many of the above-mentioned strategies to protect themselves from the various internal and external threats. Seeing themselves as a vulnerable minority at risk for assimilation reinforces the belief that these steps are necessary. Over the centuries, the haredim have maintained social control very

effectively using methods such as prevention, rewards, socialization from a young age, and external reinforcement. However, as stated by numerous respondents (that will be explored in detail later) cracks in the defensive armor of the haredim are, if not first appearing, than growing.

Perhaps, as suggested by Barth, the nature of the boundaries and interactions across them are changing while the haredim are trying to adapt. If boundaries define a group, then a weakening of those boundaries may mean deterioration in the integrity of the group. According to Bronfenbrenner's theory, an increase in the number of contacts that haredi boys have with other non-haredi individuals could expand their macro-system, even affecting some of their basic beliefs. In order to determine why these changes are taking place it was necessary to gain acceptance into this community while adhering to basic research principles. I shall now describe how this was done.

Chapter 3

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

Before presenting the methodology used in this study, I felt it would be helpful to provide the reader with some history of my involvement with the haredim so that my research can be placed in a proper context. This is particularly appropriate because my increased exposure and understanding of haredi life prompted me to undertake this study. This is also an opportunity to express some of my concerns about researching a sensitive subject with a closed group and to describe some of the problems I encountered along the way.

3.2 History of Research

My first contact with haredim probably took place without my even knowing. As a ten year-old Jewish day school student, I took a weekend trip to Brooklyn, New York with the other boys my age to take part in the *siyyum mishnayos*, a festive gathering celebrating the study of *Mishnah*. While spending the weekend with a haredi family in Boro Park, I took only a passing interest in the religious rituals and community that were, at the same time, both familiar and foreign. While the prayers and special Sabbath foods were recognizable (as I was brought up and continue to be a Modern Orthodox Jew⁴⁰), some of the rituals surrounding them were not. In all, while a memorable trip, I was

⁴⁰ Modern Orthodox Jews believe that one can observe *halacha* and still have a secular education, similar to the *Maskilim* described earlier.

more interested in exploring candy stores along Thirteenth Avenue in Boro Park than anything about the haredim.

Following reception of my MSW⁴¹ from Yeshiva university, I was offered a job as a consultant to two Hasidic schools⁴² in Montreal as part of a government grant stressing early identification and intervention with daycare children. Not knowing what to expect, I entered the Belz and Skver daycares as the first social worker ever to enter these yeshivas. After meeting with each principal (probably to ensure that I did not pose a threat to the school), I was taken to the preschool. Armed with the latest strategies for dealing with difficult three and four year old children I was prepared to observe, to comment on, and to advise my Hasidic clients.

I was immediately fascinated from a sociological perspective by their culture and how they seemed able to maintain their ways in today's complicated world. Their religious beliefs resemble mine in many ways but vary greatly in the day-to-day application of the religious rules. Because I was new and unfamiliar, dressed in different style clothes, and a resident of another part of Montreal, it took many trips to each school before the rabbis' levels of comfort with me increased enough so that we could effectively discuss the needs of the children and families with whom I was to work. While all of the teachers with whom I conversed were extremely friendly and eager to speak, they were far more interested in news about the outside world than about how to handle an aggressive child. We had many discussions about differences between my celebration of Passover and theirs, our respective family backgrounds, and our perceptions of the future of world Jewry. During my time at the schools, I was invited to

⁴¹ Master of Social Work

⁴² All schools in which I worked were exclusively for boys.

participate in various private celebrations, to participate in meals at the home of a teacher, and to spend a Sabbath in Tash. My fascination with the haredim grew, and I decided to study them more extensively.

In another haredi school, I noticed that their clothing was reflective of current fashion trends, modified to meet their needs. For example, the "C" and the "K" made famous by the designer were stitched on clothing with the words Camp Kesser instead of Calvin Klein. I also noticed the variation in recess activity among the haredi schools. Activities ranged from organized baseball and soccer play to a lack of any systematic recreation. In one school, when I suggested that perhaps a rule should be instituted whereby children may not touch the ball with their hands to prevent the tackling of classmates, I was looked at with looks of utter shock. Clearly then, there is a spectrum as to what and how much secular culture penetrates into the various segments of the haredi community.

The more I became involved in the "social work" aspects of the elementary school communities, the more I learned that many of the same problems that exist in mainstream society trouble these communities as well. Children were neglected, were the victims of poor parenting, were ostracized and bullied by their peers, and on occasion, were physically or sexually abused. I considered these issues indicative of human nature; no group can be immune from them. Other, older students were interacting with individuals outside their communities to the chagrin of community elders and occasionally "dropping out" of the community. The "loss of these souls" was a cause of ritual mourning in the community and a source of great concern.

While involved with these children and families, I began to wonder how the cultural boundaries of these communities were constructed, what was allowed to enter from the outside world, and to what extent. As a stranger to these communities, I myself was being permitted through an invisible barrier into the community, proving that some people are let in, at least to some extent. If there existed some flexibility to these boundaries, I wished to determine their degree and who determined their rigidity. Also, did the community's increased openness to me mean that the boundaries were becoming more permeable? Ultimately, I wished to find out whether their current institutions and practices were effective at protecting children from the perceived negative outside influences or whether technological and social changes in the last generation have made the current practices obsolete. If this were the case, it would take more than just isolationist practices to protect the community's members.

My impression of the ultra-Orthodox world was that rabbis have tremendous power and influence in setting policy and practice for their community members. What role do individual parents have in setting rules and guidelines for their families? To what extent are other factors at play? But most importantly, I wanted to uncover what actually was taking place among adolescent children. I believed this was not only uncharted territory but an opportunity to set the framework for a new kind of intervention to assist members of insulated minority communities.

3.3 Methodology

During a conversation with a leading Hasidic rabbi to ensure that my research would not violate any Jewish laws, he asked about the methodology that would be used.

While saying that qualitative research with the haredim would be difficult, he admitted that quantitative research would be virtually impossible. Quantitative research on a sensitive topic with a private, segregated community like the haredim is extremely difficult, as the likelihood of larger numbers of people completing outsider questionnaires is low. Therefore, qualitative research methods, in the form of in-depth interviews and participant observation must be used. In addition, qualitative research is effective when exploring a topic about which little is known (Padgett, 1998). It helps gain an in-depth understanding about a subject and is effective during initial exploratory phases of research.

My research is based on the principles of grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 1990), in which theoretical concepts are built from the gathered empirical data. Grounded methodology is most useful in areas where little or no preexisting research has been done, as is the case with this study. The main goal of exploratory research is the "generation of inductively obtained generalizations about the field" (Shaffir & Stebbins, 1991), which, in this case, can subsequently be used to generate theory about the extent of children at risk in the Montreal haredi community.

The Montreal haredi population has been chosen for study for two reasons. First, it is a reasonably sized community, numbering approximately seven thousand individuals. This makes it possible to obtain a cohesive picture of the population and its difficulties. More important is the issue of access. A private, minority cultural group will not divulge information to an outsider easily. Having worked with and spoken with many individuals in the haredi community over the past four years, I have some access to decision makers within the ultra-Orthodox spheres and the trust of some of the leaders.

An understanding of the culture, their concerns and their needs helps eliminate some of the sensitivity surrounding some of the delicate areas I wish to discuss.

As stated earlier, data was gathered primarily using in-depth interviews and participant observations, considered the most effective means of studying the Hasidic communities (Gutwirth, 1978). Shaffir (1999) advises that one "hang around, observe, and record" (p. 678) one's observations in a foreign world. It is one's presence in an unfamiliar world that will lead to rapport with the individuals in the community being studied. However, the observer cannot be completely separated from the observations he makes. A delicate balance between subjectivity and objectivity is required (Heilman, 1992).

In-depth interviews were conducted with four categories of people - teenagers, parents, community leaders (rabbis), and outside professional who work with the ultra-Orthodox community - with the hope of gathering information from all perspectives related to the issue of adolescent males at risk. These four perspectives offered insight into the causes for the deviant behavior at the various levels of interaction described earlier in the Ecological Model, as well as the different areas in which risk factors can exist. The result is a comprehensive view of the causes and extent of risky behavior among the haredi adolescent male population. The goal was to determine whether risky behaviors are the result of a change in factors coming from inside or outside the community (or both), so that strategies to intervene with those in need can be appropriate and effective. Should cultural boundaries appear to be ineffective at stemming the penetration of outside influences, intervention may be different than if internal factors are deemed to be more central to the change in behavior.

Participant observations in the schools and synagogues where males spend most of their day is the second method of data collection. While access to schools requires the permission of the principal, the fact that I have visited or worked in many of the haredi schools already eliminates most issues of access. Access to the synagogues is less restricted, and spending time in these centers is relatively easy. But, while participant observation is a useful tool in gathering information about a people, "risky behaviors" are often done covertly and would thus be difficult to see. Deviant behavior taking place in one's home, for example, could not be observed this way. Observations of daily classes and certain religious celebrations that anyone can attend may reveal overt deviant behaviors, or actions that may be acceptable at certain times. For example, it is well known that during the holiday of Purim, it is permitted, or even expected for one to become drunk, but this behavior is unacceptable at other times. Such observations may or may not yield valuable information about deviant behavior. Heilman (1992) describes Hasidic youth whose deviant behavior was evident from their behavior during class with their rabbi, when they joked, played and ate while their rabbi spoke.

Each interview was recorded and subsequently transcribed verbatim.⁴³ Except for a few brief phrases that could not be understood from the tapes, every response was typed. Once the data was collected, the process of coding began. Following the principles of Grounded Theory, the coding of the data began as an inductive process. Open ended coding, the analysis of data without the use of a priori concepts to understand them, is used initially to ensure that induction rather than deduction is used to analyze the data (Padgett, 1998). As themes emerged, the data were reviewed to ensure they were

⁴³ This process was done entirely by me. While time consuming, it did provide the opportunity to become intimately familiar with the data.

coded in accordance with these themes. For example, when it became apparent that difficulties in school meant that kids who could not keep pace with the rest of the class were at risk for deviant behavior, earlier transcripts were reexamined to ensure that they were coded properly and were consistent with these themes.

Follow up interviews, used to obtain further information or to clarify and elaborate on previous comments, were conducted as necessary, again following the principles of Grounded Theory. For example, data related to the impact of communal financial weakness was difficult to obtain. Perhaps this was due to a general lack of economic sense or possibly because it was seen by some as being so outrageous that one would work outside the community merely to obtain greater material wealth. In any event, it became evident that it was necessary to return to several interviewees and ask more questions about personal finances and expectations of oneself or of one's children when they married. In another instance, while transcribing an interview, a comment about changes in the religious community seemed vague. To clarify its context and to obtain elaboration and examples of this, the interviewee was approached and asked to clarify what he or she had said.

The analysis of the data consists of two parts. First, a descriptive account of the causes and types of delinquent behavior is extracted from the data. These themes and concepts form the basis of analysis for underlying theories that may explain changes in these communities.

3.4 Recruitment

Data for this research was obtained from haredim living in and adjacent to Outremont. Originally, haredi Jews from all parts of the Montreal area were to be included, but it was determined that a smaller focus would be preferable for several reasons. Due to their different attitude towards non-religious Jews (Lubavitch Jews attempt to recruit non-religious Jews into their group) and that they live in a different area of the city from most other haredim, Lubavitch Jews were excluded from the study. Tasher Hasidim, living in Boisbriand, were also excluded because of difficulty obtaining access to the community and the fact that their religious standards are considered different (stricter) than of those in Montreal. Finally, while originally all haredim were to be included to ensure an appropriate number of subjects could be interviewed, a sufficient number of subjects were found in the Outremont area, making recruitment from other areas unnecessary. Finally, some interviewees themselves stated that those who lived in and around Outremont were different from others in Montreal.

You know, when people talk about Hasidim, nobody includes Tash and nobody includes Lubavitch. Because you are talking two completely different ends of the spectrum.

Thus, with the exception of the mental health professionals, in order to be considered eligible for this study, one had to live in, or immediately adjacent to the Outremont neighborhood. This area was considered to run down Van Horne from Wilderton Avenue on the western edge, to Jeanne Mance (east of Park Avenue). Ekers and Ducharme were the northern limits, and Cote St. Catherine was the southern boundary. In addition, to be considered eligible, one had to attend or send children to one of the five boys' schools in this area and have an affiliation with at least one synagogue

in this area as well. Finally, one had to state that one considered himself (or herself) to be from an ultra-Orthodox group. All those willing to be interviewed easily met these criteria.

As few professionals and community leaders are familiar with the sensitive issues in the community, selection of interview subjects was based on their willingness to participate in the research. Community leaders, rabbis, and principles were approached and told about the research study, as well as its goal of laying a foundation for future intervention with these boys in need. These leaders are involved in setting policy for community members and global efforts at intervening with boys at risk. There was general agreement to be interviewed, with two rabbis asking for further clarification as to the purpose of the research. Interestingly, all rabbis and professionals who were approached agreed to be interviewed. In addition to approaching those known to me, virtually no interview ended without a suggestion from the interviewee as to who would be "a good person to talk to." These individuals were also approached, sometimes by the researcher and sometimes by the interviewee, and eventually, they too were interviewed.

Those professionals working with ultra-Orthodox individuals, families and communities were asked to offer their insights into the relevant issues. The goal was to obtain a minimum of five community leaders or rabbis and five outside professionals to interview. Glaser & Strauss (1967) state that one's strategy should be to interview until themes become apparent. Certain themes became apparent after only two interviews and were confirmed as more data was collected. Had five interviews turned out to be insufficient, the sample size would have been increased. In certain cases, additional individuals from a particular category were interviewed, as it was felt that the additional

person could provide valuable data and insight. In one case, it was suggested by several individuals that a particular Hasidic man be approached to tap his knowledge of Hasidic teenagers who were questioning their religious identity. Although he was very willing to participate in an extensive interview, he was not willing to introduce me to teenagers that he knew who were considered deviant. I was certainly under the impression that community elders still closely protected teenagers, regardless of their tendencies towards deviant behavior. Young married men were easier to access. This is consistent with data obtained revealing that married men are entitled a greater degree of freedom than unmarried *bochurim*.

As a limited number of mental health professionals have extensive experience working with this community, virtually all who could be contacted were asked to participate. No one who I spoke to refused to participate, although several could not be reached.

The selection of parents and teenagers was different. As previously mentioned, a successful method of gaining access to the haredi community is to make oneself seen and known and subsequently to learn who seems willing to discuss community issues. After spending time in the various institutions, adolescents and adults were approached and asked if they were willing to discuss their way of life. Those adults who were willing to talk were asked if they have adolescent children who can be interviewed. Adolescents were asked if their parents live in Montreal and attended the same institutions, so that they too could be approached. Participants were assured that any discussions they have with this researcher would remain confidential and would not be discussed with any other member of their community or family. This process was not as successful as the

approaches to community rabbis and mental health professionals. Few people agreed to be interviewed and it was more difficult to establish a level of comfort with the adolescents. Partly this was because most seventeen and eighteen year old Hasidic adolescents are simply not in Montreal long enough to allow for a gradual "getting to know you" process. They simply had to return to their yeshivas outside Montreal within a few days. Others clearly felt that I had been sent by school or community leaders to spy on them and report on their behaviors as seen by these two responses.

(a) What are you really doing here?

(b) Who are you *really*? Who do you work for?

Among the non-Hasidic adolescents, it was generally easier to be accepted. Perhaps this is because of their somewhat more increased openness to mainstream ideas or perhaps because I had worked in their school, I was a familiar face known to be non-threatening. Because there is a post high school program for many non-Hasidic *bochurim*, many remain in Montreal and it was possible to cultivate longer term relationships.

In my second attempt to reach Hasidic adolescents, adults were approached, and if a level of comfort was reached with them, they were interviewed and then asked if their child could be interviewed as well. This was more successful, allowing for several parent-child dyads to be interviewed. Interestingly, once I had been introduced and accepted by their parents, adolescents seemed to be more at ease. When meeting an outsider, teenagers took cues from their parents regarding potential dangers. Parents and children were asked about their own behaviors and concerns, as well about their general knowledge of their community. So if someone claimed not to have participated in a

certain behavior but to have known someone else from his community who did, this information was taken as valid.

The original goal was to obtain a minimum of five participants in each category, and then, after a preliminary look at the data, to determine whether this appeared to be sufficient. This number was reached in each category, although in certain cases it became difficult to assign an individual to one category, as they could be placed in several. For example, a school principal can be seen as a rabbi or parent. If one of their responsibilities is to counsel students, they could be seen as a mental health professional as well. To ensure that there were enough interviewees in each category, all individuals were considered to belong to the category under which they were originally approached, although information given that would have been obtained in another capacity was included for analysis. Thus, a man approached because of his role as principal was permitted to provide information about his own family, which he would have obtained and provided as a parent.

In all, thirty interviews were conducted between April and November,⁴⁴ 2003. This allowed interviews to take place with individuals who returned to Montreal from abroad for holidays and family celebrations and during the slightly more relaxed summer months. In all, seven rabbis, seven parents, seven mental health professionals and nine adolescents were interviewed. Currently all live in Montreal, except for three of the adolescents, who are studying abroad, either in the United States or in Israel. In the Montreal Hasidic communities (with the exception of Lubavitch and Tash, who are not

⁴⁴ Although the formal interviews took place during this period, many conversations with haredim took place before this time. These conversations served as a time to get to know potential respondents, learn about haredi culture and lifestyle, and for the haredim to develop a certain level of comfort with the researcher.

part of this study), high school graduates leave town to continue their studies. As a result, there are virtually no seventeen and eighteen year old Hasidic boys living in Montreal. Once nineteen and twenty years old, these young men return to Montreal to marry or study. The seventeen and eighteen year old males interviewed were either non-Hasidic and therefore studying in Montreal or home briefly for holidays, weddings, or other events.

3.5 Validity

For qualitative research, replication is not a goal, nor is it considered feasible because one cannot recreate the original research conditions (Padgett, 1998.) Thus, trustworthiness of the study that is carried out fairly and ethically and whose findings represent the experiences of the respondents is the researcher's goal (Steinmetz, 1991). Lincoln and Guba (1985) list a number of threats to the credibility and trustworthiness of qualitative research which fall into three categories; reactivity, respondent bias, and researcher bias.

Reactivity refers to the potentially distorting effects of the researcher's presence in the field, i.e., how am I interfering with the naturalism of the setting? Had I attempted to gather information by following openly adolescents and watching their activities, I may have affected their choice of behaviors. As gaining trust among the adolescents was a challenge, attempting to spy on them did not seem to be a good idea. Given that all of the interviews took place in private, and most of the data was obtained through the interview process, reactivity was of lesser concern to me than what information respondents could have been withholding during the interviews.

Respondent bias refers to the withholding of information or even lying in order to protect their privacy or the revelation of some unpleasant truths. This was of particular concern while researching a private community such as the haredim, who take great steps to separate themselves from the mainstream and who wish to prevent negative information about themselves from being circulated. The very nature of this research meant that I had to ask personal questions about types of behavior that individuals might want to conceal. While my research did reveal numerous forms of deviant behavior and genuine concern about it, it is very possible that answers were tempered or that certain details were purposely omitted.

Finally, the temptation to filter one's observations and interpretations through a lens clouded by preconceptions and personal opinions can plague any researcher (Padgett, 1998). Choosing informants who might give the answers that are being sought, asking questions in a leading way, or ignoring data that does not support the conclusions are common examples of researcher bias. In addition, becoming emotionally over involved or too alienated with the respondents can be a pitfall as well.

Fortunately, qualitative research does provide a number of strategies for enhancing the rigor and trustworthiness of a study. What follows is a summary of those used in this research.

Prolonged engagement is the hallmark of qualitative research, the trait that sets it apart as a form of inquiry (Padgett, 1998). Prolonged engagement reduces the effects of reactivity and respondent bias as the presence of the researcher dissipates over time. Although my period of formal data collection was about eight months, my actual time in the area establishing contacts and learning how the community functioned was far longer.

Certainly, the more time I spent in Outremont, the more I was accepted, or at least tolerated. It also makes lying and withholding of information by respondents less likely. Once a respondent has given informed consent to participate, it seems unlikely that he or she would cooperate just to trick the researcher (Padgett, 1998). With the haredim, access to suitable informants seemed to be the difficult part, with referrals necessary in order to meet certain individuals. Several gatekeepers who seemed genuinely motivated for data on the issue of deviance helped set up interviews. Certainly one of my strongest assets was the comfort that many haredim seemed to have with me. This was partly to do with my having worked in the community for several years. Once meetings were set up, interviews sometimes went on for hours, making it more difficult to maintain untruthful stories. Although prolonged engagement does offer the risk of increased researcher bias, "the advantages of prolonged engagement far outweigh the disadvantages" (Padgett, 1998, p. 96).

Triangulation refers to using several sources of information to yield a clearer and deeper observation on a fixed point of reference. Although rejected by postmodernists, who argue that there are no "fixed points" at all (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994), triangulation is widely practiced to enhance a study's trustworthiness. Though there are several kinds of triangulation (Denzin, 1978), the most appropriate for this study is data triangulation, whereby data from several sources (observations, interviews, previous material on subject) corroborates the results. In addition, my attempt to interview different categories of people offers a variety of perspectives on the haredi adolescents that served to elaborate upon, and confirm, various conclusions.

Lincoln and Guba (1985) explain member checking as periodically returning to the field to ensure that one is on the right track. This not only helps further develop trust between researcher and respondent, but also helps guard against researcher bias by confirming data. Any conflicts arising during member checking can lead to rechecking of the data and interpretations. In this study, several individuals were consulted to check data that was collected. At least one individual from each category of respondent was used and the respondents gladly gave the additional time to ensure that the data corresponded to their views. In all cases, the conclusions that I had reached were considered accurate.

The search for negative cases, or negative case analysis refers to the process of becoming one's own devil's advocate to strengthen an argument by searching for examples that may refute it. Researchers test their theories by searching for evidence that may refute it. For example, I received certain information leading me to believe that truancy was a problem in the haredi community. I then looked back through the data to see if any statements indicated that truancy was not a problem. Finding some, I narrowed my theory to allow for differentiation between Hasidic and non-Hasidic schools and between religious and secular studies. At times these conflicts led me to obtain more information, at times I decided that different groups may define truancy differently and some individual communities may have actually seen more truant children than others. Negative case analysis led me to look for additional data. In this research when respondents seemed split on an issue, both opinions were given.

Finally, there is the vast quantity of transcripts, notes, coding data, and other raw data that have been accumulated over the research period. As stated above, qualitative

research is not meant to be replicated. However, a data trail does enhance reproducibility, that is, another researcher could use it to reproduce and verify the findings (Schwandt & Halpern, 1988).

3.6 Limits of Research

As with all qualitative research, the results generated indicate the trends and impressions within the Montreal haredi community, but they cannot indicate with scientific accuracy the extent of the various problems or associate numerical statistics with any activity. It is possible, for example, to reach the conclusion that drug use is on the rise, but one cannot quantify the number of adolescents using drugs or the percentage of increase.

As with other research, the data gathered is limited by what participants are willing to share. In a very private community wary of outsiders there could be areas that the haredim might consider too sensitive to discuss. -Although I feel that participants gave very honest and frank answers, it is also possible they gave guarded responses to certain questions or gave false information to protect their community. Similarly, those interviewees who had decided to leave the haredi way of life may have wanted to overly criticize their former way of life and provide responses that would meet this objective.

Certain topics were considered taboo and information on them was difficult to obtain. After being interviewed, several parents asked that certain questions related to sexual behavior not be asked of their children. Individuals also seemed more hesitant to discuss their financial position and resources. It is unclear why this was so, but perhaps it is discomfort or lack of knowledge in this area. When made though, these requests were

respected. Finally, this research concerns adolescent boys and their behavior. It does not attempt to explore what may be taking place among adolescent haredi girls. This would be a logical place for future research to begin, undertaken by a female researcher with access to the girls' schools.

3.7 A Note Regarding the Quotations

The selected quotations used throughout this thesis are direct quotes from those interviewed. They have not been altered in any way. However, the quality of English varies from participant to participant, with Hasidic men generally speaking the poorest English. Participants were offered the opportunity to speak in Hebrew or Yiddish, but generally chose to communicate in English, my strongest language. Therefore, some of the language is at times unclear and grammatically incorrect. In an effort to make some of them more understandable and to ensure that the correct message is conveyed, clarifications are offered in parentheses or at the end-of the quote. A glossary of the Hebrew and Yiddish terms used appears at the end of the dissertation.

3.8 Conclusion

In retrospect, I did not have a terribly difficult time accessing those haredim with whom I wished to speak. To some I was familiar, to some I had appropriate references, to some I was a link to the outside world, and to some, I was another⁴⁵ researcher trying to learn more about a particular way of life. Perhaps the timing of the research was key as well. My research was conducted at a time when increased concern over deviant

⁴⁵ Two haredi respondents admitted to having been interviewed for other university studies.

children made it an acceptable topic for discussion without the same stigma that may have existed only a few years ago. As some articles in haredi publications had already discussed deviance, I was not raising a new concern but attempting to help with an existing problem.

Women, who I thought would be particularly difficult to access due to the religious prohibition against being alone with a man other than their husband, were willing to meet both in their homes and in certain schools. The fact that some had experienced the interview process and were prepared to do so again emphasized a certain opening up of the community to outsiders. Perhaps this increasing openness is one of the reasons that there are more ethnographic descriptions of the haredim being written. At the same time, one must ask if this increased openness is leading to more deviant behavior. There may be no answer to this 'chicken or egg' type of question.

The area of haredi deviance has largely been ignored in the literature, particularly with regard to what takes place among the males. It is a sensitive topic that haredim have tried to hide from outsiders but one that is a growing concern within their world. Interest by individuals wishing to see a decline in the number of deviant children motivated several people to discuss their community in a way that was perceived to be open and honest. What follows is an attempt to explore precisely what is meant by the term "deviance," as it applies to the Montreal haredi community. It is only after understanding exactly what constitutes deviant behavior that one can investigate the causes and ultimately search for answers.

Chapter 4

DEVIANCE

4.1 Introduction

This chapter has two goals, with the second one building on the first. It will attempt to define precisely what deviance means for the haredim, using some of the existing literature. Once it has been determined what deviance within the haredi community means, specific examples of deviant behavior as well as the perception of the extent of these behaviors will be explored. Finally, the progression of deviant behavior, that is, whether certain behaviors are precursors to others, will be explored.

4.2 Theories of Deviance

Deviance is a difficult term to define. It will certainly vary by cultural group and may vary within the same group as well. Most noticeably, something considered deviant at one time or place might be quite acceptable at another. Perhaps the best example of this is killing, which at most times is punishable by imprisonment or even death, but in times of war or self defense, individuals are not only not punished for killing, they can receive high honors for murdering their opponents.

Erikson (1966) states that deviance is not inherent in any specific activity; it is conferred upon a particular behavior by those who come into contact with it. Theoretically, any community or subgroup could decide that any behavior is deviant and impose consequences on any community member engaging in it. Something mainstream America considers perfectly normal, such as wearing jeans and a sweatshirt, would be

considered deviant for haredim and result in the exclusion of this individual from the community.

According to Erikson (1966), the “worst” people in the community are criminals and the “sickest” are the patients, regardless of how serious these conditions are in comparison to some universal standard. Based on this assumption, a society composed purely of “saints” would still find some members to be less conforming than others. Based on Erikson’s definition, deviance exists, to some extent, in every community. Do haredim regard deviances that the general public would consider insignificant as improper because there is an absence of other crimes and misdemeanors? More likely, the value system places the greatest emphasis on religious observance to ensure group survival. Anything not conforming to the religious standards set by community leaders is considered deviant.

Consistent with Bronfenbrenner’s Ecological Model, but related specifically to deviant behavior, is Robert Merton’s theory on social strain. While looking at causes of deviant behavior, Merton (1938) stresses the non-biological conditions that have the potential to induce deviant behavior. Instead of seeing social order as a device for “impulse management” and the “social processing” of tensions, he explores the ways in which social structure “generates the circumstances in which infringement of social codes constitutes a normal response” (p. 672). In other words, social structures can exert pressure on some people to engage in nonconformist behaviors. Merton believes that this takes place when the emphasis on culturally defined goals differs significantly from the social structure that defines and controls the acceptable means of obtaining these goals. Man’s behaviors are not random, but in fact, derive from basic cultural values. Someone

wishing to be rich might do so by any means including crime because the value of money supercedes (in some) the willingness to abide by law.

Several other definitions of deviance must also be taken into account, as haredim seem to respond to deviance based on a number of different factors. Becker (1963) offered several.

Deviance as a Statistic: The most basic way to view deviance is essentially statistical, that is anything that varies too widely from the average (Becker, 1963). This simplistic definition could include anything or anyone that differs from what is most common, such as redheads or tall people. Some behaviors, which would clearly not be deviant, could be labeled as such under this definition, and it does not seem to work in the haredi world either. Say, for example, that the average man spent two hours per day studying religious text in a *beis medrash* (study hall). While someone who never studied there would probably be considered deviant, spending six hours per day there would be considered a highly meritorious act, adding to one's status within the community, and not an act worthy of rebuke.

Deviance as Pathology: Another view of deviance is based on a medical model where the presence of disease prevents the body from functioning efficiently. While the model may work to describe medical conditions, when used as an analogy to describe deviant behavior, it loses its efficiency. Few agree as to what constitutes healthy or deviant behavior (Becker, 1963). Others see deviant behaviors as indicators of mental illness. Drug use is a sign of mental illness, just as difficulty breathing could be a sign of asthma. This medical analogy places the source of deviance within the individual and leaves no room for the judgment of others as part of the phenomenon. Haredim believe in the

importance of controlling one's *yetzer hara* (evil inclination) and that, with enough effort, one can overcome the tendency to commit *aveiros* (sins). One who does commit a deviant act has failed to exert enough self control and must repent. They often see deviance as representing a problem within the individual, as opposed to a reflection of the community's definition and interpretation of deviance. This is evident among the Hasidic tales that form an essential part of their life and tend to show that individual sin causes grave misfortune. An individual who repents and makes valid attempts at changing his ways is seen as fighting the *yetzer hara* and would most likely receive community help in his struggle. Such assistance could be in the form of a mentor, financial aid, synagogue honor, or blessing from a *rebbe*.

Deviance as a violation of norms: Behavior that violates institutional expectations, that is, expectations that are shared and recognized as legitimate within the social system are deviant (Bell, 1976). In short, this type of deviance is a failure to obey group rules. In this definition, there is both an individual and a group component to deviance, the deviant behavior by the one and the community norms, established by the collective. Certainly, the haredim believe that deviance is a violation of their norms and that the individual is responsible for his or her own behavior. But the haredi belief is that their rules (*mitzvot* or commandments) were established by God to be carried out by the community. They therefore have difficulty seeing community norms as established by themselves. So when the haredim sanction a deviant member, they are doing so to ensure that God's word is being followed, not just the community's ideas.

Deviance as a threat to survival: Deviance is something within a group that reduces stability, thus lessening its chance for survival. Such a definition is based on the medical

notion of health and disease (Becker, 1963), where different features within the society promote functional or dysfunctional behavior. Applying this model to the haredim might explain why the slightest loosening of cultural boundaries is considered so deviant. A minor deviation in religious observance is seen as the beginning of a slippery slope that would lead to the end of their way of life. There would appear to be less concern over such potentially dangerous acts as alcoholism, as they can be controlled and do not necessarily involve movement outside of community boundaries. In general, a society will tolerate deviance when it does not threaten the norms or values held important (Bell, 1976). However, should another form of behavior be judged at some future time to be a greater threat, then these perpetrators would be treated harshly as well. Think no further than periodic crackdowns on cigarette smuggling, speeding, or illegal gambling.

Deviance as applied by others: Deviance is created by society. As stated by Becker (1963):

Social groups create deviance by making the rules whose infraction constitute deviance, and by applying those rules to particular people and labeling them as outsiders. From this point of view, deviance is not a quality of the act of the person commits, but rather a consequence of the application by others of rules and sanctions to an "offender" (p. 9).

Some who commit deviant acts may not be labeled as deviants if they are not caught, and others may be labeled deviant even though they may not have broken a rule. Deviance then, is the interaction between the group and one who is viewed by the group to be a rule-breaker (Becker, 1963). In my examination of haredi deviance, I am interested primarily in exploring the nature of deviance and the criteria contributing to this phenomenon. The interactions between offender and group may be something to study at a later date but are not applicable at this time.

The degree to which an act will be treated as deviant depends on who commits it and who feels he has been harmed by it (Becker, 1963). Certain rules certainly have been applied to some more than to others, such as teens from lower class neighborhoods who are arrested and charged with a crime more than their counterparts from wealthier neighborhoods; though the infraction may be the same, the law is applied differently. It is difficult to say whether this principle applies to the haredim. Would the son of a leading rabbi be beyond reproach if he committed an infraction, or would he be held to an even higher standard than his peers because of his pedigree and therefore punished more severely? In his study of Hasidic Williamsburg, Poll (1962) describes social status as being accorded in direct proportion to one's scrupulous conformity to Hasidic norms. The more one conforms, the more one is respected. Religion then, is the major criterion for social stratification.

The frequency and intensity of religious behavior and the frequency and intensity with which one observes the rights and rituals of Jewish law in the course of the day are a major class index. Wealth, occupation, residence, and other social and economic characteristics only supplement one's status position (Poll, 1962, p. 68).

Downward mobility is characterized by a decreasing adherence to Hasidic rituals and by less participation in Hasidic activities. Deviation from *any* Hasidic social and religious norm lowers prestige and initiates downward mobility (p. 61).

Based on this information, it would appear that all community members are treated equally and would be sanctioned in the same way. Any reduction in religious observance by anyone would be seen as very serious.

Another aspect of deviance also needs to be examined. Community boundaries are tested by the behavior of deviant or fringe members and are defended by those who represent the group's inner morality. Every time the community censures a deviant and formally deals with an offender, "it sharpens the authority of the violated norm and

restates where the boundaries of the group are located "(Erikson, 1966, p. 13). There may be a quality about deviance that rallies the community and stabilizes social life. Deviance marks the outer boundaries and helps define a cultural identity. The logical conclusion of this thought is that communities somehow promote deviance because as a whole, the group benefits from the unity that is promoted by rebellious individuals.

This notion is inherently troublesome, as it assumes that forces operate to encourage rebellious behavior so that the community as a whole can benefit. While it can certainly be argued that haredi communities rally to defend their boundaries when they feel that they are threatened, the idea that the community needs deviants to survive is objectionable from a religious standpoint. The Talmud (Tractate Sanhedrin, p. 37B) states that for one who saves a life it is as if he has saved an entire world. Subsequently, one who loses a life, it is as if he has lost an entire world. The importance of saving each life, not only physically but spiritually as well is a core value for the haredim. Rather, the haredi community seems to draw strength from seeing mainstream culture as evil and a rallying point for increased religious observance. As standards for behavior become stricter, previous behavior becomes redefined.

One final note on deviance. Secret deviance, one of the foci of this research, is an improper act committed that receives no notice or reaction. Either no one knows the act took place or it is not perceived as a violation. For example, computer ownership is not by definition a deviant act and would not be perceived as one, but a computer used to surf the internet would be considered an improper act. Because the ramifications for deviance are so severe among the haredim, this probably accounts for a significant percentage of the deviant acts. Finally, there are deviant acts committed intentionally and those that are

done with ignorance. Unintended acts of deviance are usually the result of a lack of information (for example one did not know he should stand when his rabbi entered the room). Purposeful acts of nonconformity usually elicit questions about motivation, e.g. trying to determine where this behavior originated. For this research, I have relied on the ecological model of development to help explain the causes for deviance among the haredim, as opposed to biological or developmental theories.

4.3 Deviance Among Montreal Haredim

This section will explore the nature of deviance in the Montreal haredi community and how its definition of deviance differs from those used to describe inappropriate behavior in the mainstream population. Aside from examining the kinds of behaviors deemed deviant, the increase in the amount of deviant behavior, which is such a pressing concern to the haredi population, will also be explored. While this examination might be relevant to any group of haredim, this data refers primarily to the Montreal community.

As already stated, Jewish law and binding custom defines haredi life and specify how an individual should conduct himself from the moment he wakes up in the morning until he goes to sleep at night. These instructions state explicitly such details as what shoe should be put on first (the right, but it should be tied second), how one should sleep (on one's side), how to dress, and how to clean oneself. An overt rejection of these numerous regulations qualifies as deviance, so haredi society has many more potential acts of deviance than there are in mainstream culture.

Although haredim conform to most secular laws, many do not have religious meaning and are adhered to merely for reasons of convenience. For example, it is highly

impractical to receive daily tickets for parking illegally, but there is no religious commandment not to park illegally during street cleaning hours. Other laws in the Quebec Civil and Criminal Code, are not followed by many haredim. There is a great reluctance to report an abusive parent to the secular authorities, even though there is a law requiring school personnel to do so.⁴⁶

The reverse is even more prevalent; an almost infinite number of Jewish laws have no meaning to the secular world. Generations of rabbis have interpreted and ruled on all matters related to Jewish life, and Jewish courts, called *batei din*, exist in most cities with sizeable Orthodox Jewish communities in order to rule on matters related to Jewish life. Matters related to religious divorce, competition among stores, *kashrut*, and conversion to Judaism are among the major issues dealt with by the *beit din*.

4.4 Defining Deviance

The definition of Conduct Disorder was used as a starting point in attempting to determine what constituted deviant behavior in the Montreal haredi community. The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders Fourth Edition (DSM IV) describes conduct disorder as a

Repetitive and persistent pattern of behavior in which the basic rights of others or major age-appropriate societal norms or rules are violated, as manifested by the presence of three (or more) of the following criteria in the past 12 months, with at least one criterion present in the past 6 months.

⁴⁶ This has been a source of great tension between Batshaw Youth Services and the haredi community. The reluctance to report cases of suspected abuse stems from experiences in anti-Semitic Europe where government officials were seen as the enemies of the Jews who looked for ways to make them suffer. There is been some improvement in these relationships in the past few years. There are Jewish laws that require one to help someone in need and the haredim may see that the child is helped, but this will take place within the confines of the community, without government assistance or involvement, if possible.

- A) Aggression to people and animals
- B) Destruction of Property
- C) Deceitfulness or theft
- D) Serious violation of rules including staying out late at night despite parental prohibitions before the age of 13, running away from home overnight, and truancy before the age of 13. (p. 90)

In addition, the behavior must cause “clinically significant impairment in social, academic, or occupational functioning.” (p. 91)

While most of the above-mentioned behaviors would certainly be seen as inappropriate and worrisome to the haredim,⁴⁷ they do not include anything related to religion. Since the purpose of this research is to define deviance from the perspective of the Montreal haredi community and not from an external position, definitions such as this one are insufficient. While the term “societal norms” could be interpreted as those social standards set by any community including the haredim, the types of behavior specified in the DSM definition do not include anything related to religious values, which guide the lives of the haredim. For this reason, the term deviance rather than conduct disorder will be used to describe inappropriate behavior.

Certainly not being observant enough is a cause of serious concern, but being too religious is problematic as well. Obsessive-compulsive behavior (OCD) in the haredi world frequently centers around religious practice, such as concentration during prayers, personal cleanliness before entering the synagogue, and hand washing (Greenberg &

⁴⁷ While not the focus of this research, it should be noted that among haredi adults, there are stories of aggression and violence being used to deter or punish someone who does not adhere to religious norms. For example, wife beaters and those men who refuse to grant their wives religious divorces have been known to have been beaten up by groups of other haredi men. The slashing of car tires and the breaking of windows have also been reported (O’shea, 2003, Mintz, 1993). The extent or frequency of such actions is unknown but probably is rare. I have heard of no such situations involving adolescents on either the giving or receiving end, although spanking is a common discipline method for children under thirteen years of age.

Witztum, 2001). Extreme focus on religious performance keeps the individual from completing the requirement. A person with a mental illness is not considered a deviant, and he is deemed to have an ailment that somehow figures into God's master plan,⁴⁸ but his behavior is not condoned if it interferes with the performance of religious commandments. For example, someone who is so concerned that he must have the proper concentration while saying his prayers that he repeats them over and over all day long is not following the pragmatic attitude of the religious Code which prohibits the repeating of whole prayers (Greenberg & Witztum, 2001). Many haredim with such conditions do seek help from qualified physicians and therapists.

Other religious stringencies not associated with OCD can be harder to distinguish as being devious or meritorious. A Hasidic woman told the following story:

-She told a story of someone who had a problem taking home dry cleaning for his wife while she was a *niddah*.⁴⁹ I'm sorry I have a problem with that. He would not pick up his wife's dry cleaning.

He couldn't pick it up?

-When she was *niddah*.

Because?

-Because it got him going.

Seeing her clothes?

-Yes (laughs). This is a guy with a problem. He was picking up the clothes, not the woman. You know what? I have a problem with that. I have a problem with any person who thinks that is normal. Maybe I'm very naïve, I don't know. Maybe I married somebody very funny, but I have a problem with that. My husband thinks it's completely off the wall.

But do you think these kinds of extremes...

⁴⁸ Just as someone without hair who cannot grow a beard is not considered deviant, no one blames the individual, as this is how God made him. Even so, such a condition may affect someone's ability to find a wife.

⁴⁹ A *Niddah* is a woman who is either menstruating or in the week following her period. Physical contact between husband and wife during this time is prohibited.

-I think there is certain deviance, yes, in the world. But I don't think this is the majority of cases.

But would you call that deviant? Someone who wouldn't pick up the dry cleaning?

-Yes. Yes. Yes...I know somebody who told me, who told me in the 3rd person, that he couldn't speak to his wife while she was a *niddah*...

While the woman telling the story obviously felt this was deviant, others might see it as a meritorious religious stringency, because it further limits the possibility of any sexual arousal.

This story illustrates the lengths the haredim may go to ensure that no religious commandment is violated. The Biblical prohibition against physical contact between a man and a menstruating woman states "If a woman has a discharge of blood she shall be in a state of separation for seven days" (Leviticus 15:19). The Mishnah and Talmud elaborate on this law, stating that a woman may not have any physical contact with her husband for the period of her menstruation and the next seven days. At the end of this time, she immerses herself in a *mikveh* (ritual bath), and contact can resume. With this commandment as well as with others, the rabbis have instilled extra fences around the law to ensure that it is not violated. For example, men and women should not pass something from one to another so that there is no chance of touching. Beds are separate so that there is no inadvertent touching at night. What follows is individuals placing restriction on top of restriction under the impression that more (restriction) is better. The above restrictions are additional boundaries that are seen by some as deviant and as meritorious by others. As additional boundaries are added, the amount of behavior that could be considered deviant increases. It is entirely conceivable that, in the near future, it will be a communal standard not to speak to one's wife while she is a *niddah* and

someone doing this will be considered deviant. It must be stressed that, at this time, this is not the case, and not talking to one's wife is considered an extreme and improper behavior by all rabbis to whom this question was asked. It is unclear from where this individual decided to take on this behavior. He was not interviewed.

Acceptable norms of behavior change over time. As recently as 60 years ago, Glatt Kosher meat⁵⁰ was considered an unobtainable standard and financially impossible to sustain.⁵¹ Today, no ultra-Orthodox or even Orthodox Jew would consider eating meat that was not certified Glatt by an approved rabbinic authority. Advances in technology, changes in attitude, and increased perceived threats have led to more rigorous interpretation of laws (see chapter 7). Acceptable standards have changed, much in the same way that changes in technology have changed safety standards in cars over the past century.

4.5 Loss of Religious Identity

The haredim see their purpose on earth as serving God. Anything that hampers this objective is trouble and is therefore avoided. Thus, the most serious infractions involve loss of religious identity. This is the fear that kept most haredim from leaving pre-Holocaust Europe (despite the growing anti-Semitism there) for the American melting pot, where one was expected to assimilate. This value has not diminished over

⁵⁰ Glatt kosher meat literally means that the lungs of the animal are without blemish. For the haredim it means that the animal has been properly killed and inspected and is fit for consumption.

⁵¹ Today, cows that do not meet the standards of Glatt Kosher can be sold to other slaughterhouses. In previous times this was not possible so that the butcher could not afford not to use the meat. A leniency exists within Judaism, where, in some cases, if one is going to suffer financially, exceptions to laws can be made. However, given that a certain standard has been set in this day and age, it is highly unlikely that any exception to this rule would ever be made again.

the past fifty years. When asked to describe the biggest worry one has for members of the haredi community, the following responses were given.

(a) Religious identity is the biggest.

(b) -What is the biggest fear you have for your son? The biggest worry as a parent?

-Off the *derech* (religious path).

(c) Well, the most deviant...would be dropping out from religion...

(d) How are they going off the *derech*?

By having different attitudes, different values, socially, sexually, in focus and perspective...what is called *hashkafah*...in the not abiding by certain of the laws, Shabbat for example, *kashrut* for example, sexual behavior for example...

For the haredim then, deviance is defined as any activity or thought that might cause an individual to alter his religious beliefs or practices outside of a specific, community accepted range. This range of acceptable behavior may change over time. Anything that may contribute to this loss of religious identity is considered deviant.

The behaviors considered deviant can vary slightly from sect to sect within the Hasidic community, and Hasidic standards can vary significantly from the *litvish* ones. For example, the Belz yeshiva is known to take its students snow tubing during the winter, an inconceivable thought to the Satmar school.

They gave them 3 days off in the middle of winter, they took them snow tubing, which in a Hasidish world...if you took Satmar, they would fall on their heads. Snow tubing? Boys 17 years old? What are they doing there?

Non- Hasidic families tend to be more open towards certain mainstream ideas and allow their children more freedom to explore and participate in mainstream activities like

ice hockey or baseball and they give slightly more freedom when it comes to dressing, free time, or computer use.

What constitutes a drop in religious observance varies by community. It could involve something (seemingly) as minor as a change in eyeglasses, cessation of observance of the minor Sabbath laws or any other behavior that might threaten religious observance. The following section discusses the major categories of deviant behavior that became evident during my interviews with the haredim.

4.6 Deviant Behaviors

Respondents were asked both open ended questions related to their perception of deviance as well as questions about specific behaviors considered to be signs of conduct disorder as described by the DSM IV. Respondents offered answers related to whether they felt certain behaviors were deviant and whether they took place in Montreal. In order to determine whether there has been a rise in deviant behavior among male haredi adolescents, interviewees were asked whether they had noticed an increase in each of these behaviors in the past few years, in the past generation, or since they were themselves adolescents.⁵² Each of the following topics describes a type of behavior considered deviant and its prevalence in Montreal among haredi adolescents.

4.6.1 Drug Use

All haredi respondents felt that any drug use, including marijuana, cocaine, heroin and ecstasy was a significant act of deviance. There is a Biblical prohibition against

⁵² This question varied depending on the age of the respondent.

harming oneself, and those engaging in any drug use are considered by haredim to be in grave danger. It is also deemed an act of rebellion, as it is an attempt to search for happiness outside of communally accepted ways and is a sign that one rejects community values.

All respondents stated that drug use in Montreal was extremely limited, although marijuana use was described as taking place in both Hasidic and non-Hasidic communities. The following two statements attest to this.

(a) What about drug use? Marijuana?

-(nodding) Yes. Marijuana

Cocaine? Heroin?

-No.

(b) I can only say I've heard of marijuana and I haven't heard of much else.

Drug use was not seen as a widespread problem, although it seemed well known that other cities, New York in particular, had many more adolescent drug users.

(a) Have you heard of any drug use in the community?

-Not really.

(b) Seen? No. I heard once or twice that there is a little, but I'm not sure it is a fact. That for sure I cannot say. But as far as I know, here it's much better (here) than in New York.

(c) Drugs...we haven't really seen.

This Hasidic man claimed that his contemporaries knew of drugs but had not tried them.

J: What about other smoking. Marijuana?

I: Not that I know of. I've heard people, friends, they were talking about marijuana and stuff, and I was asking how do you know how it smells? For example, me, I'm smoking Marlboro lights. American cigarettes. And here you can't get it, and it's different quality than du Maurier. And we sit together when we smoke, and then someone would come in and ask, anybody smoking marijuana here? Cause it has a bad smell. Compared to du Maurier. it has a bad smell. And I asked him how do you know how it smells?

J: Did he answer you?

I: Well they don't answer...they say you (they) don't know, I know. Something like that. I wouldn't say that they smoked, or they were in a bar where people smoked, or they had friends that did it, I don't know.

Mental health professionals agreed that drug use among haredi adolescents was rare.

...it (drug use) occurs...but its rare, among adolescents... We're talking about weed, we're talking about hash, ecstasy. I haven't seen any adolescents...orthodox adolescents...that have used more. Again I want to be very clear that the other problems, at least the adolescents that I see in the ultra-orthodox, drugs are more the exception.

One woman described someone she knew was involved in illegal activity, although she did not seem to have much information.

there was one (arrested) last week for operating I don't know what. No one quite knows what it was.

Operating?

A drug store (laughs)...

This individual used to be a religious member of the community but had not been for many years. It seems that by the time an individual reached the stage where he would use drugs, he is no longer a member of the community in good standing.

J: What about marijuana?

I: No one that I know. I think by the time it gets to that they are no longer living at home, and they are no longer part of the community. These guys that are smoking, maybe drinking a little bit, driving...they get into drugs, they're no longer part.

The use of drugs is thus a later step in leaving the community. Only one person who had left the religious community for a secular lifestyle, claimed to have tried marijuana, and to have been able to obtain it easily.

You were Hasidic when you experimented with them?

-Of course.

It wasn't hard to get?

-It wasn't hard to get.

In Montreal or in Israel?

-Both.

In Montreal it wasn't hard to get. Is there someone who is known to supply the Hasidic community?

-No. Actually I went to a club where I got it.

You went dressed like a Hasid?

-Yeah. Actually I knew the club owner who was Polish. I used to go there frequently.

It was on Park Avenue?

-On St. Laurent. Very close. I used to walk down there. I didn't need no transportation.

Did other kids know about this too?

-Yes, there were actually a couple of guys following me to figure out where I'm going at midnight. Because my parents didn't know about it. They figured out and they tried to tell me what to do and how to do it, so I said don't waste time on that, this is my decision. It's not something that happens frequently because of the fear of it.

Getting caught by a parent or, even worse, a community leader,⁵³ would put one's reputation and one's family's reputation in instant jeopardy and thus this sort of risk is more often taken when one is less concerned with the consequences.

⁵³ Parents would be extremely concerned but would initially try to help their child without taking extreme actions. Community leaders such as rabbis or principals would be concerned in protecting the larger group and would likely seek expulsion for the child or other methods to keep him away from other children.

Despite stating that drug use is a growing problem in the New York haredi community, most respondents felt that, although there are more drug users in Montreal than a generation ago, use is still sporadic and limited to marijuana. However, the community fears the close ties of the Montreal and New York religious communities will lead to an increase of drug use here as it has in New York.

4.6.2 Alcohol Abuse

Alcohol is associated with many religious ceremonies, so it is a constant presence in haredi homes. Blessings on wine are said several times each Sabbath and holy days, at weddings and circumcisions. At these functions, the consumption of alcohol, by adults and adolescents, is considered socially acceptable and even required.⁵⁴ Casual drinking by adolescents after services on the Sabbath is also common and is generally acceptable when done in moderation, as this mother stated.

I think not in something that would be called a deviant way. It's quite acceptable.

One man stated emphatically that alcoholism was not a problem in his Hasidic community.

It's not an issue by us, alcoholism.

While blatant alcoholics may be highly unusual in the haredi community, excessive drinking does take place. It has become customary to drink to extremes,

⁵⁴ Blessings are made over the wine to sanctify special times. Minimal amounts must be consumed to meet the religious requirements. However, young children are permitted to drink non-alcoholic grape juice.

especially on the holiday of Purim,⁵⁵ and (to a lesser degree) on Simchas Torah,⁵⁶ and the festive nature of these holidays means that alcohol is readily available and that boys' activities are not carefully monitored by their parents or rabbis.

Certainly Purim was always a bad scene.

Increasing alcohol use and abuse among teenagers is seen a growing problem in the haredi community, whereas it had not been previously.

(a) Simchas Torah was not a bad scene. Weddings were not a bad scene. From what I understand, I'm not over at the men's side, but (now) the boys drink too much...

(b) I heard from other people, you know they come Friday night and they drink too much.

In recent years, the amount of drinking has become a concern; Rabbinic warnings to parents regarding excessive drinking have grown, particularly this year.

...but this year, the *rosh yeshivas* put out a whole big thing, it was in the Jewish Observer, about not serving boys anything on Purim...I think the fact that this was put out, it's beginning to be seen as deviant.

Before Purim, several yeshivas send letters home to parents warning them not to serve alcohol to students who come to their door.⁵⁷ In some cases parents must sign a form promising not to serve alcohol before the school will place that home on a list of

⁵⁵ Purim celebrates the victory of the Jews over Haman and those who wished to destroy the Jewish people in ancient Persia. According to the Talmud (source) one should drink until he cannot differentiate between Mordechai (the hero) and Haman (the villain). Subsequent rabbis (Remah – Source) have tempered this statement, saying for example that one should have a drink of wine and then go to sleep and that when sleeping one will not be able to differentiate between the two.

⁵⁶ Simchat Torah celebrates the completion of the reading of the Torah, a cycle that is completed annually.

⁵⁷ One of the laws of Purim is to deliver at least one package of food to two neighbors or friends. In addition, groups of boys frequently go to from house to house performing a skit or other entertainment in exchange for money which is then given to an approved charity.

approved homes. These new measures, previously unnecessary, demonstrate the widespread use of alcohol on the holidays.

Alcohol use among underage boys has spread from taking place just during religious functions.

(a) In one case we had boys going on the roof of the yeshiva, which is accessible, unfortunately, and drinking beer. These are grade 8 boys. And to us that was a terrible thing.

(b) Um...yeah...but not frequently...I would tell you that I have seen a couple of kids that basically did use alcohol to excess. Not as common as the other problems that I've dealt with, I'm sorry, in terms of the population I see.

(c) I can only tell you anecdotally, not statistically. Yes, and we're hearing that either from professionals who are involved in the community or professionals who are asked to intervene when something goes wrong.

While there is no specific religious decree against underage drinking, its manifestation demonstrates a lack of control and discipline and could be interpreted as a general rebellion against the status quo. It also means that time is being spent idly, when could be better spent in other ways.

4.6.3 Cigarettes

Cigarette smoking is fairly common among haredi adolescents and their parents in Montreal, although it is forbidden in local yeshivas (although in yeshivas in Europe and in Israel it is common to smoke, even in the *beis medrash*).

(A Smoking policy) Depends on the yeshiva; depends if you are restricted or not. But I will tell you I know there's one of the big yeshivas in New York, without a name, that they didn't even start to ban cigarettes. *Bochurim* were 17 and 18, they used to walk around in the yeshiva in the hallways, in the dorms and smoke.

Although many adults smoke regularly, teen smoking is generally frowned upon.

You will see *bochurim* (boys) standing on the street corner smoking, which is another thing, smoking is not looked upon.... it is frowned upon. And there is no *beis medrash* that I know, not a Hasidish one, not a Litvish one that will let anyone smoke in the actual *beis medrash*.

Most yeshivas will not make a big deal out of their students smoking, as long as they do it discreetly. This idea is consistent with other sociological studies (Heilman, 1992), which show that private deviance is more accepted than public displays of disregard for communal values. Some yeshivas have an unstated agreement with students; they permit specific discreet locations where students can smoke without being harassed by school officials.

If you go here, down the back stairs, if you've ever been there, the place is littered with cigarette butts, because that's where the *bochurim* are smoking. You're not allowed to smoke in public places. In a *shul* also, they don't let you smoke in public places.

A short trip to this stairwell to see the dozens of cigarette butts covering the floor confirmed this as an indoor spot where boys can smoke.

Other parents saw smoking as an indication of rebellion and not merely as a sign of independence.

It's definitely frowned upon and they don't see why a *bochur* who never had it, if you take a 14 or 15 year who has been smoking all these years its hard to give up. But why does a 13 year old have to start? Or a 15 year old? So if he started, it's obviously some sort of rebellion. He is doing something to get somebody going. He's not doing it because he is hooked on it. He is getting himself hooked on it.

Adolescents tended to see smoking as something relaxing and did not make a big deal of it. They felt that it was something that many adults in their community did, and that it did not diminish their level of religious observance.

It's not like I'm smoking on *Shabbos*.

Some boys who did smoke secretly in school knew that their rabbis would not punish them, although superficially they knew that the school had a no smoking policy. One stated that this arrangement kept everyone happy.

We get to smoke, and they (school officials) know they won't see us. They can tell us not to and we don't have to listen.

Respondents could not state whether they knew if more adolescents were smoking now than in previous years. One man summed up the general indifference towards this activity.

With everything else going on...who has time to worry about this? (Smoking)

When asked what else was going on, he responded that the increasing number of people leaving the religious community was far more worrisome.

4.6.4 Vandalism

While vandalism was clearly seen by parents, rabbis and professionals as a deviant behavior, its prevalence was described as relatively low, with no noticeable increase over the past generation. Only one respondent had any information on the subject.

Actually vandalism started more at 13 to 15.

What did you guys vandalize?

-Anything we could. That we could get our hands on.

In the school?

-Not as much in school because that was basically hurting ourselves because they wouldn't fix that anyway. So if you damage it...whatever. We used to walk down the street, there were a couple of houses of Chinese growing mashed potatoes...not mashed potatoes, sweet potatoes and pumpkins and what not. We just peeled it off at night going home from yeshiva.

In schools, some graffiti could be found on bathroom walls and classroom desks, but it was generally inoffensive and silly. No adult considered vandalism to be a major issue in the community or a growing problem.

(a) Vandalism? Not a big deal.

(c) We don't see that a lot here.

6.5 Theft

From the interviews, it is clear that petty theft occurs in yeshivas as well as in homes, with school supplies and small amounts of money being reported missing most often. The following statements indicated a prevalence of theft.

(a)...in every yeshiva you find it, it keeps happening.

(b) It could happen that children have a *yetzer hora* to (for) these kinds of things.

(c) There is a lot (of theft)...even in young kids.

One mental health professional thought theft could be more common within haredi families.

There is a lot...even in young kids. I can't say that much about adolescence and often I don't understand it. It may be something with large families. I hear about it more than I hear about it from the regular Jewish population...

One teacher described how something was taken from her.

I don't know if you heard, but this year in (yeshiva)...whole reading program disappeared. And I was frantic about it. In the end (one rabbi) actually found it in the bottom of a garbage bag outside that he dug through the entire garbage looking for it. He was so upset for me. That was one particular kid, we never found out who it was.

Responses generally indicated that theft occurred at home or in school. Only one adolescent stated that shoplifting was a commonly occurring behavior.

-That was frequent for most of the kids.

Who would they steal from?

- It wasn't actually stealing, just like for the fun of it, we used to go down into Jean Coutu down the street and take as much as we can.

Really? Did they know it was you, it was the Hasidic kid who came in and stole?

-We never got caught.

How old were you?

-10 to 13.

He added that he learned that stealing from non-Jews was not a concern.

-... Stealing from *goyim* is no big deal.

You were told that it was ok?

-Yeah, as long as he doesn't know about it.

That's what the teachers told you? The *Rebbes*?

-That's the way it was announced. As long as they don't know and don't catch...as long as you don't get caught you're not a criminal.

As long as it's from a *goy*.

-That's right.

Do you think this was right?

-Looking back now? Of course it was wrong. Even then I knew it was wrong.

The attitude towards non-Jews helps reinforce separation between the haredim and non-Jews⁵⁸ and helps keep members within the group.

Others stated that it was morally wrong to steal from anyone, although they acknowledged it took place.

(a) Of course stealing from anyone is wrong. Although it can happen anywhere, including this community.

(b) It is morally wrong to steal...from anyone.

Clearly, there were different opinions on this issue.

Finally, it seems that although petty theft takes place, it is neither a frequent occurrence nor becoming so.

Yeah, sure. Sure. But I don't know if it's on the rise. It's always been there, and there are always, you know, issues, but it's not like all of the sudden there is huge concern.

Theft clearly takes place in the haredi community but does not seem to affect it seriously, nor does it seem to be a growing problem. This is not to say that parents would not be concerned if it were reported to them that their child was stealing. Parents and rabbis did express concern and stressed that children are taught that stealing is forbidden by Jewish law. They are also taught that it is considered meritorious to return something that someone has lost, and children are taught extensively about the religious laws that govern action when something that does not belong to them is found, such as when something found may be kept and so forth. It may be that these rules are more strictly applied when dealing with fellow Jews and not with gentiles, although only the one respondent cited above claimed that this was true.

⁵⁸ It is difficult to say how prevalent this attitude is. This respondent himself dropped out of a Hasidic group and his answers may be colored by his experiences. On the other hand, it is possible no other respondents mentioned this in order to protect themselves from negative exterior perception.

4.6.6 Truancy

Truancy, the intentional skipping of school without legitimate authorization, is feared in the haredi community, as it provides the child with unsupervised time during which he can engage in deviant behavior. It also means that there is time lost that could be otherwise spent studying religious material.

Mixed reports were given about the extent and seriousness of truancy in the Montreal community. Interviewees ranged from stating that it was a serious and growing problem to that it was extremely rare. For example, these two interviewees stated that truancy certainly exists and is serious and on the rise.

(a) -Serious truancy and early.

Early means...?

-11, 10.

Elementary school age.

-Yes.

(b) ...But we do hear more about internet, about boys being more alcoholics, and like you said, truancy from school...

This Hasidic rabbi was emphatic in his assertion that truancy is not a problem.

I: Not even a quarter of a percent happen like this. All our boys are not skipping yeshiva. Till the age of 14, 15, 16, never. Never. I don't know even one.

The difference in perception is difficult to explain. Observations of haredi schools, particularly the non-Hasidic ones, revealed more boys leaving after 3 PM, when secular studies begin. Truancy may be more problematic in the schools with secular studies. This

teen had little concern with leaving during a secular class, but stated he would not to skip class in the morning.

(a) -What do I need to learn English for? Classes are boring and they don't teach anything.

How often do you skip in the morning?

-Never...I may go for a walk for a bit to take a break, but I always go back.

(b) Secular (studies) here is a joke. Nobody cares.

While visiting one yeshiva and joining them for the afternoon prayers, I noticed three boys from another school attending services. Upon completion of the prayers, I approached them and the following conversation took place:

-No yeshiva today?

First boy: Not really.

-Not really?

First boy: It's only English class.

-But you're sure not to miss *mincha* (the afternoon service)

Second boy: Why would I miss *mincha*?

The hierarchy of deviance seemed clear. Skipping English class was no big deal but had they missed *mincha* their behavior would have been a more serious infraction. Major religious rebellion did not seem to be an issue based on this interaction. What was perhaps most interesting was that a school administrator, partly responsible for behavior and discipline during religious studies, was studying in the corner of the room. The boys were unconcerned by his presence. This man's disinterest in the boys seemed to be some kind of approval of their decision to skip school.

The boys' parents may officially or unofficially sanction the departure of their children, making it difficult for administrators to enforce attendance policies. Perception of what constitutes truancy may also differ. While professionals may view any skipping of class as truant, rabbis may only view boys who actually leave the confines of the yeshiva as engaging in deviant behavior. As long as they remain within the confines of the yeshiva and thus protected from external influences, they may not be considered to be breaking the rules.

4.6.7 Contact with Girls

Contact with girls is considered to be any conversation or interaction with a female other than a close relative, whether in person or by phone, internet chats, e-mail, or in any other form. Premarital contact with girls is considered highly deviant behavior, as it is believed that mere conversation will lead to greater transgression, that of physical contact or sexual activity. Like the laws of the menstruating woman, the rigorous separation of the sexes represents additional rabbinic fences installed to protect community members from transgressing. Self control over one's sexual urges are also highly valued. One who conquers these urges is considered to have overcome his *yetzer hora* (evil inclination.)

An exception may be young boys and girls. Pre-Bar Mitzvah boys may have some limited contact with girls other than their sisters, but once they turn thirteen all such contact ends.

Maybe before his Bar Mitzvah he was friendly with a neighbor. But the minute he turns Bar Mitzvah and puts on that hat, he turns into a different person. I know my neighbors. When my youngest son, my youngest son was a very friendly kid who practically lived by my neighbors. And she happened to have a bunch of girls. He played there. The day

he turned Bar Mitzvah everyone was rolling on the floor (laughing). He was like a different person.

To avoid interactions, or the perception thereof, some Hasidic boys have been observed asking their sisters to take their friends out of a room (kitchen for example) before they enter to take a snack. Girls readily comply, knowing that the obligation not to interact with boys is upon them as well. Interaction with girls is seen as one of the final steps for an individual leaving the community and is grounds for suspension or expulsion from school or other serious punishment.

(a) Interaction with girls?

-That's bad stuff. That is bad stuff.

(b) What about...if a boy gets involved talking to girls or something. Does that happen?

-By us, by Satmar? I don't really think, except if he is already out on his own with the car with the phone and then it's uncontrollable.

So that is like one of the bottom step above the ground floor?

-(nods).

(c)...Another behavior is interaction...talking with the girls. If a boy was doing this would you be worried?

-For sure. And as long as in yeshiva, there is no time for it...they don't think about it. When they leave yeshiva...it could happen.

Leaving the sanctuary of yeshiva life precipitates interaction with girls.

In the uptown community, interaction with girls is also highly discouraged and can be grounds for expulsion. It does take place, although frequently in a silly way.

Interaction with females?

-Sure but it's so silly and childish that it's almost comical.

What do you mean?

-That means the girls from the Beis Yaakov pay phone will call the pay phone at Yeshiva Gedola and see who they can get to talk to. Or Gitty's friend Frumi has a brother in Yeshiva Gedola. Gitty's friend Frumi wants to talk to Moshe and Yanki, and they end up giggling on the phone together for half an hour.

Is that deviant behavior?

-Oh yeah, sure. Absolutely.

That bothers the rabbis?

-Oh yeah, 100%.

Inappropriate sexual behavior was also reported.

-Multiple partners, frequent lack of protection, promiscuity with a capital P.

Is this behavior you see among adolescents?

-I'm speaking about a couple of adolescents that I've seen that with. We're also talking about sexual aggression, sexual abuse...possibly...depending on... I don't want to get into semantics, but towards a sibling or a peer. Acting out.

Interaction with girls is considered so inappropriate that its avoidance is one of the conditions residents of a British haredi rehabilitation center must adhere to in order to be allowed to remain there. The only other rule was that no drugs may be used on the center's premises.

According to those interviewed, interaction with girls is not a frequent occurrence because of the severe separation of the sexes and the severe consequences awaiting someone who does interact with girls. One rabbi clearly stated that this was less of a problem today than in the past.

When I was a kid and when I started teaching, I think that deviant behavior was more centered around girls. I think that boys interacted with girls very much. Now, we don't hear about that so much, but we do hear more about internet, about boys being more alcoholics, and like you said, truancy from school, and *hillul shabbos* (desecrating the Sabbath). I think that is much more prevalent nowadays in our community in Montreal...I think generally we've gotten *frumer* (more religious), on the outside at least.

and these behaviors are never recommended...I find they (parents) are more strict about their behavior...they (parents) strongly condemn any interaction between boys and girls.

The haredi community maintains the highest vigilance to ensure that interaction with girls does not take place and to act swiftly if contact is suspected.

So the interaction with girls....if this was something that happened, parents would be worried about it?

-They would be very worried. They wouldn't just be worried, they would be doing something about it. They would ship the kid out of town, they would ship the girl out of town, they would ship the boy out of town, they would try to do something to control it... There was a girl in a Hasidish school who happened to meet up with a boy from out of town who was in a Hasidish yeshiva *ketana* (high school), and they were going out together. And the story only came out because she started boasting to her friends.

Going out...to movies? To hotel rooms?

-I don't know how far it went. I actually don't know. Nobody ever wants to get into how far that went. But she started boasting to her friends, and her friends were very concerned about this. Like, she is not really supposed to be doing this, you know what, she is going to tell one kid who is going to think this is a clever thing. And she was expelled. And the parents of the girl were very distraught and said if you don't take my daughter back...because what am I going to do with her in grade 10? No other school will...they tried to get her into (another school), but they said, excuse me, we don't want your garbage. We don't need your problems. And the parents could not get her into any other school, and they came back and said if you don't accept her back, we are going to take all our kids out. And it went as far as the *dayan* (judge) who had to make a decision here. He said I'm sorry. The line that she may now be an influence on other people.

Given the extremely long hours that the boys spend at school and the efforts the community go to in order to ensure that the sexes do not intermingle, serious deviation from the community standard is unusual.

4.6.8 Homosexual Behavior

Homosexual behavior, whether among males or females, is reviled among the haredim. It is considered to be against the teachings of the Torah and one could not go public about one's homosexual relationship and expect to remain within his or her haredi community.

This was an extremely sensitive topic of discussion for haredim and one that several parents did not want asked of their children. Other than admitting that it probably does exist, no one could (or would) provide details about its prevalence among adolescents. Given the restrictive nature of haredi life and the lack of sexual outlets, some homosexual behavior probably does occur among adolescents.

Masturbation also occurs, although no one interviewed admitted to this. One rabbi expressed the struggle the community has with this issue.

*-Zera levatala.*⁵⁹ To me that is a very...unfortunately very prevalent in our days. That is something to be watched also.

That is hard to watch...

-That is the age old dilemma. If you warn the boy then he experiments. If you don't warn the boy he doesn't know about it, he doesn't know it is forbidden. And once he is *zera levatala*....that's high up on the list (of deviant behaviors).

As so much effort goes into separating the sexes and maintaining high levels of modesty, sexual deviance is considered severe and would be met with harsh consequences at home and within the community as a whole.

4.6.9 Dress

Manner of dress is extremely important for haredim. While the focus of women's dress is around modesty, men's dress serves several purposes. It also should be modest (you will not see men or older boys wearing shorts or tank tops and the long coats worn by the Hasidim keep virtually the whole body covered), and it serves to identify community members and make them easily distinguishable. Different Hasidic groups

⁵⁹ Literally "wasting seed," meaning masturbation.

generally wear slightly different styles of hat, coats, and pants, although there are certain basic similarities. Changing the way one dresses, even going to yeshiva in a blue shirt instead of a white one is seen as a highly deviant behavior beyond merely the shirt, and is perhaps worse than going to the movies. It sends the message that the student is rejecting the values of the yeshiva and is willing to flaunt this attitude publicly.

I know for example that if a boy showed up for yeshiva one day in a blue shirt instead of a white shirt, there would be alarm bells going off.

-He wouldn't even do it.

He would know not to come in that situation?

-I used to look at a *bochur* who dressed up...sometimes we had...by us in a Hasidish yeshiva, no *bochur* shaved or trimmed his beard. If we would see a *bochur* trim his beard and coming in publicly in the yeshiva, not at 19, 20, 21 when he is already coming into *beis medrash*, but I'm talking about coming into yeshiva, but I would consider that he is not very smart. Not that he is a bum, but that he is stupid.

He is saying to everyone I don't care?

-Well...you can do whatever you want to do without cutting your beard. At least your looks can be normal. You can satisfy your feelings by whatever you want, play the internet all day or watch movies, so whatever you want, but dressing different is already like...you're not ashamed to...I'll give you an example. That man running around in an undershirt, to me that's really obnoxious and stupid. I mean why wouldn't you wear sleeves?

J: So better to go the movies dressed in the *bekeshe* and...

I: When you go to the movies to dress up doesn't make a difference. Coming into yeshiva, into *beis medrash*, you're coming where you should be dressed normally and you dress different, then you want to demonstrate something.

A *Litvish* rabbi stated that, in his yeshiva, it used to be permissible for a high school boy to wear a blue shirt but now it is frowned upon. When asked why the practice was changing, he responded merely that the accepted standards were changing and becoming more strict. Another rabbi stated that change in dress begins the slippery slope that leads to loss of religious identity.

The dress. When he starts changing his dress. When he cuts his *payes* (sidecurls), he shaves his beard, he starts walking around with t-shirts instead of white shirts, his *tallis koton*⁶⁰ disappears inside or disappears, I don't know where it goes.

These changes, whether they be to his beard, *payos* (sidecurls), or clothing are major sources of concern and signify rebellion against the cultural norms of the community.

It is the perceived increase in the number of adolescents who are becoming less religious that has the community so worried.

(a) And I know that it's getting worse, and I know that the number of dropouts is rising, more Hasidish dropouts, more litvish dropouts,...

(b) So you're worried the number of religious dropouts is increasing?

-Definitely.

(c) And what I do know from some friends in the Hasidic community is that it is going on more and more.

Subtle changes in other matters related to appearance are taboo as well. Hasidic yeshivas forbid the wearing of stylish eyeglass frames because this represents a shift towards trendy mainstream values.⁶¹

I: Take glasses. A Hasidish boy is supposed to wear black glasses. Not supposed to, in certain yeshivas it is a very big *inyan* (matter) to wear black plastic frames. Yes it's considered very modern to wear like what you're (the interviewer) wearing now. My son had to change his glasses when he went to yeshiva.

The change in dress from the traditional, no matter how subtle, will be noticed and impact how the adolescent and his family are seen.

⁶⁰ *Tallis koton* literally means "small tallis" and refers to the four-cornered garment worn by Orthodox men.

⁶¹ No rules regarding eyeglass frames seemed to be evident in the non-Hasidic yeshivas.

4.7 Progression of Deviance

Once the types of deviance had been ascertained, interviewees were asked whether they felt there was a progression in the various behaviors. In other words, could a pattern be determined whereby certain deviant behaviors were precursors to others. Two pathways were identified as bring likely pathways for non-conforming youths to take. Several respondents stated that many children who eventually leave their religious community have academic difficulties early in their lives. Trouble with academics can begin early, as children are expected to know how to read by the end of kindergarten. Without proper help, which is difficult for yeshivas to provide (see chapter 6 on education) academic struggles can continue, not only remain unsolved but even worsen.

-I guess the first indication that a *bochur* is out of line is that he is not following along in yeshiva.

Academically? He is struggling academically?

-Not that his marks are not good. Well someone can have bad marks, but you see he is there 6 in the morning to 10 at night, but the *rebbe* sees that he doesn't participate in the *shiur*. His mind is somewhere.

Certainly not every boy in yeshiva has the intellectual capability to be a *rosh yeshiva*. There are those boys who struggle to comprehend all that is learned in school, but who find comfort in the routine and predictability of yeshiva life. These boys are not at the same risk for leaving the community as those who cannot find happiness in their place in the community. One Hasidic man stated that the boys about whom he worries are the ones who do not appear happy.

If a boy is a poor learner but is still happy then he will turn out ok. If he is unhappy and doesn't like himself, he will look for something to make him happy.

The boy who is still happy draws strength from the community and feels he is still an accepted and worthwhile individual. The unhappy struggling student seeks to escape the environment causing his discomfort and begin skipping school in an effort to find approval and acceptance. According to this mother, truancy is the first kind of deviant behavior to manifest itself.

Truancy is the first, dress is the second, and driving is probably the third. And the girls I think comes after that. And the alcohol, its somewhere, I don't know if it's an overall problem, if alcohol goes with all of it...

Truancy from religious classes was described as taking place due to extreme boredom or disinterest in the subject matter.

I didn't feel like learning Gemara all day...it's boring.

Once out of the protective yeshiva environment, without resources to help him, the truant yeshiva student begins to shed his religious garb, seeks additional freedom by obtaining a driver's license, and meets other boys who give him a sense of belonging. Once connected with mainstream people, he moves towards a secular way of life, leaving his religious identity behind.

A second path that boys can take begins with an interest in matters related to the mainstream world. Unable or unwilling to control his curiosity, he begins involving himself in non-haredi things.

What would you say is the first step that kids take down the slope of deviant behavior.

-It depends on the degrees. Probably reading, probably a newspaper, a magazine, a movie.

Many families, especially but not limited to the non-Hasidic ones, allow their children to read secular books like Harry Potter, and even allow them to see the movie, although this is forbidden by the schools. Some Hasidic families have absolutely nothing of a secular nature in their homes. There is a clear range of what families will permit their children to look at, and thus there is a difference in what is considered deviant.

The progression beginning with a greater interest in secular matters would explain the haredi adolescents seen in movie theaters still dressed in their religious clothing. As community leaders do not attend movies, the likelihood of being seen by someone who would “tell on you” or “punish you” is minimal. Following this pathway, interest and interaction with mainstream culture increases to the point where changes in dress occur, followed by other modifications in religious observance, as mainstream values become stronger and the individual seeks to conform to a new way of life. At some point the schism with his religious world reaches the point where he chooses to move away or is asked to leave by his family or community.

4.8 Conclusion

Although a range of acceptable behavior exists between one community, neighborhood, or family and another, the haredi lifestyle is not very flexible. The countless religious laws governing every aspect of one's life mean the bar for deviance is set very low. Because of the centrality of these rules, all deviance can be defined in relation to *halacha* (religious law), whether they be criminal behavior (as defined by the secular society) or not. An increase in the stringency with which the commandments are being observed is expanding the scope of what is considered deviant and means that today's adolescents are growing up with more restrictions than any previous generation.

While a certain amount of deviant behavior has always been present in haredi society, respondents were virtually unanimous in their concern that acts reducing one's level of religious observance, and therefore acts of deviance by adolescent males, were on the rise. Not only do there seem to be more people engaging in deviant behavior, but the seriousness of the behaviors is increasing as well. The reasons for this apparent increase are complex and will be examined extensively in the following chapters. Chapter 5 will examine the changes in mainstream culture and their possible impact on deviance among haredi youth. Chapter 6 deals with the institution of the yeshiva as contributing to inappropriate behavior, while chapter 7 looks at the changes that have taken place within the family over the last half century that may have created conditions where deviant behavior could rise. Finally, chapter 8 examines the financial stability of the haredi community as a whole and whether financial instability might be a factor in youth leaving the haredi community.

Chapter 5

MAINSTREAM CULTURE AS A CONTRIBUTING FACTOR TO THE RISE IN DEVIANT BEHAVIOR

5.1 Introduction

Perhaps the simplest, yet most effective strategy used by the haredim to ensure the perpetual existence of their way of life is to shield their children from mainstream culture. They rationalize that the less they see, the less they will adopt into their own individual identities. Although not alone in this view, the haredim have, over the past several decades, developed a comprehensive system to protect their children from that which is not Jewish. The fact that the Montreal haredim live in the midst of a large urban environment full of unwanted influences makes this challenge particularly demanding.

In interviewing the various haredi and non-haredi people for trends that seemed to explain the reason for the rise in deviant behavior, as well as in subsequent analysis of the data, several trends became apparent. The first theme to emerge was dismay over what was felt to be the degradation of mainstream culture, which contributed to their adolescent males engaging in deviant behavior. The haredi respondents were quick to lament the increased sexuality that is apparent to them on TV,⁶² in the newspapers, and on the streets, as well as its accessibility. They fear the rising visibility and attractiveness

⁶² One of the signs that the interviewees were becoming more comfortable with me, particularly the non-Hasidic ones, was their willingness to discuss television shows that they had seen. Several stated they watched at their grandparents houses while they were growing up, others stated that they watch in hotel rooms. I had discussions about Seinfeld, L.A. Law, Welcome Back Kotter, as well as movies, fashion models, and other mainstream culture. These men and women clearly knew television. A main theme stressed by these individuals was that today's shows are far more sexual then when they watched as children and therefore greater stringencies are required today. While this point of view may be biased, it does seem to be consistent with general views of increased explicitness in television. I had no such conversations with Hasidim.

of mainstream culture and quickly identify its temptations as a major reason for a rise in deviant behavior, particularly the rise in religious dropouts. Non-haredi respondents agree that there are potential ramifications to constant exposure to mainstream culture, although they tended not to fear it like the other interviewees. Haredim would prefer to blame the mainstream world for the deterioration in their community.

There are no walls to separate the community from the mainstream. As the environment gets worse outside, it will get worse inside.

While it is easier and less threatening for the haredim to look outwards rather than at internal changes at the family or community level, the effect of mainstream culture on haredi deviant behavior must be explored.

Data on the ramifications of exposure to outside culture have been divided into two categories. Those influences confronted outside the home are often unavoidable and include anything that might be seen or heard around the immediate neighborhood or wherever else the individual may go. Store signs, billboards, people on the street, smells or sounds all can make impressions. The methods that can be used to engage in deviant behavior within one's home comprise the second group and are generally related to recent inventions or technological improvements such as televisions, computers, and internet access.

5.2 Influences Outside The Home

The haredi lifestyle contains numerous defenses against interaction with mainstream culture outside the home, particularly potential interactions by youth. According to several interviewees, the distinct dress worn by the boys makes them easily

identifiable and serves as a reminder to the young men as to who they are and the religious values to which they should adhere. The lengthy school day in private, single-sex, insulated institutions provides little opportunity for boys who wish to explore the neighborhood or to interact with those who are outside it. Separate camps, recreational facilities (e.g. swimming pools), community organizations that provide social services and financial assistance, independent supermarkets and other stores, and even insulated summer colonies serve to keep the haredi child from associating with the mainstream culture.

In addition to the techniques used to isolate the children, the youth themselves are taught to minimize that which is non-Jewish. While visiting a Hasidic school, I observed a fascinating process. A Hasidic man teaching seven-year-old boys to read English had the boys take turns reading sentences from a reader. When told to, the first boy read "Tom has ham. Jane has a pig," which came as a huge shock to me. Why did they choose sentences about pigs, considered the epitome of non-kosher animals? When asked, the *rebbe* explained the reason for this choice of sentence with another example. He stated that when boys write the letter "t" they must write it with a small hook on the bottom so that it does not have any similarity to a cross, the symbol of Christianity, which the haredim totally exclude, in any form, from their midst. However, when they read typed material, the letter "t" can sometimes be printed without the hook. Children are taught that they must see the letter as part of the alphabet only, and push out of their minds any link to a religious symbol. So it is with the word pig or ham. The boys must take it upon themselves to see the word merely as a group of letters and not as an animal of any

significance. If the boy complains about the word or letter, it is a sign that he is unable to suppress the inappropriate thought, and thus a sign of weakness in him.

While it is possible to control what enters one's home, it is virtually impossible to limit entirely what children see outside, despite the abovementioned efforts. Park Avenue contains numerous bars, clubs, movie shops, a strip bar, pool halls, libraries with internet access, restaurants, and theaters. St. Laurent Boulevard - with its bars, clubs, and nightlife - is only a short walk away from the majority of Hasidic homes. In addition, it is an extremely popular area with people of different cultures, backgrounds, each with their own ideas of what constitutes appropriate dress and activity. It is a bustling center of commercial activity located close to downtown and considered by many to be a highly desirable place to live. It therefore seems impossible to say, as many haredim do, that their children are not exposed to mainstream culture. They may not take interest, as many of them admitted, but the opportunities to see are there.

Ironically, the slightly more modern non-Hasidic community lives in a more residential area and therefore is less exposed to the sights on Park Avenue than are the Hasidim. The De Viny area is mostly residential and partly industrial, with the exception of Darlington and the Wilderton Shopping Center. However, given that many misnagdish boys are allowed to ride bicycles or roller blades, as was apparent one summer day, their ability to travel to more distant areas is greater.

Data on the issue of increased exposure to mainstream culture outside the home primarily comes from three groups of people. Youths admitted to seeing and being aware of what was happening on the streets around them, but their handling of it varied. Some, seemingly more indoctrinated to community values or possessing greater resilience,

denied having interest in what they see, believing that it is not part of their world but that of the non-Jews. Others claimed to be quite knowledgeable about mainstream matters and to have had many interactions with non-Jewish people. Adolescents generally seemed unable to notice a difference in the accessibility or explicitness of mainstream culture. One eighteen year old boy stated that he was only aware of "what was out there" for a couple of years, so he had "no idea if it has changed."

Parents and community leaders lamented the demise of morality in their neighborhoods, although they generally believe that they and their children can withstand or ignore what they see. Mental health professionals, generally uninvolved in issues that deal with mainstream culture, stressed the difficulty in avoiding the onslaught of mainstream culture and the need for interventions to deal with what children may see, instead of simply denying that the culture is seen or teaching that non-haredi things are not good. As two mental health workers stated:

(a) They're gonna walk down a street, they're gonna see a billboard, they're gonna see an advertisement for a movie, they're gonna see somebody driving down the street in a car, they'll walk down Bernard (street), they'll see people at the outdoor cafes.... hey, deal with the issues. Help them deal with it. Help them understand it. Help them feel more comfortable within their own skin.

(b) Trying to deal with Park Avenue while at the same time you are living on St. Viateur (street), is very difficult. You see things on the street that are...exciting, it's titillating, it's very seductive and they don't know how to deal with the outside world.

One Hasidic parent stated that she would not even want her children to glance at a television that might be on in a store or situated in a store window.

But if I were to see my boys doing it (stopping to look at TVs in a store window), I would have a little fear.

Two haredi women had difficulty pinpointing an exact cause for the apparent decline in behavior, stating a general change in environment.

(a) It's like almost the air is doing it.

(b) There were never issues to contend with. If a kid lost religious identity, it was so rare and it was so...but now it's in the air.

Haredi response to the mainstream world has been to go to great lengths to separate themselves, believing this to be God's way of protecting them. It is when you involve yourself with others unlike yourself that your religious purity is threatened.

Of course. The Torah says *Vehavdil eskhem min hoamim lehiyos li*.⁶³ That's it. That you have to be separate from the *goyim*. There is no other way. The more you are out of the whole living (mainstream society), the more you are safety.⁶⁴

Haredi responses to these external threats are certainly not stagnant and do evolve to try to meet some of the new challenges. The community has adopted a number of additional strategies to limit the exposure of children to forbidden or unwanted things. Such strategies include forbidding children to be in certain places where they could be exposed to inappropriate things. If someone must be in a public place for a period of time, he is encouraged to take a religious book with him for two reasons. It is considered meritorious to learn as often as possible, and it gives one what to focus on, reducing the desire to let one's eyes wander. These parents described some of the restrictions placed on her son by school personnel.

⁶³ This appears to be a quote from Leviticus (20:24) saying "I the Lord am your God who has set you apart from other people."

⁶⁴ I believe in his poor English this man was saying that the more secluded or isolated you can stay, the better off you are.

(a) I'll tell you. My son learning at Belz was told that he was not allowed to walk down Park Avenue. That's what they told him, not to walk down Park Avenue.

(b) They tell them to take a book with them, a Gemara with them, when they travel on the bus. They never travel on a {city} bus or metro. My kids never went on a bus or a metro.

Another woman told of how isolated her son was at school so that they could not be influenced by anything in the city of Monsey, which had grown substantially since the original yeshiva had been founded.

...he was learning in Vishnitz (the Vishnitz yeshiva)...there was nothing...he went walking around the building and there was *mamash* (literally) a wood, a forest, the middle of nowhere. Very isolated. They did it like that on purpose. It used to be in the middle of Monsey (New York), they moved them out.

In addition, summer camps for the non-Hasidic teenage boys keep them in rural areas when they are out of school, and the Hasidic communities, whose boys attend school twelve months a year, have begun taking high school aged boys to the country as well. In these rural areas, communities can continue their learning without the any distractions, particularly from large number of women in the area considered to be dressed inappropriately.

(a) Even walking down the street in summer say, they are going to see people who aren't necessarily dressed...

-I know. That's why as soon as summer is here they're out, they take them to the camp in the country.

The boys?

-They go to Val Morin, Saratoga...

So they get the boys out of here.

-And when they go up to the country, they're also in a secluded area....but they see the *pritzus* (immodesty), they see the *goyim* walking around half naked in the summer

(b) But they are not here in the summer. That's why they go out to the country cause they don't want them to see what's going on.

(c) My brother is going out next week, and he is out for the whole summer.

The rural locations also provide the boys with opportunities to do physical activities that they are either unable or forbidden to do in the city.

They're in a dormitory in the yeshiva, but they have swimming every day. They're allowed to take their bikes out, which they're not allowed to drive bikes here...in Belz they don't let the *bochurim* drive bikes. They think it's not appropriate for a *Hasidish bochur* to be riding. But in the country they have their bikes. So they get all kinds of stuff. It's not bad stuff. They go into the woods, they fall into sewers, they climb trees. They take the stops out of the trailer houses and the trailers roll down the hill, you know that kind of thing.

Younger Hasidic boys, who also attend school twelve months of the year, spend their summers in the city, but religious studies end at three in the afternoon, as there are no secular studies during the summer months. This gives the children too much free time, resulting in conflicts with other boys.

(a) And that's why they started day camps in the summer. I mean here, there is no school in the summer, which by us would be a total no no. By us, 12 months a year. But the trouble was, they didn't have school at 3 o'clock, the kids used to come out of school at 3 o'clock in the afternoon, at age 7, 8, 9, 10, like before bar mitzvah, a whole war was going on. Certain lanes were only for the Satmar *bochurim*, certain lanes were only for the Belzer *bochurim*, and they used to go into each other's lanes and start war. Literally, war. They used to come home...fist fighting...and they used to start hanging around with the *goyim*, and they used to start fighting with the *goyim*...because the *goyim* knew where they were, and they knew where the *goyim* were hanging around. It was impossible. And you have no idea. because putting your kid on a bike is like putting him in a car. You have no idea where he is going.

(b) Yes. You're walking on a street and there is a kid from who knows where on certain streets. They have no business being there, but you can't control it. So they decided fine, if they come home at 6, till they eat; after that they have an hour on their bikes, no problem.

The result is a day camp that runs from three to six in the afternoon, after religious studies end. The kids participate in activities not usually done, such as

swimming and games, but they are in a controlled environment for virtually the whole day.

To further limit Hasidic boys' opportunities to stray too far from the neighborhood, they are forbidden to obtain their drivers license while enrolled in yeshiva.

(a) When they drive at 16, that is a definite no, no. Hasidish *Rebbes* do not allow teenagers to drive, they don't allow it.

(b) If you're in yeshiva, you don't get to drive like that; you'd get kicked out straight away.

It becomes acceptable to only drive once a boy is married, or at least engaged.

Some boys do when they become engaged. They'll start taking their lessons. But you cannot drive before you are married, because they consider that teenagers are not careful... And the other thing is that if they are in cars, you have no control over where they are or where they are going. At least if they can't drive, then maybe you have a little more control. And the other theory is that they're supposed to be in yeshiva learning. What do they need to drive for?

In the yeshiva community, many boys are allowed to get their driver's license. It seems to be more an individual decision for families rather than a community norm that can result in expulsion.

Those strategies that seek to isolate the boys, such as spending the summer in the country, will certainly limit their exposure to mainstream culture. These strategies work for those indoctrinated in community beliefs and interested in separating themselves from the mainstream. But what of those who do not have the same resilience or strength to tune out what they see? Even in a benign setting, some curiosity about the outside world will arise. Those with a sense of curiosity have plenty of nearby and easily accessible spots to see them. As mainstream culture becomes more explicit, what a child can see

merely by driving down the street increases. A child who wants to look and who knows where to go has the option of seeing virtually anything he wants. Consider the following:

(a)...because the temptations, the sexuality in the outside world is overwhelming. It's overwhelming...It's overwhelming. It's pulsating all around them.

(b)How do you live a block from Park and not see Park? How do you live half a mile from downtown, from St. Catherine, and not see it? It doesn't make any sense.

Kids are exposed to outside influences more than they were in the past, which creates an increase in conflict.

(a)... that just walking down Park Avenue there is a lot worse than spending the day at the Children's (hospital). You can see anything you want on Park Avenue.

(b) As the sexuality and seductiveness of the outside world increases, the exposure of the haredim to this culture increases as well.

(c) I am worried because of the fact that today everything is open...the whole street, the whole city is dangerous

He can also hear inappropriate language as well.

It's getting very normal to pick up any kind of language picked up on the street. It shocks me.

One community member reported the ease with which he could obtain marijuana.

-It (drugs) wasn't hard to get.

In Montreal or in Israel?

-Both.

In Montreal it wasn't hard to get. Is there someone who is known to supply the Hasidic community?

-No. Actually I went to a club where I got it.

You went dressed like a Hasid?

-Yeah. Actually I knew the club owner who was Polish. I used to go there frequently.

It was on Park Avenue?

-On St. Laurent. Very close. I used to walk down there. I didn't need no transportation.

For those who had a desire and knowledge, virtually anything was obtainable. The relative ease with which anyone can obtain illegal drugs was not limited to the mainstream population.

From my discussions with members of the haredi community, there is definitely greater fear today of what is out in the world for young children to see than parents remember seeing while they were growing up. The fear is that any temptation will grow and that the *yetzer harah* (evil inclination) will pull the boys towards their undoing. Specifically, that they will lose part or all of their religious identity. Therefore, among the Hasidic children, virtually any curiosity for mainstream things is worrisome. This includes boys watching television through a store window, looking at movie titles in a video store, or peeking into bars.

Thirty years ago, various Hasidic *Rebbes* in New York, as well as the Tasher *Rebbe* here in Montreal, decided that the influence of mainstream culture threatened the stability of their communities. They therefore uprooted their followers and set up new communities in remote areas, each of which has grown steadily. However, the likelihood of the Outremont community, or even of one Hasidic group, doing such a thing seems remote today, because of the logistical difficulties of moving, the lack of an influential enough leader, and the perception that perhaps the influence of the street is still manageable.

(a) The majority I would say are not influenced, cause you can see the way they act. It could be that this has an impact, not significant enough that I would say they would

decide we got to move away from this area. Because you see they're already there for 40, 50 years. I never went into this detail, but I can't really think that the *rebbeim*, the *menahelim* (principals) or whoever would decide, ok that's too much for us, we gotta move out.

(b) I can't really say that such a thing should happen, because that's a major move. Everybody moving, there's no moving truck for that. It's a big thing. And fact has proven, that unless you have a *Rebbe*, who moves out and people will follow him, it will never happen. I know for a fact they tried to set something up in Lachine or Mirabel or something.

It would seem that the worries about what is on the street are rising, but not to the extent where it is felt that relocation by the entire community needs to be undertaken. Those individuals who are felt to be having more than a minimal contact with outsiders can also be sent to yeshiva in another city. This intervention will be discussed in detail with other matters related to schooling. Perhaps a greater fear is not for what they see on the street, but for what, thanks to technological advancements, they can see or do in the privacy of their own homes.

5.3 Influences Inside the Home

The last fifteen years have witnessed technological advancements that have changed the accessibility to outside culture from within the home. Haredi decisions relating to technology used to be rather straightforward. Technology itself is not forbidden; most families welcome devices that simplify housework or other chores. Rather, the haredim wish to control the way technology facilitates bringing mainstream culture into the home. For haredim, a difference appears to exist between those inventions that help but do not connect the user to the outside world and those that bring mainstream culture into the home. Microwaves, vacuum cleaners, and cars are all appropriate, while television, computers, and the internet are objectionable. Newspapers

themselves are not considered offensive, but mainstream papers are forbidden. But magazines and newspapers written by haredim are welcome and are constantly being printed to ensure that an individual's need to read is fulfilled without exposure to mainstream ideas. One would think that, if the resources and technology existed to allow haredi television sets to receive only haredi broadcasts, the use of television would be acceptable as well (certainly in Montreal there is no such option).⁶⁵

As technology gets more sophisticated, more of it is necessary for a variety of reasons. Businesses simply cannot operate effectively without e-mail and internet resources. In addition, cell phones and pagers are standard business tools and also offer the same convenience to the haredi community that they do to the rest of the world. So whereas answering machines, for example, provide only assistance, other technology can be used either for appropriate or deviant purposes. Particularly, haredim expressed concern over television, cell phones and computers, especially, but not limited to, those with internet access.

Data on threats to conformity coming from within the home come from all sources, including community members who fear the spread of such devices and mental health professionals who receive referrals from individuals whose behavior includes putting these instruments to unacceptable uses.

⁶⁵ A new Israeli cable channel is airing "The Rebbe's Court," a soap opera about Hasidic Jews in Israel. As most haredi Jews do not own televisions it is unclear whether the desired audience is haredi or mainstream Jews.

5.3.1 Television

Televisions are generally not found in haredi homes, although exceptions certainly do exist, more in non-Hasidic households. It seems that certain families keep televisions in the home for the sole purpose of showing videos of rabbis speaking and religious gatherings and therefore any hookup to a cable or other connection was unnecessary. Potential to view inappropriate material is thus limited. General attitudes towards television varied too. At one extreme, a Hasidic rabbi stated:

If a boy watches TV every day, I don't care if he is watching Donald Duck, it will hurt him.

Another added:

Television should not be brought into the home, it is a *yetzer hara* of a huge amount.

A small group of parents seems to be comfortable using videos to help children with reading problems. These parents recognized the need for their children to have certain skills and that they could be learned from potentially dangerous equipment without causing any harm.

I find that there are people who are very good at taking what's good and discarding what's bad. They don't have tv but have gotten videos or certain parts of Sesame Street for kids who are having reading problems early on. Teaching them the alphabet and stuff like that.

At the other end of what was found, other parents, generally in the non-Hasidic community, claimed to own televisions but to limit what their children were permitted to watch. Public broadcasting shows, children's shows, and sporting events seemed to be acceptable to these parents.

Conversations with parents made it clear that, although they claimed that most homes do not contain television sets, they were familiar with many current and former television shows, could discuss them, and were willing to do so. These individuals claimed to have seen these shows while staying in hotels or while visiting other, less religious individuals.

While those who have seen recent television shows express shock at some of the content, the relatively small numbers of people who have TV's, particularly in the Hasidic community, limit the likelihood that there is an increased exposure to television by adolescents. But, if a child does watch TV, what he is seeing is more detrimental than what could be seen a generation ago. It is therefore believed to have a negative influence on him and lead to other inappropriate behavior, particularly the use of inappropriate language.

(a) I would say that with the introduction of the internet and TV shows getting more and more lewd and more and more inappropriate, I think the level of *chutzpah* is a lot higher.

(b) Why is it worse? Because what kids watch on TV at eight o'clock doesn't leave anything to the imagination.

(c) I think they are more *chutzpadic* (rude) today.

Two respondents chose to stress that the impact of television on the lives of the haredim is far less than it is on the rest of the population. They therefore felt that their limiting of television was the proper course of action, because it both limits time spent idly and exposure to inappropriately explicit things. Overall, it would appear that television watching is not a widespread deviant behavior and that parents could easily control their child's access to television simply by not having one in the home. The

lengthy school day and lack of free time limit the amount of time a boy could spend watching television outside the home.

5.3.2 Cellular Telephones

The rapid rise in cell phone use is apparent in the haredi community. Casual observations by walking in the neighborhood or attending weekday services show many men carrying them. All but two of those interviewed who identified themselves as haredim, both women, had cell phones with them at the times of the interviews. It is also not uncommon to find students in high schools with cell phones, but these are kept discreet, as their disclosure to school officials would result in their confiscation or in other disciplinary measures.

While the use of cell phones is, for the most part, to conduct legitimate business, they provide the opportunity for secret and inappropriate behavior for those who have access to them and wish to behave inappropriately. Two parents stated:

(a) I think a kid nowadays can do a lot more secretly now than he could then. I think teenagers today have cell phones so they can call anybody and you won't know; and again that opens the possibility to speak to a girl and being able to cover your tracks.

(b) The parents give their children cell phones, they are setting themselves up for disaster.

The introduction of cell phones with the capability of taking pictures, sending and receiving e-mail, and surfing the internet has broadened the range of deviant behavior capable with these devices. As they decrease in price and become more common and sophisticated, use of these phones for illicit activity will likely increase. What may prevent this are recent decrees by leading rabbis. One respondent stated that the Belzer *Rebbe* recently issued a statement saying that no teenager should be allowed to carry a

cell phone. To what extent this is being followed is unknown. Hasidic adolescents do not seem to have cell phones while in yeshiva but seem to get them immediately after finishing, usually as a sign of independence.

5.3.3 Radio

Radio broadcasts allow the transmission of mainstream culture both at home and in the car. The radio is perceived as slightly less dangerous, but still a risky medium, like television or the internet. Radios offer worthwhile programs to which one can pay attention, but also harmful material. Everyone interviewed had one radio in his or her home, although sometimes it came with a tape deck, which was the main reason the equipment was purchased. While most haredim reported that they listen to the news only, radios are quite common among haredi households, and therefore the potential exists to listen to inappropriate music or talk shows with sexual content. Even listening to baseball games is considered taboo, although depending on the family some leniency exists.

I have a son, who is 14 who is a sports freak. He loves sports. And I didn't want him listening to the radio to the Expo games. But after a while I said to myself, I would rather him do it, and he know that I know and that I am not happy about it, than him going behind my back. And if this is the worst that he'll do, then I can't really complain.

Several adolescents reported listening to late night talk shows, although they would not specify which ones. One boy stated "You *know* which ones" but would not elaborate leaving only speculation as to whether these were shows with sexual discussions. Parents admitted that they could not always monitor what their children heard, but claimed not to be overly worried about the radio. All parents claimed not to know that radio shows with discussions related to sex existed.

In the car, radio listening seems to be a relatively minor issue ever since cars began being equipped with tape decks. Everyone claimed to have numerous tapes of Jewish music, rabbinic lectures or children's stories in the car to entertain the entire family while on the road.⁶⁶

5.3.4 Computers

The concerns about computers are that they allow children to do things secretly that they may not have been able to do previously and provide the distractions that result in wasted time. For example,

So if a kid's parents don't let him listen to English music, for example, he can just have his friend burn a cd for him or whatever he wants (that he can listen to on his computer).

The increase in the possession of computers (all but one interviewee had one) means that there is an increase in their potentially inappropriate use. Whether playing games on the computer is allowed seemed to depend on the background of the families. All but one of the non-Hasidic respondents allowed their children to play some computer games, as a reward for good behavior, academic success, or the completion of chores, or as something to do in their free time. Hasidic families were more hesitant to have their children play even what they considered relatively harmless games on the computer, as they resulted in lost time. Two Hasidic parents were vocal in their opposition to any

⁶⁶ Although only one person mentioned this, I believe the reason that there are literally thousands of such tapes is because of the necessity of lengthy commutes in the New York City Area. To not only offer alternatives to the radio but also to make commuting a time to study Torah, these tapes began being produced and grew in popularity. Virtually every lecture given by leading rabbis is taped and distributed. Here in Montreal the Bais Yaakov girls' school (and perhaps others) has hundreds of tapes available for borrowing. It should also be noted that there are at least two Jewish radio stations that broadcast in the Greater New York area.

computer playing, particularly by their younger children, who had more free time than did their older siblings.

(a) Because computer games alone are very addictive. There are two problems here. One is that it's addictive, but it's a lot of time going away.

(b)...my son told me, he learned 3000 mishnahs *beal peh* (by heart), in one year. And in the beginning of the year he had been nagging me that he wanted this computer game, that computer game because one of his friends had it, (saying) "and mommy we have a computer why can't we have this stuff," and I kept saying "no." He came to me after got his prize for learning 3000 mishnahs and he said to me, "you know, I have to tell you one thing. If we would have had all those computer games, I wouldn't have done that. You know, there are better things to do." There is no such thing as getting onto that computer for 5 minutes. It just doesn't happen. You get on it, you don't get off.

Despite these parents not allowing it, some parents clearly do. This seems to be a personal decision made by individual families either in the absence of clear community policies or contrary to them.

Many parents have responded to the concerns of inappropriate computer use by situating the computer in a high traffic area of the house, such as the front hall, which minimizes the opportunity to use it in private. Those opposed to owning a computer feel it is impossible to monitor constantly who is using it or for what purposes it is being used. Such fears are greatest when it comes to computers that can be used to access the internet.

5.3.5 Internet

As the internet barely existed fifteen years ago, but this invention represents the largest worry for the haredi community, as it allows any user uncensored access to virtually anything, often without even looking for it. Not surprisingly, this was the focus of many of the responses.

(a) The internet problem is a different problem. It's the stuff that's coming up on it. And it's the access that you have to absolutely anything.

(b) Listen. As you say before, the internet can bring stuff to...*hashem yishmerenu* (May God protect us)...

(c) The internet, and the whole street, the whole city is dangerous and even children play usually don't go out. But if you bring it into the house...

It is impossible to know exactly how many homes have internet access. What became apparent during the interviews was that many had access to it but gave the impression that this was something they did not want publicized. One conversation with a Hasidic man regarding mental illness went as follows:

-I can go look that up later.

You have internet?

-Shh. (nods and winks)

Another Hasid stated:

A lot of homes have computers in them. They may not have internet, but they have computers. A lot of them have internet, even though you don't think they do.

Regarding the intentional use of computers to view pornography or to engage in conversations with unknown individuals, interviewees clearly felt that this was taking place and had specific examples.

(a) Any complaints among the adults about increase internet use?

-Yes. In terms of watching pornography on the internet...internet pornography definitely.

(b) For two years she was on the internet. Looking at everything and anything.

(c)...it (the internet) is not only just frowned upon, in most Hasidish communities it is forbidden. You cannot have it (internet access in the home).

But there are still families who have it.

-There are some families who have it.

And that's a potential source for trouble isn't it?

-Yes it is. Because you know what? You do not control what comes up on that screen. I don't care what anyone tells you. You punch up something and something completely different comes up on your screen.

So, are there boys who have access to internet in private?

-Yes. They must do.

I2: They also go to the libraries.

To use the internet?

I2: Yes.

While this is the result, the initial motivation for having internet is innocent enough.

They also have internet for business, and they happen to have it at home, and you think that they don't know what's going on? You think that a kid can't figure out what your password is? They're not stupid.

There is another use for the internet that is gaining prominence. Although no one interviewed admitted to seeing or taking part in something of this nature, the internet is a simple and confidential way to communicate with other deviants and even to express one's own views on ultra-Orthodox Jewry. One such individual, writing anonymously under the pen name "Hasidic Rebel" posts his own observations, as well as criticisms of the community. He writes that if his identity were revealed he would suffer severe consequences, including having his children expelled from school and possibly subjecting him to physical violence (O'Shea, 2003). Those interviewed for this study were unaware of such things on the internet and saw them as just another reason why internet use should be avoided.

It is the unintended consequences of using the internet that have the community so concerned and struggling to find a response. Ironically, many web sites are oriented towards ultra-orthodox Jews, where they can access Torah lessons, ask questions of rabbinic authorities and check important dates and times. These sites are clearly intended for members of this community. But, the fear remains that the unsupervised teenager will eventually find objectionable material, pornographic or otherwise. One rabbi with e-mail described some of the unsolicited e-mail he received at home.

E-mails that I get at my house, they come all the time. Not pornographic, I don't see anything, but I get all these nice invitations to join people.

Today's parents of adolescents had no internet to access when they were teenagers. They see internet use as a whole new category of behavior threatening today's youth. As computers continue to become more integral to life, and as access to one becomes ever easier, the problem of illicit internet use is expected to rise.

A statement from the Rabbinical Court of Montreal August, 5, 2003 banned the internet from being brought in to any Jewish home because of the limitless access to uncensored material. Businesses are permitted to have internet access, although the responsibility is placed upon the owner to ensure that no employee or child uses the computers inappropriately. Rabbinic lectures to community members stress the evil nature of the internet and its ability to drive observant Jews into inappropriate behaviors.⁶⁷

⁶⁷ It was recently reported that a synagogue in Brooklyn placed a coveted honor up for auction on the internet site Ebay prior to the holiday of Yom Kippur. While the authenticity of this has not been confirmed, if true, it represents a contradiction within the haredi movement. On the one hand, internet use is preached as being evil, while religious institutions are using it for their own benefit. Children are no doubt aware of these inconsistencies.

5.4 Conclusion

To defend itself against the potentially harmful effects of mainstream culture, haredim rely largely on avoidance of certain locations and devices where there is a potential to be influenced. Ultimately, they worry of a decline in religious commitment by members of their community, leading to the eventual extinction of their way of life. In a community with strict beliefs as to how one should act, there are more risks to homeostasis than might be sensed among other groups. As a mental health professional stated:

I think that any threats to a community upsets the community, and the more rigid the structure, the tougher it is. Ultra-Orthodox is much more protective and much more rigid in structures than say the Modern Orthodox community. So of course, it's got issues that it fears more, and then you have to have more prohibitions that somebody doesn't adhere to...

The increased explicitness of what can be seen on the street and the unwanted appearance of sexual and explicit and otherwise distracting material on the internet put the conforming child at greater risk for a lifestyle unbecoming a boy from that community. For the boy who is looking for such things, the internet, sophisticated cell phones, and computers make it easier to engage in deviant behavior in secret. The significance of this is immense. Previously, one of the greatest deterrents to leaving the haredi community, particularly the Hasidic community, was the lack of the skills needed to succeed in the secular world. With poor English and French language skills, virtually no secular education or marketable skills, and little knowledge about the world at large, the fear of leaving the community and being alone was great. For those wishing to engage in significant deviant behavior, the choice was limited. One could make a full

break from the community or conform and remain. With cell phones, internet, and pagers, an individual can easily maintain contact with the outside world without leaving the relative safety of the community. Potentially, he could learn enough to make a complete break from the community without needing to do it without outside support.

(a)-The possibility, the capability of a *bochur* that can't follow along in yeshiva to drop out and to occupy himself is a lot easier than it used to be.

It's easier to keep yourself busy?

-There were no cell phones, there's no pagers, and even cars you couldn't rent so easy. So basically what could you do? You couldn't hook up with people just like that, cell phones and pagers and stuff. So you were limited unless you revolted and moved out somewhere without anything.

(b) I would say to go out on your own, to go on your own, you have to decide already "I am going to go on my own regardless of what my parents will say, I don't care what people will say, this is what I like." That's a big step. But now, a *bochur* can pretend to be in yeshiva, having a cell phone, having a pager, having connections to other friends and *motzei shabbos* (Saturday night) or Fridays or whenever, Sunday at nights, he will be occupied, so he will satisfy himself on one side. The other side (is that) he will still face like he is still in yeshiva but eventually, the *maggid shiur* (a kind of rabbi), the *rebbe*s, his parents will see that he doesn't follow along, he doesn't cope.

(c) Really, we are recognizing a whole host of boys who are opting out of religious lifestyle or getting themselves into serious trouble in their contacts with some mainstream communities.

The comprehensive series of rewards that the community has to offer in exchange for adherence to social norms are no longer necessarily effective. By engaging in deviant behavior in secret, the haredi adolescent need not choose to be "in" or "out." He can take advantage of the emotional and financial assistance available to him. No sanctions will be imposed, as long as no one knows what he is doing.

According to certain professionals working with the community, the easier the contact with the outside world, the more boys will choose this sort of behavior. The growing ability to live in two worlds simultaneously is allowing the haredim not to have

to choose between them before learning enough about the outside alternatives. They can make the gradual change to a secular life without the fear of being unable to cope in the mainstream world. As one Hasid summarized:

So he can like slowly (leave the community), it's not like he is going to jump. For example, he won't jump off the roof, but he will take the stairs down.

The transformations in technology and sexual explicitness represent changes at the broadest level of Bronfenbrenner's theory of human development. Increased accessibility means that the haredi macro-system is ever expanding to include more from the mainstream. It seems clear that the opportunity that today's haredi adolescent has to interact with mainstream society has changed from what was possible a generation ago. A larger, more accessible culture is affecting the haredi boy's macro-system, his underlying beliefs and values as to how his society should function in ways considered detrimental by haredi values.

The tension created by the need for technological devices such as internet access and cell phones and the need to protect the society from mainstream culture was evident. Individuals, families, and community leaders struggle with how to use them without adversely affecting others. Despite the decisions made on a small scale, it has become up to the schools to set guidelines and policies about how children should behave. It is also largely up to the yeshivas to indoctrinate the children into community values, and enforce community values. Yet, the yeshivas have also struggled with adolescent deviance, for a variety of reasons.

Chapter 6

THE YESHIVA AS A CONTRIBUTING FACTOR IN THE RISE OF DEVIANT BEHAVIOR

6.1 Introduction

The yeshiva has been the center of religious learning for centuries. In Montreal, (as well as in the rest of North America), school attendance is mandatory, as is the requirement to study certain subjects.⁶⁸ To meet these obligations and maintain the structure of the yeshiva, separate, private schools were created where secular curricula could be rigorously censored of any inappropriate material, and religious learning could be given every priority. To fit everything into the day, many hours must be spent in class. Considering that the adolescent haredi boys spend so many hours inside the walls of the yeshiva and must cope with pressures associated with study there, it is not surprising that the school system was identified by so many people as being a contributor to the rise in deviant behavior.

Adolescents, parents, rabbis, administrators, and mental health professionals all commented on the difficulties some children have in yeshiva, as well as the best interventions to help those struggling. Sadly, most felt that an increasing number of students are having difficulty in school and are dropping out in favor of other activities where they can feel more successful.

⁶⁸ The study of a minimum amount of French is required in Quebec schools in order to receive government subsidies, essential for the cash strapped haredi schools. The Tasher Hasidim though, prefers to have no obligations to outside requirements and receive no government money.

Although considered private schools with significant tuition costs, these schools were described as public schools for their community. Since essentially one school serves a specific community (particularly in the Hasidic areas), a child will not be turned away, as long as the family is a properly indoctrinated part of the community. For example, as there is one Belz yeshiva, the administration will not deny admission to a family from this group, regardless of its ability to pay the necessary tuition. This flexibility does not extend to the school's expectation of the children. All students are expected to conform to the rules of the school, arrive punctually, and remain for the duration of the day.

6.2 The School Day

The underlying value of the yeshiva school system is to ensure that children will grow up with the same religious commitment as their parents (Rubin, 1997). The study of Torah is seen as one of the primary requirements of life on earth, and the extended school day for the haredi male reflects this aptly. By the time a boy reaches thirteen years of age, he is spending the vast majority of his waking hours in school. While the long day is designed primarily to make certain that the boys learn as much as they can, it also helps to ensure that they do not have too much free time to get involved in questionable activities. Morning prayer services usually begin between seven and eight o'clock, and last, on the average day, for about one hour. They are followed by some brief learning and then breakfast, which is eaten in school. Religious learning in the form of classroom lecture, paired learning, and individual review takes place over the majority of the day, with recess and lunch breaks providing a chance to eat, run around, and unwind. The

greatest amount of time is spent studying Gemara, although some time is spent on *halacha* (religious law), *mussar* (exhortations to proper thought and behavior), and Bible study. When it comes to secular studies, there is a range of how much is offered, if it is offered at all. The Yeshiva Gedola, a *misnagdish* yeshiva, offers a full range of secular studies including French, English, gym, math, and science for all high school boys through grade eleven. Secular classes begin just before three o'clock and continue until almost six, Sunday through Thursday. On Friday, classes end early, depending on the time of year, so that the boys can prepare for the Sabbath. The First Mesifta (another *misnagdish* school) also offers secular studies in much the same way as Yeshiva Gedola, although not all students take these classes. Those parents who feel that such classes are not only unnecessary but wasted time, see that their children spend additional time studying in the *beis medrash*. The Hasidic schools offer no secular studies once a boy reaches the age of thirteen (religious adulthood), but these boys also do not go home until about six o'clock. Behavior during secular classes is usually very poor, with teachers struggling to maintain order and often becoming frustrated and resigning themselves to the fact that many students have no interest in learning their subject.⁶⁹

In all the schools, boys are expected to return to the yeshiva on certain nights of the week. Fewer nights are required when a boy is younger, and the number increases as the boy gets older. Thus, the average teenage boy can leave home early in the morning, return in the evening for supper, and head back to the yeshiva until a late hour. One mother described the life of her child.

⁶⁹ Although I did not hear comments to this nature, it has been reported that some parents (fathers in particular) appreciate their children's disdain for secular matters, and this message is given when a father disciplines his son for poor behavior in school. See Rubin (1997) for details on how the Satmar Hasidim of New York view secular studies.

Normal, good boys...go to yeshiva *ketana* after the age of thirteen, which means they leave at 6:30 in the morning, they're home at 6:15. He's home for an hour and he goes back. No sports, no recreation...

The length of the school day, coupled with the rigid curriculum and rigorous schedule, puts boys in the position where those who cannot handle this type of learning struggle in ways that their sisters do not.

6.3 Differences Between the Boys' Schools and the Girls' Schools

To understand the reason for the yeshiva's inability to handle those students with learning difficulties, it is helpful to look at some of the differences between the boys' and girls' schools. Boys are under the obligation to study religious texts as much as possible.⁷⁰ Thus, from the age of three, they are beginning to learn the Hebrew alphabet. All boys are expected to read Hebrew by the end of kindergarten and to spend a minimum of five hours a day studying Torah by the time they are in grade one.⁷¹ This time commitment to Torah study increases almost yearly. By the time they reach high school, most Hasidic boys have no secular studies, while their counterparts in *misnagdish* yeshivas may have some secular studies that are taken far less seriously than the religious ones. In post high school programs, commonly referred to as *beis medrash*, the curricula are comprised entirely of religious study.

Girls, on the other hand, are under no religious obligation to study Torah. Quite the contrary; they are forbidden from the study of Talmud, and while they do learn a

⁷⁰ Maimonides (*Hilchos Talmud Torah*, chapter 1, law 13) states that one should not teach the Oral Law to girls. Though this is not the original source (the mishna discusses whether girls should be taught Torah), this is generally considered the basis for the haredi practice of limiting girls' religious education.

⁷¹ In the younger grades, artwork, storytelling, and class projects are all common and age appropriate. However, they are all directly connected to the study of Torah.

variety of Jewish subjects, there is a great deal more flexibility in terms of what they can learn. As a result, the girls' secular education is able to flourish and they are offered a variety of challenging and stimulating courses. Also, a girl who struggles in one area of study has a variety of alternatives in which she can excel. Music, drama, gym and art are all offered to the girls.

That's why girls don't have so many problems. I really think that's one of the main reasons. Because if a girl is not academically inclined, but she is good socially and she can draw or she can dance or she can sing, or if she is part of G.O. (extra activities that they have in school), or part of the play, or a counselor in day camp...there are other things for a girl to do. The boys...you either learn or you're out of it.

While the boys continue their yeshiva studies after high school, many girls participate in seminary programs, where they continue some religious study but can also choose from a variety of vocational courses, such as computer training, secretarial skills, or special education. Those who study special education are then able to offer their services to one of the girls' schools and help the weaker students. However, since women are, for the most, part forbidden from working in the yeshivas, particularly with boys who have reached the age of thirteen,⁷² their training does not benefit the boys. This results in a school system for girls that incorporates trained, capable, religious women who can offer remedial services to their students. And though there may be a high turnover rate in the schools as the women marry and begin having children, the system constantly replenishes itself. The following conversation illustrates why girls have capable people available to tutor students.

⁷² There is a range of what is considered acceptable that varies depending on the yeshiva and on the family involved. In the more modern De Vimy area schools, women can teach boys up until a maximum of grade 6 in Yeshiva Gedola, grade 3 in Mesifta. In the Hasidic schools, no women are involved in the teaching of boys unless they are hired privately to tutor them outside of school.

-They're putting more resources into the girls than into the boys.

Why is that?

-Because the boys are only supposed to be learning in yeshiva....It's resource room. Resource room for the Hebrew. And one reason is that the specialized teachers are women. So women can't teach them Rashi or Gemara or whatever.

The women get the training?

-Right.

And the women get the training because?

-They go to seminary.

While boys of that age are expected to still be in yeshiva.

-Right.

So the women keep training themselves and improving themselves.

-Right.

Another mother stated:

I: They (the girls) have trained teachers. There are no trained teachers (in the boys' schools).

I2: There is only one trained teacher that I know. That is it.

The boys' schools offer no vocational training to their graduates. The focus in the religious commandment is to study religious texts – mostly Talmud - and to become as knowledgeable as possible. The curriculum is so rigid that there is little room for flexibility in dealing with boys who may be struggling. In addition, the material studied is often complex. The proper study of Gemara requires the understanding of Hebrew and Aramaic, the comprehension of abstract arguments, and the ability to follow an argument over many pages with many dissenting opinions. The difficulties and lack of resources available in the boys' schools lead one Hasidic parent to conclude:

If you're going to have a learning-disabled child, I've always said, make sure it's a girl.

Not only do boys not have access to significant resource rooms, but a boy who struggles with his learning will see his value as a *shidduch* reduced. A girl struggling academically will not necessarily see the quality of her *shidduch* affected because her marriageable value is not determined by academic excellence but by her family lineage.

6.4 Free Time

The concept of free time does not exist in the haredi communities as it does in mainstream culture. Boys are kept busy most of the day and, for the most part, do not know that others may live differently. While students enjoy numerous breaks during a typically lengthy yeshiva day, the boys generally stay in school. One rabbi described his impression of free time as well as the virtues of having little of it.

Could you describe the concept of free time for boys in the community?

-It's non-existent basically. The way our curriculums and our schedules are set up, a boy comes to the yeshiva at about 7 AM. He has about 45 minutes for lunch, where, in most cases, it doesn't pay to go home, so they just hang around the yeshiva. They are let out of school at 6 o'clock, but they are expected to be back at 7:30. So they have basically an hour and a half to chill out. And they don't get home from school until after 10 PM.

Is one of the reasons for this to specifically keep them out of trouble?

-Certainly. Sunday is a regular day. The only real day that a boy has to get into trouble is Friday. But since Friday is *erev shabbos*, (the time preceding the Sabbath) it is pretty controlled.

He considered it a potential source of worry if a boy had too much unstructured time.

Would you worry if a boy had too much free time?

-Oh yeah, oh boy. I think in the Modern Orthodox crowd, the boys have a lot of free time. Forget about the day itself, where they end much earlier and don't go back at night, but what about all the mid-winter vacations and spring breaks, and these days and weeks that a boy can go away with his friends and do who knows what. We're, *boruch hashem* (thank God) not exposed to that, because they (i.e., our boys) live in a real protected environment, where they have no time to do anything. I don't think a boy should have more time. I think it's fine like this.

Several breaks from school are built into the school calendar, generally around the time of Passover and Rosh Hashana (the Jewish New Year), when schools are closed, so that proper preparation for the holidays can take place and the many families who travel can do so without missing school. Although formal classes are cancelled, learning in the *beis medrash* continues for adolescent boys. This unstructured time is of concern to some parents.

-Ok, like my husband and I were just discussing it. My son is coming home by *bein hazmanim* (Time before Rosh Hashanah and Passover when children are off from school). The 15 year old too. From *rosh hodesh* (beginning of the month) right? In Belz they do keep them a little extra. So they are like home a week before *yom tov* (the holiday). My husband was saying "Maybe they are going to go to shul, for an hour or two to learn and then they come and they sit around or they'll do an errand, and then they'll go back." My husband was saying there is a little bit of concern because there are a few boys that he would say are, like rotten. There is a concern, there is no guidance.

What do they do all day?

-He is going to come, he is going to shul to learn. Do I know where he is going? I have no control over where he is going to go. He might be sitting down, yes, but if someone comes in and says "Let's go out for an hour," he can go. I don't have policemen around, and I don't intend to. I hope by 17...but then my concern is he is not yet strong enough.

In some schools, leaving at all during the day is forbidden. This mother described what happened when her son started coming home for lunch.

My son...he couldn't bother to pack lunches, so he started coming home for lunch, which isn't really legal. And after three or four days, he got stopped and his *magid shiur* said to him, "Yossi, you're going home an awful lot. He said Yes, I don't have my lunch." So he said "This is the last day you don't have your lunch." And I assume he stopped him from there because my son said to me "I'm not coming home anymore."

During the free time the boys do have, activities are typical of those engaged in by other adolescent boys. Uptown boys tend to play organized sports, with baseball during the summer and hockey during the winter being the most popular. These sports are

played on school grounds or in the gym and generally occupy most of the boys. Snowball fights, "hanging out" in the halls or lunchroom, and eating are all other common free time activities. During days off from school, organized play in parks or hockey rinks is a common recreational activity.

As the religious nature of the schools move more to the right, recreational activities become more limited. Organized sports are non-existent in the Hasidic community, and the schools do not have indoor facilities where organized games can be played.⁷³ The boys are also forbidden from leaving school grounds, so activities are limited. Some children play outside in an unorganized fashion, throwing snowballs during the winter and talking in groups during the summer. Others remain inside, sitting in small groups, occasionally chasing each other through the halls, until an adult reprimands them.

Lack of free time for boys also seems to limit the amount and effect of peer pressure as a contributing factor to deviant behavior. Two respondents felt that the effect of what peers say is of monumental importance.

How important is the individual's peer group in determining their tendency towards deviant behavior?

-Absolutely. 100%. Much more than parents, much more than teachers. What your friends say when you are a teenager is Torah *misinai*.⁷⁴

Several responses seemed to express that peer groups had a more limited impact because of the tight controls imposed on the children, as well as the lack of free time.

⁷³ Most schools have one large, low-ceiling room where younger children spend their recess time. High school students do not use these rooms for their own play.

⁷⁴ Literally Torah from Mount Sinai but here refers to something of utmost importance. What one's friends say is very important to a young man.

How important is the peer group in determining tendency towards deviant behavior?

-I think that's true for everyone, boys and girls for that matter. But again there is not that much time as an adolescent, during adolescence...Depending on the background of the kid. For many of these kids, most of the time is spent learning. Some of the kids...they don't kick around a ball, they don't throw around a ball, they don't do that. So the social pursuits may not be as much. I'm not saying it doesn't exist; of course it exists. But I would say yes, the peer group will have an influence, no question at all. I think it may have less of an influence than different groups of adolescents where there is more time spent following social pursuits, going out, hanging out, chilling out, whatever you want to call it.

Do boys tend to pressure each other to do inappropriate things? Do they dare each other? Are there...I wouldn't call it gangs, but do they pressure each other...go do this, go do this...?

-I don't find it that much in this group as in other groups.

It seems that peer pressure within the yeshiva system helps to keep one religious; religious deviation in school would mean instant ostracization, likely to be followed by expulsion. Children certainly misbehave in school and at times actively encourage each other to do so (particularly in the secular classes). Peer pressure towards serious deviant behavior seems to be more significant once the child has begun associating with less religious or non-religious people.

Once they're out of school they meet other kids...they are influenced by other kids.

As this mother stated, once a boy leaves yeshiva or becomes truant, the potential for deviance increases.

6.5 The Rebbe

The *rebbe*⁷⁵ is the principle individual with whom each student has contact.⁷⁶ Spending up to six hours a day with his students, the *rebbe* spends more waking hours with the child than does either parent. This results in a very intense relationship that lasts the duration of the school year.⁷⁷ All *rebbe*s are themselves graduates of haredi yeshivas and have never attended a university or college program. Their training is directly related to their years of study of religious texts and not to their ability to transmit their knowledge in a classroom. The result is a very well read, learned man (Jewishly speaking), who is not necessarily an effective teacher, particularly for those students with academic difficulties.

I think that the male teachers don't have teacher training. And you can be very, very scholarly, but it isn't necessarily what the kids with difficulties need.

One observation made during visits to the schools is that a *rebbe* can be hired to teach in a yeshiva with students that he would consider less religious than himself, but the reverse is never true. For example, a Hasid could teach in Yeshiva Gedola or Mesifta, but a *litvish rebbe* will never be found teaching in a Hasidic school. It would seem that religiosity is as important a criterion for teaching as any other qualification. The importance of the *rebbe* as a role model in life, and not just as a teacher, would appear to explain this phenomenon. However, a man to the left of the school's religious position could be hired to teach a secular subject or even to be the secular studies principal. These

⁷⁵ In this section "rebbe" connotes a student's teacher and not the leader of a Hasidic group.

⁷⁶ In the older grades, it is possible to have two or even three *rebbeim* during the day.

⁷⁷ The academic year in Mesifta and Yeshiva Gedola is similar to that used in the mainstream, beginning in late August and running until June. As the Hasidic students attend school twelve months a year, their new year begins immediately following the Jewish holiday of Sukkot, which falls in September or October.

individuals are not seen as role models but as people hired to teach specific, less important material.

The *rebbeim* do not have easy jobs. Aside from the many hours spent teaching, reviewing, testing, and evaluating their students, they are involved in the personal lives of many of the boys. The *rebbe*s are expected to serve as the role model for their students twenty-four hours a day, 365 days a year. They host the students in their homes, counsel them in times of need, model proper behavior in synagogue, and are available to parents for consultation virtually all the time. Because they regularly live in the same neighborhood as their students, they often meet on the Sabbath, in stores or even on street corners. For this work, they are not especially well paid, as some are quick to point out.

(a) They're not getting paid well.

(b) What about the *rebbe*s themselves, and I am speaking as one, who are struggling to make ends meet.

In addition, *rebbeim* want and are expected to, continue their own learning, on their own time. With these rigorous expectations and requirements, it is a challenge for the *rebbe* to connect with every boy in his class. In fact, they readily admit to not being able to cope with each child's individual needs.

(a)-If he is not a special *rebbe* who thinks about every kid, he doesn't build a relationship with those kids.

Why do you think that is?

-Because they are busy with 20 or 30 children in the class. They have to show and give them the most success they can. They cannot afford to give.

(b)... What I remember was that a *rebbe* to focus in on a class of 20, 25 students is a lot of work. Let's take the *maggid shiur* in the morning, or the afternoon, or at night even. For him to start focusing on kids one by one and, when there is a problem, to deal with that

kid on a one to one basis, he would lose track of the whole class; he wouldn't be able to hold them. Yes he can have a talk here and there to try to deal with him, but it needs some more attention.

From these statements, it would seem that the *rebbeim* are not at fault for being unable to handle the difficult children. They see the large size of the class as limiting their ability to give the necessary attention to every boy. Also, the *rebbeim* lack the skills to intervene in difficult situations, such as with depressed, unmotivated, or aggressive boys. They are themselves products of the yeshiva system, and therefore it is not their fault that they lack the training to deal effectively with certain children. In addition, the rigorous day offers the *rebbeim* few opportunities to motivate the students that need the extra push.

But when you have a very difficult kid, or a kid with ADD, or a kid who just shouldn't be there, the *rebbe* doesn't have enough incentive for those kids.

The criticism seems to come primarily from parents who claim that the *rebbes* do not alter their expectations from boy to boy.

(a) The rabbis should be more realistic...being realistic for what you want from this kid. You want this kid to learn for 10 hours a day? Get him to learn for half an hour.

(b) A lot of the *melamdim* (teachers) who teach in yeshiva don't have the understanding from where the kids are coming from. How can you give it to a kid who shows up ten minutes late at seven o'clock? He comes every day at 6:30. He is learning until 10 at night. The kid just collapsed. He just couldn't come in one day.

Do you think that leads to this kid saying "I just cant handle this"?

I2: Yes.

Another parent felt that certain rabbis were just not good role models for some children.

I think the kid went off in the first place, because he doesn't think much of his *rebbe*. And some of the *rebbes*, I have to tell you, are not very lookuptoable.

School personnel were quicker to protect their institutions and lay blame elsewhere, particularly on the parents. One man felt that children today do not show the same respect for their *rebbeim* that his own generation did.

...the other problem is that they (the children) are very, very scornful today. They don't have the proper respect for authority that they should. They don't look at Torah leaders and say "Wow, those are our role models." They are constantly making fun and minimizing what their *rebbeim* are saying. And we are missing that. We had that about fifteen, twenty years ago when I grew up. We had a very deep respect for our *roshei yeshiva*, for our *rebbeim*. Right now I think it's more of going through the motions. I don't think there is a *kesher* (connection) between the *rebbe* and the *talmid* (student) that there once was.

He also expressed a concern about the decline in the discipline of children (described in chapter 7).

I think the *rebbes*, the ones I know, are wonderful... And I think from what I know, kids can talk to them about anything.

In any school, one will find better and worse teachers; the ultra-orthodox world is no exception. The lack of formal teacher training means that rabbis can only rely on their natural instincts when faced with a troubled pupil. The immense involvement in the lives of their students means that the teachers' impact on a student has the potential to be very powerful. While most students seem to thrive on this relationship, or at least are resilient enough not to need it, there remains little to catch those students in need of a strong bond with an adult in school.

6.6 The Successful And Unsuccessful Student

The bright student who is motivated to learn thrives in the yeshiva system. The successful student is able to comprehend the material, learn in both an individual and

group setting, and come up with his own questions on the material. He recognizes the wisdom of his *rebbe* and the importance of having this knowledge to further his ability to serve God. He receives much positive reinforcement from both the home and the school, and relishes the fact that he is fulfilling the religious requirements properly. The "best" kids are the ones who learn well.

(a) The academic, the emphasis on achievement, the emphasis on excellence, is extremely powerful in the ultra-orthodox... The learning, who are the good learners, how much did they learn, how much did they achieve, how many hours are they sitting and learning, is given a tremendous amount of emphasis. Sometimes to the exclusion of other pursuits.

(b) Who is a good kid? The one who knows how to learn.

Parents, teachers, and administrators from all schools readily admitted that their schools contain children with academic and emotional problems, but the lack of resources and training limit opportunities for school based interventions. Switching yeshivas is not really an option for two reasons. First, in Montreal, there are only five yeshivas in Outremont and a couple are located elsewhere in the city. Each yeshiva caters to a fairly specific group; finding another school that is comfortable from a religious point of view is difficult. Second, since all the schools function in basically the same manner, with an intense Judaic Studies and little else, there is but a small chance that a child who is academically unsuccessful in one institution would thrive in another. The lack of assets to help the weak student seems to be directly linked to those engaging in deviant behavior.

(a) The things that concern me...you're going to hear this over and over again...the schools are not designed for the present world. The yeshiva's education, which worked in the shtetl, wasn't for everybody. In the shtetl, the smart kids stayed in the yeshiva, and the other kids took care of the cows. Now they want everyone to stay in the yeshiva, and

there are kids who can't. Because they are not bright enough, they have attention deficit, they have learning disabilities, they're not motivated enough, and there are no outlets for them. So they stay...this includes the yeshiva group, and they aren't trained or apprenticed to do a trade. And their secular education is often very weak, particularly in a Hasidic school, where the French is hard. And they are just not prepared to join the world. And over and over I have told them that you could produce kids who stay religious and do what a religious man has to do and work as a plumber, as an electrician, a bookkeeper, but they need some kind of training for that, and no, he has to stay in yeshiva.

(b) I find that most of the kids that are not in yeshiva it's because they have a learning problem that was not dealt with. The *yeshivish chadarim* (classrooms), the *Hasidish* yeshivas do not have the ability to help the kids who are learning disabled. They don't have the *rebbe*s who have the training. And they don't have the money to support the programs...

(c) Some boys cannot sit through Gemara the whole day.

Today, all boys are required to learn the same material in the same way, whereas a hundred years ago, yeshiva was only for those boys who were capable of this kind of learning and who could afford to do so. While access to the schools has changed, teaching styles have not adjusted. A mental health professional sums up the problems created by this system:

...Attitudes of some of the schools are that you have to cut the child to fit the suit, and not the suit to fit the child. And some kids do not fit the mold because of difficulties they may have on a cognitive (level) or their learning styles or aptitudes, and also, even because of what their motivation is.

One parent stated the seeds for difficulty in school are planted in the first few years of formal education.

The boys in the religious community, if they don't know how to read, then they have it more difficult later....if they don't know their Aleph Beis (Hebrew alphabet) well, if they don't know their Chumash (Torah) well, they don't know their Gemara well, then they close up; and that's when they move out.

Again, the issue of staying in yeshiva goes back to the issue of marriage. If it is known that a boy left a yeshiva or had learning difficulties, there are marriage implications for him and possibly his siblings as well.

...And there is always that stigma, I don't want my kid in a different class.

For this reason, there is even a reluctance to put a child in a remedial program within the regular yeshiva, should one even be available.

High school students have no choice but to remain in school, so they stay unless they have severe behavioral problems (which will be discussed below). Even post high school, parents leave their child in yeshiva to try to improve his *shidduch* opportunities.

The ones who are not really made for learning but they do, because that's the expected thing to do. They stay for like 6 months and then they go to try to find themselves a job.

The consequence of an inability to manage in school frequently is the lowering of self-esteem. Criticism that is intended to enhance the child into trying harder in his studies compounds the feeling of despair. Part of the curriculum stresses *mussar*:

If someone is put in a situation where expectations are not realistic, then self-esteem is going to suffer....And again, if a kid is put down, and the person speaking to them about what he doesn't do right, and it's constant...you're not doing this, and you're not doing this, and you're not doing this right, and you're not saying this the right way, and you're not...you don't have the right intentions with this, and you're not learning enough, and you're not doing this...you know what? The kid will basically look for a way to feel good about himself. That's a need that we have.

The repetition and length of the day compound any weakness. There is a cumulative weakness to constantly feeling like a failure

...Don't forget, it's not one day; it's not two days. You gotta for example, if you sit him down at a table, sit there for two hours and do nothing, he's gonna go out of his mind. He's gonna walk out, do this, and do that. But this is not two hours, it's a whole day.

And this is not one day a week, this is five...six days a week for a whole year, and year after year after year. So that kid goes crazy.

Eventually the boys will come to see the yeshiva negatively. They are

...Just schlepping along at the yeshiva, they're not good at it. They hate it, and they really don't have much of a meaning in their life.

In certain cases, the child's need to feel good will supercede his religious convictions. He will find a place where he can be happy or successful, whether in school or elsewhere.

(a) The boys who are poor learners...they always manage to skip school, go to pool halls...

(b) I see it as a slope...and the slope starts with poor academic success.

(c) It's unfortunate...there are a lot of good boys out there who can't learn and who are just dropping out.

6.7 Expulsion From School

As teenagers feel increasingly uncomfortable in school, they will start coming less often. If there is no effective intervention initiated by either the school or the family, the boys will start spending their time elsewhere, and there is a gradual distancing from the yeshiva in favor of other, less approved activities. Permanently ousting a child from school, although not common, is an immediate intervention that removes the child from his peers. Permanent expulsion is a final tool used in only the most serious situations, and it is a complicated matter, governed, like other issues, by Jewish law. In circumstances where it is deemed necessary to expel a child, a difficult question is confronted, as demonstrated in the following situation. A parent told a story of a Hasidic

girl⁷⁸ who bragged to her friends about dating a boy from another city. This behavior being completely taboo, the girl was immediately asked to leave the school. It was feared that her presence in school would result in a negative influence on her peers. Because of the close knit nature of the community, no other school would accept the child because she had been expelled in the first place; she would boast of her exploits to her classmates. However, the lack of an appropriate school that she could attend would mean that the adolescent would be in a situation where she is at an even greater risk to be influenced by inappropriate sources.⁷⁹ The likelihood that the school that expels a child is contributing to the religious demise of the child is great, as it also ensures that contact with a stable environment ends.⁸⁰

-They are worried about the influence...on the other children.

So it's a problem. They are worried about the influence on other kids, but they know that kicking him out might accelerate his leaving.

-Yeah, cause no one wants, as parents and as a school, they don't want this particular boy influencing others.

A mental health professional understood the school's concern but felt that expulsion was not an appropriate solution.

I understand the concern of the school on one hand; on the other hand, it's not solving the problem. It also teaches the kids that if they do have questions, or if they do have doubts, they are gonna keep it bottled up. They are not going to deal with it. Later on, they will deal with it the wrong way. Number one. Number two, is kids getting thrown out of school. Kids should not be thrown out, garbage is thrown out. You gotta deal with the kids. You gotta relate to the kids. It's not a solution; it really is not. And that itself can escalate the downward spiral of that kid. You're trying to solve the problem, yeah. they have a responsibility to other kids...hey...its not fair to the child, if every kid has to

⁷⁸ Although this story concerns a girl, the same situation would apply to a boy.

⁷⁹ In this case, the girl was hired as a babysitter where she could remain inside the community but have no access to the other girls. Marriage will obviously be very difficult for her.

⁸⁰ In some instances, an expelled boy might retain contact with a particular rebbe with whom he had a positive relationship. However, most leave because it is with their rebbe that they cannot relate.

get what they need. Unfortunately if teachers are rigid, if *rebbe*s are rigid, and they hear the first thing and all of the sudden the alarm gets sounded, and it's publicized to the whole world, then what effect are you going to have on this kid? You're not going to get this kid back. You'll lose this kid.

When a boy is expelled, it is justified because it is considered in the best interest for the many. What happens to the expelled boy depends on him and his parents. Some parents will send their child to an out of town yeshiva that specializes in dealing with children with difficulties. No such programs exist in Montreal. Some of these children remain observant; others do not. But even if some children might be successful at these specialized yeshivas, parents still have to be willing to send them and be able to afford it.

I see it advertised in New York...a lot of yeshivas, kids at risk, kids on the fringe...you then have a parent who is willing to put their kid into such a program that has such a name.

Many parents are not willing to send them, again out of concern that the family's reputation will suffer, again hurting marriage opportunities for that child and for others. Other children remain at home or get some sort of job and are viewed with diminished respect by the community.

6.8 Reasons Not To Change

A number of factors make it extremely difficult for the yeshivas to offer alternative services for children in need. There is considerable fear that, if alternative classes were offered, where a skill such as woodworking were taught, many students capable of intense religious study would enroll, at the expense of continuing their religious studies. The opportunity to do something different would be a very powerful draw.

... There wasn't a class, because all the good working boys would want to go to it. Where do you draw the line?

Some professionals feel that activities other than learning would be good for all of the boys.

I think that the good students might really enjoy to have some activity to do besides learning. But I think it's essential for the others.

The worry that efforts to accommodate a small percentage of the boys may cause a general lowering of the current standards prevents even the most liberal rabbis from working towards change.

As previously mentioned, stigma is a huge factor preventing parents from sending their children to resource rooms.⁸¹ Even in the girls' schools, a stigma is attached to being seen in the resource room, although this seems to be decreasing.⁸² In the boys' elementary schools, with the exception of Yeshiva Gedola,⁸³ remedial services are minimal. They are all-together non-existent in high school; boys themselves do not want to attend, and parents are wary as well.

Finally, the costs of remedial services make them prohibitive. As many parents cannot afford regular tuition, not to mention extra costs, the schools must raise the funds to pay additional teachers. With budgets stretched so tightly already, the likelihood that these programs will open without major private support is unlikely.

⁸¹ Resource rooms in haredi schools are remedial classrooms where children can receive extra tutoring.

⁸² The Satmar girls' school recently opened a resource room; most children who are referred do attend.

⁸³ Yeshiva Gedola has a resource room staffed by trained women for children up to grade six only.

6.9 Conclusion

The child who is academically unsuccessful in yeshiva is at greater risk for lowering his level of religious observance. In addition, the lack of a secular education makes it even more likely that children who leave the yeshiva will engage in deviant behavior. With few marketable skills, those who leave the yeshiva have little chance of finding a job. Yeshivas, once available only to the elite students, are having difficulty coping with the numerous learning disabilities and the emotional distress faced by many students. Adjusting the course of study is virtually impossible, as is finding trained personnel to work with those having trouble.

The rigid structure of the school day has not changed in many years and thus is at least partly to blame for the increase in haredi deviants. The same format that was used to teach the elite students is now being used to educate all. In addition, the inability of the schools to adapt to meet the growing needs of their children is resulting in more dropouts. Children with increased financial needs, increased access to a more seductive mainstream culture, and less stable home environments are coming to school under greater pressure. Without a change in the way that schools deal with these students, there is every expectation that the number of dropouts from school and from the haredi form of Judaism will continue to be on the rise.

While the previous chapter described how advances in technology in mainstream culture have impacted on deviant behavior, this section actually describes how a lack of change within the schools has contributed to a rise in unwanted activity. Schools have attempted to be islands of tradition and stability in a sea of rapidly changing environments. This seems to emphasize the interaction of the various components of

Bronfenbrenner's theory of development. Changes in one level of influence impact on another. In this case, an increase in what is perceived as inappropriate mainstream culture (the macro-system) leads to increased time in school⁸⁴ (a meso-system.) However, some students cannot handle even more time in school (as stated above) and therefore rebel.

In defense of the yeshiva, school personnel have argued that it is not the institution that needs to change, but rather the attitude of the families who are sending their children to be educated. They argue that schools are expected to bear a greater and greater responsibility to raise *frum yidn* (religious Jews) as families contribute less and less to the upbringing of their children for a variety of reasons. The changes in family dynamics over the last fifty years and how this may be contributing to a rise in deviant behavior among adolescents will now be addressed.

⁸⁴ Saturday night classes for example, ensure that there is limited free time to engage in improper activity. However, the way the school runs and the academic expectations of students has not changed.

Chapter 7

CHANGES IN FAMILY DYNAMICS AND RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCE AS CONTRIBUTING FACTORS TO THE RISE OF DEVIANT BEHAVIOR

7.1 Introduction

This chapter will explore the possible influence of cultural and family changes on the rise in deviant behavior within the haredi community. Some haredi respondents were able to compare life now to how it was when they were children and to speculate on the reasons for the differences. Non-haredi respondents gave their perception of changes as they have seen them evolve through their work with the community.

Through analysis of the data, it has become apparent that changes in family functioning, as well as changes in community values, have contributed to the increase in deviant behavior. The simplest explanation given for the rise in deviant behavior is the huge population explosion in the haredi community during the last fifty years. The sheer numbers in the haredi community are many times what they were only a few decades ago. With any population increase, the absolute number of deviants will rise. Several of those interviewed saw the rise in population as the reason for the rise in deviance, although this tended to be the minority opinion. They saw an increase in inappropriate behavior proportionate to the increase in population and not in the relative number of deviants. But, most interviewees feared an increasing trend in deviant behavior beyond the rise in actual population. Several family factors seem to contribute to this and they require further explanation.

Data for this topic came from all community leaders, parents, rabbis, adolescents and professionals working with the haredi community. Virtually all agreed that changes in family dynamics and functioning have affected those growing up today.

7.2 The Holocaust And Its Aftermath

To appreciate fully the extent of, and the reasons for, the changes in the family and the religious behaviors of the haredi community, it is necessary to understand and explore the impact of the Holocaust and its aftermath on Orthodox Jewry. The Nazi attempt to rid Europe of its Jews resulted in the deaths of most Jews from Eastern Europe. Among the millions of Jews killed were thousands of rabbis. Over the centuries, it had been the job of the rabbis to understand and disseminate Torah knowledge and its application to everyday life. As two rabbis stated:

(a) I think that a lot has to do with the Holocaust; I think we still live in the shadow of the Holocaust for this.

(b) I would also say that, because the Holocaust destroyed a whole generation of living rabbis, there was a greater reliance on text. And Jewish text always needed to be mitigated by rabbinic interpreters and those interpreters were destroyed. When you only have text to rely on, you do move more to the right.

The result of this interruption in a living tradition of rabbinic guidance has been a shift to the right - which continues to this day - is a more stringent observance of religious practices, and a narrowing of what is considered acceptable behavior, and therefore a broadening of what is considered deviant. One Hasidic woman described the extremes to which behavior not only could go but had gone in her community. It concerned the response to a package of certified kosher Sunmaid raisins in a Hasidic house.

-You know the Sunmaid raisins? There is a woman on that box. You know what she looks like?

J: I know what you're talking about.

I2: Now she thought that this was a very inappropriate picture for her son.

-: He was the one who had the problem. He told her.

I2: Yeah, he said if we're gonna have this in the house, you have to take off the picture.

The child told the mother that?

-Yes. And she thought that he was right. That he was 100% right. I think the boy is crazy... When my husband heard this he said that woman should get kicked out of the city, because all the girls are going to start thinking that men are animals, and it is not true. That is a terrible impression to give a girl. She is going to be terrified to get married. You're giving the really wrong impression here.⁸⁵

If packaging with a woman on it can become illegal, using it provides another way someone can deviate from haredi norms and expectations.⁸⁶ Such restrictions did not exist after World War II.⁸⁷

In contrast to this story, the same woman described the difference between Kellog's Frosted Flakes and those made by Kemach, a brand with a Hasidic *hechsher* (Kosher seal). The boys were described as preferring the Kellog's brand cereal, but they feared bringing the package to school.

-Because the *hashgochah* (Kosher supervision) was not a *Belzer hashgochah* (under the auspices of Belz). And he is going into a *Belzer cheder* (A Belz classroom).

I2: Buy the same bag of frosties, take it out of the box and put it in a kemach frosties (box)...

⁸⁵ The irony is that the picture is of a woman in long sleeves and a hat, considered by al haredim to be modest dress.

⁸⁶ This story was told by a mother and daughter who were interviewed together. I have no sense of how widespread this belief is, or whether there are repercussions if someone actually brings a box of raisins to school. These two clearly thought the woman upholding this standard herself deviant.

⁸⁷ I am unsure when Sunmaid raisins began selling raisins in such a package. My point is that there are more restrictions today than in previous generations.

-Now ¼ of the class are coming with their little Ziploc bags...cause they like them better than the Kemach brand. But, you're not going to walk into Belz with your Kellogg's frosties.

With Orthodox Judaism on the verge of disappearing and the reliance on text instead of rabbis, the enduring leaders felt that changes were needed to protect the remaining faithful. Without the option of remaining in Europe, and with the State of Israel not yet created, the only visible option was moving to America. This choice had been previously feared because of the pressures to assimilate and to join mainstream culture, a function of the melting pot mentality the United States was known to impose on its immigrants. Living in such an environment would require changes to daily life to protect one's religious identity. Rabbis trying to rebuild a religious community in which little religious learning was taking place had to create an environment where people would continue to study Torah, even after they were married. They felt that only a strengthening of religious values would allow Orthodox Judaism to survive the pressures of living in a foreign land.

(a) I think after the war, when populations were decimated, the *rosh yeshivas* had to do their thing. No one was learning. When I got married, I remember someone who spoke, said in the whole world, including all of *Eretz Yisroel* (Israel), England, all of Lakewood (New Jersey), which was maybe forty or fifty people in a *kollel* then, all together, I don't think you have a thousand men that are learning after they are married. He said you are the elite, it is going to be up to you to create Torah here. So the *rosh yeshivas* pushed their thing.

(b) Because really what the rabbis said after the war is "After what we suffered, we have to create a new model." The new model is really *kollel* for everybody. Universal *kollel*. Everyone has to learn and learn and learn. There is a certain justice to that position.

To sit and learn in yeshiva was seen as being not only a meritorious act in the eyes of God, but as highly regarded and worthy of status in the community, despite the lack of financial compensation. This, in and of itself is not new; rabbinic figures were always respected and held in high regard. But, the trend began whereby it was seen that children

should spend time studying both before and after getting married; to ensure the continuity of Torah study and to help insulate them from mainstream culture. One rabbi commented on the expectations in his community.

You are asking me about ultra-orthodox Lithuanian community. Generally, in our community, when a boy gets married, it is expected that he is going to stay on and learn a few years.

Therefore, whereas the exception had been to sit and study after high school and after marrying, it became more of the norm. The financial and educational implications of the pressure to stay in *kollel* will be discussed in another chapter. The value to learn above all else has led to other changes that have contributed to a rise in deviant behavior – not necessarily in the boys who grew up in the 1950's and 1960's, but in their sons and grandsons.

As stated, the children of the Holocaust survivors were given the mandate of ensuring the rebirth of Torah Judaism, but they had been raised with values that seem to differ from those of today's children. Older respondents stressed that, when they were younger, they were responsible for various aspects of their lives outside of the yeshiva.

Like when I went to Israel, I earned the money myself and had to support myself totally while I was there...

Part of the reason for this was need. Most survivors did not have the resources to support their children fully. If children wanted to study abroad, especially in Israel, they needed to be able to provide for themselves. For the most part, these men and women became more successful financially than their parents. Many *misnagdish* men attended university

and became professionals. Hasidic businesses, such as 47th Street Photo⁸⁸ in New York City and Reichman's Olympia & York Company headquartered in Toronto, grew and flourished. Religious schools and other institutions, in Montreal and abroad, grew as well. When it came time for their children to be graduated from high school, these more abundant financial resources made it unnecessary for children to support themselves while studying. The value of studying seemed to supercede the need to become financially responsible and independent.

(a)-Now, you know, you just go; and so you can go out as much as you want there also. There is no commitment; there is no accountability almost. You are paid to do the things your parents want you to do.

J: To sit and learn?

-Sit and learn or go to Israel and go to seminary, you know, any of the things that are there.

(b) Maturity has been pushed off. Commitment and responsibility have been pushed off by a number of years.

(c) They have very, very little responsibility, often, these boys. They are in school all day, then they go back to pray after supper.

A seventeen year old who once had to work to make ends meet now has no such responsibility. In some Hasidic communities, working even part-time outside the yeshiva can get you thrown out, as it is considered wrong for a *bochur* to interact with the mainstream and to spend his time in what is considered an unproductive way. While working in and of itself does not constitute deviance, interactions in an atmosphere where deviant behavior can grow are forbidden for yeshiva boys. This is compounded, if the

⁸⁸ 47th Street Photo was one of the best known Hasidic business. Owned by a Satmar Hasid, it employed Hasidim and accommodated their needs, closing early on Fridays and remaining closed all day Saturday.

yeshivas are lax in their supervision of the boys and do not catch on to the fact that some may be spending time working outside the yeshiva. With a sense that going to Israel to study is expected for any high school graduate who can afford to go, and with no obligations other than sitting and learning once there, those who are not emotionally ready or who do not sincerely want to go have the freedom to engage in other activity (provided they do not get caught).

7.3 The Impact of Hasidim and *Misnagdim* on Each Other

In Montreal, as in other communities, the Hasidim and the *misnagdim* had significant effects on each other that have led to the blurring of lines between them. While this process began many decades ago, as the two groups began to recognize each other as allies and not as adversaries, it continues to grow stronger today. The *litvish* community has adopted many of the material stringencies held by the Hasidim, such as matters related to personal appearance and what products they are willing to eat.

Why did the *yeshivish* world become so much more careful of beards⁸⁹ and *cholov yisroel*?⁹⁰ Mixing (between the Hasidish and the non-Hasidish). When I got married, there was no *cholov yisroel*...

Meanwhile, many Hasidim have picked up the hallmark of the *misnagdim*, the pursuit of Torah knowledge for every capable man. Whereas Hasidism once appealed to the masses, because one did not need the ability to study Torah in depth in order to be considered a pious member of the group, pressures to study and gain the knowledge held

⁸⁹ It was not the standard in the *yeshivish* community for everyone to have a beard as it is now.

⁹⁰ *Cholov Yisroel* (literally "Israel milk" is milk that has been supervised by Jews from the time the cow is milked. Not easily obtainable 50 years ago, drinking *chalov yisroel* was not the regular standard for many haredim.

by the *misnagdim* has grown. In the Hasidic world, it was once seen as perfectly acceptable to engage in a variety of jobs. Now, the most desirable boys to marry have become those who are able to, and wish to, sit and learn all day.

You could be a very respectable person and be the milkman. Work was just more acceptable. It's only in the last very few years that that's changed. And that Hasidish boys were learning, that was never an option.

Now, in the Hasidic world as well, rabbinic learning is growing as the predominant factor in determining one's social status.

...Intellectual excellence, which used to be the hallmark of the Lithuanian world, but is now also the hallmark of the Hasidic world. That means, "Who knows how to learn? Who is smart?" The kid who isn't so swift won't have a place, won't have a *shidduch* (marriage partner), won't have anything. And that kid knows that. He won't have friends; it's a disaster.

Those boys who have difficulty studying are pressured to remain in yeshiva, as this has become the expected thing to do. Consequently, those very boys have few options, particularly before they are married.

7.4 Marriage

When it comes to marriage, the differences between the Hasidic and *misngadish* communities are striking. *Misnagdim* tend to be more liberal in the courting and dating process, allowing boys and girls to meet, date, and ultimately decide whether or not to marry. As adolescent males and females have no opportunity to interact in a community-approved way, parents often arrange for their child to meet a prospective mate. From that point on, he has a say in whether or not he will marry the proposed girl. While there is great pressure to marry, boys generally do not wed until their early twenties. In contrast,

both Hasidic men and women tend to marry at extremely young ages. Boys tend to marry at the age of eighteen, nineteen, or twenty, often to girls who are of the same age or slightly older. As one parent stated when describing her son's class:

...His class got smaller and smaller. Half his class was already married. At the age of eighteen... And the class was getting smaller and smaller They started feeling like the leftovers, and they start feeling stigmatized. And if they're good boys, they just don't want to stay in a class that's getting smaller and smaller.

She continued:

For this particular son I have not yet been offered a *shidduch* that is the same age as him or younger, they are all older. There is a tendency now for them all to be older than the boys. Even 2, 3 years older.

In fact if a child is not married by the time he reaches twenty, the parents rightfully become concerned.

(a) A *bochur* who comes to the age of twenty and who is still not married, usually he feels alone. He cannot continue in yeshiva, because he has no friends there; he feels *rachmunus* (mercy), and then he needs something. He needs community and he doesn't have it.

(b) Over there, it's either you get married or you get the heck out.

The norm that boys get married by the age of twenty does not consider their emotional readiness for marriage. From the data, it was virtually unheard of that a boy would feel that he could delay getting married for emotional or maturational reasons. In certain extreme cases, marriage was seen as a solution for disturbed boys, either to try to resolve an undiagnosed mental disorder or, in one case, to end a boy's sexual inappropriateness.

I've run across two girls who were sexually molested, on a date. An arranged date. A first time thing. I know another boy whose parents response was to marry him off quickly... That was considered the response, what he needed. He needed to get married.

In the Hasidic community, marriages, or *shidduchim*, are arranged by the parents, whose job it is to seek out an appropriate spouse for their child. Thus, the life of the average Hasidic boy would be as follows: Yeshiva until seventeen years of age, followed by additional, post high school study for two more years. After marriage, he would continue in *kollel* for another one to two years, at which time he would either take a job in the community as a teacher or in another religious profession, or join a family business, or learn a skill or trade.

From the data, it appears that marriage at a young age was encouraged for two reasons. First, the need to repopulate the community that had been destroyed during the Holocaust necessitated large numbers of children. To give women the greatest opportunity to have children, they married early. While women regularly married before the age of twenty prior to World War II, the need to do so afterwards was greater. Second, the belief existed that if men married young, they would become more stable, have less of a need to rebel, and would have an allowable outlet for their sexual needs.

(a) They get married, they stay out of trouble.

(b) After you get married, things are a lot easier. Things are a lot looser. They figure that you're already going to be more stable. You're married, so it's different.

Thus, it seems that the boys go from having no responsibility other than learning to the responsibility of heading a family. Men nineteen years old who have spent more than twelve hours a day in yeshiva since they were thirteen years old must now adapt to a

completely different lifestyle. The women contribute to this as well. Potential brides are interested in boys who are willing to spend their entire day studying.

(a) -Girls are fostering this.

What do you mean?

- I have girls come here, and I'm thinking of one teenage girl who is very learning disabled, and has plenty of issues of her own, and she will not consider a match with anyone who isn't studying. When they discussed a match with someone who was in a trade, she didn't want to hear of it.

(b) The push among boys is to stay and learn

(c) And for a boy, what's considered a good *shidduch*?

I2: A girl who will take someone who wants to learn 24 hours a day.

J: Who (she) will take care of everything else.

I2: Yes.

(d) -She says she wants a learner...Because that is considered a good *shidduch*.

I2: Yeah, that's considered a good *shidduch*.

As a result, parents are prepared to do whatever they can to keep their children in yeshiva as long as they can, even if they struggle with the difficulty of the curriculum and the lengthy hours. When it is time to arrange a marriage, being able to say that your child is in yeshiva raises his value as a potential husband.

And also parents even who have boys who can't learn, but if they're behaving themselves, and they're not causing any trouble, they'd rather keep them in yeshiva and do a so called, better *shidduch*.

Pressure - from parents and potential brides to remain in yeshiva and to study, from the increased rigidity and structure of yeshiva life, and from decreased responsibility from parents - and severe pressure to marry early, particularly within the

Hasidic community, has had serious consequences. The lack of responsibility, as well as the existence of the highly structured yeshivas, leads to what has been described as a delayed adolescence that finally emerges when the young man obtains greater freedom, once married.

Is it delayed adolescence?

...because our kids are not pressured at ages that the outside culture is. Eleven and twelve and thirteen and fourteen are very safe years for kids. Their hormones could be acting up, but still what are you going to do in the eighth grade in a *frum* school? Right? So even I would say the whole high school years for girls are pretty calm times. Very calm times.

Once married and acting with a little more freedom, these nineteen and twenty year old men sometimes find outlets for their rebellious needs. These behaviors vary depending on the individual. Some are considered less significant, such as changing one's glasses to more modern looking frames or wearing a slightly more modern hat during the week. But there is evidence to suggest that increasing problems are surfacing right after marriage.

-The turbulence begins. I think that's why we're having so much trouble with marriages. The divorce rate is rising, and everywhere you go...I watch the magazines, the Jewish Observer, and I like to watch that stuff, because I like to see what's offered at different times. It's all *sholom bayis* (marital harmony) now right? It's such a prevalent thing. I think all that turbulence comes when they're first married. So you either have broken engagements or divorces....a soaring divorce rate...

What happens when the rebellion comes up in marriage?

-Well, then you are in big trouble. You're just in big trouble. So either you get divorced, or you fight continuously and go to the Rav, or go to therapists....And I cannot believe the things that people fight about. But it doesn't surface...Besides the immaturity, the rebellion comes a little bit later. By then you could be married.

An increasing divorce rate, attested to by virtually all who were interviewed, means more children being raised by single parents. Children of divorced parents have long been considered to be more at risk for behavioral difficulties. (Rutter, 1979)

7.5 Larger Families

Not only has the rabbinic push to increase the population and the prohibition of birth control among most women had its effect on population size, but advances in science have affected family size as well. Medical interventions now allow more women to continue to have children later into life. More assistance is now available to those women who have difficulty conceiving and child mortality rates are lower than they have ever been.

Do you think families are larger than they were?

-I think so. I think so. Than 2 generations ago they are much larger. But even a generation ago, I think there are more and more large families.

Generally, interviewees seemed to feel that family size has been increasing and that this likely contributes to a rise in deviant behavior. Many haredi parents who survived the Holocaust came from relatively small families themselves. Their children started reproducing in greater numbers. Thus, the experience of living in the hectic environment of a large family is a new one that many parents did not have as children.

Many of these parents with not twelve, not fourteen kids come from families of three. The parents were concentration camp survivors who came over and became more religious. And they came from small families themselves and do not necessarily know how to deal with this huge group. And it is very hard for some of the parents, and you see this with large families from other groups as well. The mother's first may have been at eighteen, but her last kid may have been at forty-two, and by the time he is ten she is tired. This isn't necessarily all that better. She may let him get away with more.

Most were quick to point out, however, that a large family was a blessing from God and stated clearly that they would not change this, even if they could. One Hasidic respondent stated unequivocally that he had time for all of his children:

-It doesn't matter the number of children. I have *boruch hashem* (thank God) 10 children and no problems.

You have time for everyone?

-Yes, and I am a very busy man. But for my children I have time. That is not a problem.

It seems that when parents are highly organized, the family runs in a highly efficient way.

Because after five kids, I read somewhere, you have to run like the military.

However, when a parent, particularly the mother, is unable to run the house in an organized manner, the results are far more catastrophic than in a house with fewer children. Mealtimes, homework, and getting everybody ready in the morning can be particularly difficult. As well, it becomes a further challenge to give the child who needs extra attention even a few additional minutes. It is in these families that the likelihood for deviant behavior grows.

One final point related to large families is the growing tendency for older children to be more involved in the raising of younger children. This is especially true should one or several of the older children be girls. As boys are in school most of the day and evening once they turn thirteen, and those (in the Hasidic community) attend school year round, they do not have the same familial obligations as girls. In contrast, girls as young as elementary school age have been described by their parents as helping with virtually every aspect of child rearing related to their younger siblings. When the older children are boys, parents tend to have less support because of the boys' hectic schedules. Mental health professionals agreed that boys had few duties outside the yeshiva.

They have very, very little responsibility, often, these boys.

7.6 Poorer Parenting

Poor parenting skills was one of the most frequent reason given by both haredi parents and mental health professionals for the rise in deviant behavior. Some parents admitted to being either less capable or less willing to be strict with their children, resulting in children getting away with more unwanted behavior.

Maybe us as parents allow it a little bit. And they hear it.

Adolescents tended not to comment on this area, given that their lack of life experience makes it difficult to compare themselves with boys from another era. Either they expressed a willingness to conform to community values or, when they did deviate, they were going to do what they wanted, regardless of parental disapproval.

Several reasons were given for a decrease in effective parenting.⁹¹ Some respondents felt that the increased comfort in which children are being raised makes their lives too easy and lacking any form of struggle. Without a struggle, there is no appreciation for what they have or the effort it took to get it. Here is a segment of a conversation that took place with a man from a Hasidic community.

-... Today children are raising up in the way more comfortable, they have everything on a golden tray,

The parents or the children?

-Both. The parents and the children. They are not used to struggling. That's why it affects them more... Money... or the style of living today is like this, that children are not struggling in their raising years and every small thing affect them... becomes an explosion.

Are you telling me that they don't know how to deal with something?

⁹¹ Most of them are not by any means limited to the haredi community although these conversations were centered on this group.

-Yes.

Like a child whose parents always run over and fix their tower of blocks won't know how to deal with it falling down?

-That's one thing.

This Hasidic man felt that, when children do not have to struggle, they lose the ability to cope with difficult situations later in life.

A second reason stated for the decline in parenting capability was a lack of patience on the part of the parents to deal with those issues that required their attention.

-A second thing is not knowledge, it's not know how to deal with it. It's that they cannot afford...*lo savlanut*...

Patience?

-That's it. Patience...It's not only patience. There not used to be *sovel*...to be ok, if its not its not. That's a fact, you cannot change it. Our generation goes like this. But that's may be the reason it affects more children.⁹²

One haredi rabbi described today's parents as lazy in not properly supervising their children. He said that

... There are a lot of parents in this community that don't take kids to *davening* (praying) with them on *shabbos*. They let their kids get up later. Adolescents. They are going to *shul* themselves. Kids are talking in *shul* there are no parents watching them.

Some respondents stated that many parents today are just incapable of handling the emotional, behavioral, and material needs of their children. One haredi woman described parents as:

⁹² I believe he was stating that parents today are less patient in dealing with their children, not necessarily less capable. He was unable to explain his reason for believing this, although he believes that with greater effort and with the availability of parenting resources for the haredi community, parents will change their way.

They're missing screws. I mean it. There are parents who haven't the concept of what it means to be a parent and that's my community, that's the *Hasidish* community, anything worse, I can't believe it but it is.

She also said:

The homes don't understand what the kids need.

She also stated that parents were not strict enough with children and unable to establish and maintain firm limits.

We grew up with parents who were...maybe too strict. But we certainly had limits for children. I think my children's generation, the generation that we're sort of seeing in their children, are having a much harder time setting limits. They don't know how. They don't think they have a right to set limits.

This is just my thing that somehow we have to give kids a sense of who they are as parents, because they're really losing it. They do not know what it means to set limits for their children. They have this very mixed up idea that they are supposed to love them, and positively reinforce them, and give them confidence; and they think anything they do is going to crash down. So the kids grow up with this.

I think there is immaturity in the parents.

A rabbi from her community supported this idea. He added:

And also parents not being as firm as they used to be...I think there is are a lot more dysfunctional houses now than there used to be... I think parents let things run on autopilot.

Finally, with the change in values towards staying in yeshiva and accepting few or no responsibilities, rabbis and *rashei yeshivas* have undertaken tasks of responsibilities that are more parental. Parents who are unable to control their children or who feel that it would be inappropriate to interrupt their study are turning to rabbis for help rather than trying to impose their own wishes on their children.

I remember someone calling (a rabbi) *erev* Pesach (the day before Passover) and saying "Rabbi... do you know where my son is?" He was in the *Beis Medrash*. *Erev* Pesach in the afternoon. He said "Go to yeshiva and tell him this is not the time to be in the *Beis Medrash*. He has to come home and he has to help you." She said, "Rabbi, you can do it. but I can't do it." And I understand her feeling. He's not going to listen to me. What do I

know about anything? So parents, in many ways abdicated, as they've done in many areas, abdicated that kind of thing also.

7.7 Fear of Children Going Off The *Derech*

Regardless of the dearth of statistical data about the number of children straying religiously, there is a perception among parents that this is on the rise. As one parent stated:

You know what's happening. You know how many kids are off the *derech*. Everywhere I turn, someone from someone's family.

Another parent described what someone she knew had stated.

She said, "Have you read things like the Jewish Observer? Do you know what's going on in the world?" She said "You never know when a child that just encounters so many difficulties, you have to stop it now." This kid was barely six.

This fear is based on a feeling that a child chooses to stray, because he is not happy with his current lifestyle. While there may be some truth to this, the parental response is to overcompensate to ensure that their children stay happy. I believe this is another reason why there are few (if any) demands of adolescent males to assist in domestic matters. The belief is that, if too much is demanded of a child, he will rebel by dropping his faith. At the same time, parents and community leaders are tightening the control on these boys, keeping them in school longer and reducing their free time, where they can go, and with whom they can associate. One haredi parent offered her theory on why this is happening.

Some parents are so scared that they're paralyzed... And I think that's why, but the more scared you are, the more you tighten the controls...

She concluded the interview by stating:

The tighter you hold the water in your hand, the more slips through.

From the data gathered, it would appear that the strategy of loosening demands at home, while increasing structure outside the home, is failing and results in more children seeking happiness elsewhere.

7.8 Conclusion

The evolving nature of the family structure and parenting style seems to be helping to create an environment where increasingly unsupervised adolescents have more chance to explore or to engage in inappropriate activity. The history of the trend seems to be as follows: For a variety of reasons, parents were able to conceive and ultimately have more children, resulting in larger families than had been common previously. The parents of these large families, with little or no experience with families of five or more children, became overwhelmed with the emotional, financial, and temporal challenges of raising so many children. The result of this was less effective parenting, which left children looking to fulfill their needs elsewhere. While many looked to the yeshiva heads or other trusted adults to meet their needs for recognition and attention, a segment of the population either would not or could not find fitting adults and got involved in activities deemed unsuitable for ultra-Orthodox Jews.

To this recipe, one must add several additional ingredients. The increased perception that more children were losing their religious identity led to a tightening of the control on the boys, limiting where they could go and what they could see. With limited outlets for their teenage needs, many adolescent-like behaviors were delayed until they had more freedom, namely after marriage. A wish to provide for their offspring led many

of these children to grow up lacking the skills to resolve conflicts on their own. Having grown up with neglectful or overwhelmed parents, some children were already seeking to belong elsewhere. Delayed adolescence means that young men are now acting out adolescent behavior after marriage, while having children of their own (many haredi women give birth within a year of being married), and the haredi male is in a poor position to be an effective father. This next generation of children would seem to be in at least as poor a position as their parents.⁹³ One professional summed up her impressions of the lack of effective parenting in the haredi community.

I see it in terms of a lack of development of good skills that ultimately affect their fathering. So it ends up a recurrent circle. These are boys who aren't learning what it means to have relationships with families as kids grow up.

Without changes, she felt this was destined to continue.

Relating back to Bronfenbrenner's model once again, the family represents the smallest level of interaction affecting the individual. As family structure, dynamics, and composition changes, so too does the effect that it has on the child. More single parents, more mothers working, and more children mean that the micro-system is becoming increasingly complicated and can involve additional people, particularly an elder sister

⁹³ This theory is general and is not meant to be specific to every or even most haredi families. It attempts to explain the rise in deviant behavior that is taking place in some families. Obviously there are many large families that cope quite well with the complicated logistics. One mental health professional sees a possible reversal of this trend as women from large families adjust and learn how to cope with many children, even if their mothers did not, provided there was at least some stability in their family of origin. She stated:

I think from what I see, one of my predictions is that mothers that we see now who come from large somewhat organized families are going to do much better with their own, should they choose to have large families. The one's who really know how it works.

who may be instrumental in the upbringing of a younger sibling. Again, the haredi community seems to fit the model.

Finally, with a reported increase in divorced parents and single parent families, the external reinforcement of certain family values is diminished. Higher rates of divorce in the secular world have convinced the haredim that their methods of courtship and marriage are superior. While divorce rates in general remain higher, the number of separations among ultra-Orthodox Jews is increasing. The long term impact of this developing trend remains to be seen although a rise in divorce does add to the financial strain of the community, stretching already tight budgets. Financial weakness on a community level may even be leading adolescents to choose alternative lifestyles where they have the opportunity to become more financially secure.

Chapter 8

COMMUNAL FINANCIAL WEAKNESS AS A CONTRIBUTING FACTOR TO THE RISE OF DEVIANT BEHAVIOR

8.1 Introduction

The value placed on the study of Torah means that most haredi boys do not get the education to prepare them for a secular job. The establishment of the *kollel* system means that few begin working after they marry but instead continue to learn in yeshiva an extra couple of years, to ensure the solidification and entrenchment of communal values. The result is very few marketable men who can form the financial base of the community. Women, who can and do receive post-secondary educations, frequently take jobs to support their husbands after marrying. However, this is generally short-lived, as most women become pregnant shortly after marriage and dedicate themselves to raising their families. Thus, for many haredi families, a steady source of income can be difficult to sustain.

This chapter will explore the possible link between financial hardships and the rise in deviant behavior among adolescent males. Specifically, are adolescents engaging in deviant behavior because of the modest lifestyles in which they live? All categories of respondent opined on this question and some speculated as to the financial future of the community. This subject also provided some of the greatest discrepancies between mental health professionals and haredim themselves. This subject was also perhaps the most difficult to explore as adolescents do not consider their financial future in the way that young married men do. So while adults were clear in their concern about the

financial stability of the community, it was difficult to relate this to a rise in adolescent deviance. Thus creating a definitive link between adolescent deviance and financial difficulty is difficult.

Interviews with members of the haredi community, as well as data available on the Montreal community (Shahar, 1997) and the haredi population in general (Rubin, 1993 for example), point to financial hardships within their midst. For example, according to the Shahar data, average income among haredim in the Outremont and surrounding areas is lower when compared to other Jews in Montreal. The two primary reasons for this are limited choice of work locations, limited by their clothing and dietary restrictions, and limited skills necessary to obtain a well paying job. As a result, haredim have had to find occupations where their unusual demands can be met.

8.2 Cost of Living

Although many haredim live modestly, the financial cost of being ultra-orthodox is high. Kosher food is significantly more expensive than other groceries, and when multiplied by the large numbers of children, an enormous food bill results.⁹⁴ During a recent visit to an Outremont supermarket selling both kosher and non-kosher items, the following differences in the prices of everyday items were noted. While this was by no means a comprehensive or scientific study, it is indicative of the major difference between the cost of kosher and non-kosher items.

Chicken legs: \$3.28/kg

Kosher Chicken: \$6.75/kg

⁹⁴ Passover is well known for the extraordinary prices for food which must conform to even stricter standards.

Milk (2%): \$1.31 (1 liter)

Kosher Milk (2%): 1.60 (1 liter)

Cheese (American, 16 slices): \$4.49

Kosher Cheese: \$6.49

Cookies: \$1.99

Kosher Cookies (similar kind): \$4.99

Cereal (Kellogs): 3.99

Kosher Cereal (Kemach brand): \$5.59

In order to be considered kosher, virtually every food (with the exception of most fruits and vegetables and a few other items) must have a kosher symbol on the package⁹⁵ signifying that the food has been processed and packaged in a facility supervised by a *mashgiach*. This raises the cost of production and often the price of the food.

Religious articles of clothing such as *tzitzit* (fringes), *tefillin* (phylacteries), *streimel* (man's fur hat), *sheitl* (women's wig) are all expensive. Religious commandments stress the importance of beautifying the *mitzvot*, so silver vessels and candelabras are treasured. Enrollment in public school being out of the question, haredi families are responsible for tuition payments for their many children.⁹⁶ Finally, in order to marry off their children at an early age, many parents are expected to support their children for a number of years after they marry.

The absence of trendy clothing, numerous outfits (particularly for the men), expensive cable bills, and entertainment budgets helps lower monthly costs, but hardships are compounded by the general absence of well paying jobs in the haredi community,

⁹⁵ There are dozens of these symbols on different products. Different groups hold that different symbols are or are not acceptable.

⁹⁶ While no haredi child will be denied a religious education for lack of financial resources, the obligation remains on the family to pay what they can. Should enough families not be able to pay tuition, obviously the schools would have to make difficult decisions regarding what they can offer. No study of the schools' finances was done for this study.

particularly in the Hasidic neighborhood. While there certainly are those with successful businesses, they seem to represent the minority of the community.

How many of them (Hasidim) do you think make a decent living?

Many men do not have the skills or the business savvy to open and maintain a successful business. Many other kinds of jobs are merely incompatible with the haredi lifestyle.

8.3 Appropriate Employment

Most haredim are not opposed to the idea of earning money or having lots of it. They are opposed to learning skills or obtaining employment that do not fit their religious learning.

The other part is that there is a prejudice against learning employment skills. I don't think that there is that much of a prejudice against earning money or being employed, but there is a disconnection between learning how to do it and doing it.

One exception is Rabbi Aryeh Steinman, a resident of Israel, who purportedly turned down a donation of one hundred million dollars (U.S.) to be used to provide vocational training to Haredi men, because he believed that life with limited means was a "garden of Eden" (O'Shea, 2003). Most haredim though, would gladly accept financial aid or employment, if it fit with their religious needs.

Haredim will take jobs only where their religious observances do not need to be compromised. This eliminates many kinds of work, some of which do not need major training (truck driver) and many that do.

-Now what I mean to say by that especially a person who comes from a rabbinical background like me, can't do everything. For instance, I wouldn't be a truck driver. I wouldn't be a plumber or electrician with these big pants and big shoes and everything. It's gotta be in the line. Has to fit the picture. They look for jobs high and low, but it has to be something that fits the picture.

What else fits the picture? You have *mashgiach*, *rav*...

-Something you can call a *klei koddesh*... *dovor shebikedusha* (something with holiness) like a *magid shiur* or *rosh yeshiva*, something like that.

Teaching, *mashgiachs*, and other similar jobs are desirable for several reasons. They allow the individual to remain within the community's boundaries virtually all the time where they are more comfortable. They also allow the individual to contribute to the religious life of the community, an act considered highly meritorious. Finally, these jobs are the only ones that allow them to put to use what they have studied in yeshiva, making additional training unnecessary.⁹⁷ The downside of such jobs is the meager pay they usually provide.

Haredi men do take other jobs either by fulltime or to supplement other incomes. Others remain in *kollel*, either unable or unwilling to find work and preferring to live off the generosity of others in the community.⁹⁸

I wouldn't sit in *kollel*, because I had to make a living...I used to do long distance (phone service). I used to go with a briefcase, call up people, sign up. Again it wasn't something *klei koddesh* So I was there as many years as I could (in *kollel*) but then I had to get out and start working for *parnossah* (livelihood), you know, nobody supported me, I had to do it for myself. There are some who can face it, and they are *mazliach* (successful). Again *hatzlacha* (success) is up to the *Ribono shel Olom* (God), but there are a lot of them who can't really face what...I should go work...So they will push it here, they'll sit in *kollel* and wait for this person's help and that person's help, whatever. I wouldn't say that they don't learn, don't do anything, but they would sit in *kollel*, do this, do that, but they can't really fit into a job.

⁹⁷ Teachers, for example, would know all of the content that they would need to teach. They would not necessarily have the skills to be a teacher but this is of less importance in most haredi schools.

⁹⁸ Although stated earlier bears repeating that learning in a *kollel* after one marries is a normal part of haredi life intended to help solidify one's level of comfort in this lifestyle before looking for an external job. Newly married men are thus often paid by the *kollel* to sit and learn.

8.4 Lack Of Secular Education

As previously stated, secular educations in yeshivas, if offered at all, are minimal. So when a boy marries and finishes in *kollel*, he is limited in what he can do.

So by 19, these boys can be finished school, looking for a job.

-Yes. But they have no qualifications, because they don't even have a secondary education.

So what kinds of jobs are they finding?

-A lot of them are doing, like, physical jobs, like working for other people. Some of them, if there is money behind them from either family, either their family or their wife's family, they get help. Others who are talented, in certain areas like computers, or whatever, who have taught themselves, and they have certain skills they have taught themselves...

Being able to teach oneself a skill seems to be a common way for young men to learn a new skill or profession that can then be marketed. Skills that interested an individual or that he was capable of learning helped a man decide what to study. However, only those who have the desire and, more importantly, the capability to teach themselves, can take advantage.

...I don't think he had a grade 4 when he started learning. And he had to take private lessons, and learn how to write English, like he read it. He could read English, but he couldn't write it. He couldn't write to save his life. He could just spell his name. He had to learn how to write an essay. But you know what? He was very motivated.

But the majority of boys are unable to teach themselves advanced skills such as computer programming.⁹⁹

⁹⁹ Of course, these who learn advanced computer skills are also in a position to use computers for inappropriate reasons with perfectly reasonable excuses for having access to computers.

There does seem to be some acceptance among the Hasidim for boys to attend secular programs to learn skills. These programs can be attended only by married men, because they are considered to be more stable and less likely to be influenced by what they see. Also, if a boy takes such a course before getting married, his worth as a potential *shidduch* declines.

If you take a boy who is working it is considered you took a second class boy. It's a terrible thing. Feel bad for the boy.

For those who do wish to learn a skill, getting in is difficult.

-My son is actually going to be taking a course, but he had a lot of problems getting in. He's going to be learning furniture building.

Is that a Hasidish program?

I: No, it's a *goyish* program. And he asked the *Rebbe*, and he was told yes he can do it. It's a 2 year program. My nephew just did plumbing, but they have no secondary education so they have to get a GDT; My son in law actually had to have a grade 9 English education...If they would not have been married, they would not have gotten it. They would not have had this thing. But because they were married, because it is seen that *parnasah* (livelihood) is a problem, and this was not something very social and everything, and mostly plumbing and cabinet building are...they're men oriented things, so it was ok.

There does seem to be a growing recognition by community leaders that men need to learn skills, so that they can earn a living. Finding appropriate milieus for them to do so remains a challenge. In Montreal, there are no programs within the haredi community to teach skills. The Coalition of Outremont Hasidic Organizations (COHO), an organization established in 1995 to act as an intermediary between the Hasidic groups and the larger community, does provide, among its various roles, guidance to entrepreneurs. However, attempts to sustain training programs specifically for haredim (such as the TAV program, open, then closed, now open again) have had limited success.

In the days of the shtetl, there was an acceptance that not everyone could study and that other professions contributed to the well being of the community.

I don't think they are planning for it. If you go back to the model of the shtetl, the butcher contributed. The baker contributed. The milkman contributed...

While haredi butchers and bakers remain, the community needs to sanction other professions such as a plumber or electrician for example, not necessary in the times of the shtetl, but important today and capable of generating above average incomes.

8.5 Reliance on Non-Haredi Financial Support

In Montreal, the dependence of the haredi communities on support from non-religious Jews is significant. Non-religious Jews support the haredim for a variety of reasons, ranging from nostalgia dating back to pre-war Europe to a feeling that supporting this way of life will somehow bring blessing to their homes. Hasidim can be viewed collecting money from Cote St. Luc and Hampstead synagogue goers on a daily basis, and frequently meet with non-haredi rabbis to request financial support for weddings, children, or ill relatives. However, the potential for this support to continue is questionable.

I mean, is the tolerance of non-Orthodox Jews for Orthodox charities going to end at one point? I mean how much longer are you going to have Jews who aren't Orthodox but for nostalgic reasons give to Hasidic organizations, I don't think that can last to Canadian born. The European born non-Orthodox Jew, yeah, he remembers those beards, so he likes them, he gives it to them; he feels guilty, he gives. But to his grandchildren? Does that exist?

If this rabbi is correct, a significant source of income will evaporate over the next generation, as the haredi population continues to grow at unprecedented rates and as those with a memory of European Jewish life die out.

The haredi population, like many others, excels at tapping government resources that offer financial assistance. Programs like family allowances and welfare often provide the majority of income for haredi homes.¹⁰⁰ They can be accessed relatively easily, do not require children to meet with outsiders, and are basic entitlements under Quebec law. Recently, another agency has received an influx of requests from the haredi community. The Jewish Family Services of the Baron de Hirsch Institute (JFS), a social service agency that provides emergency financial assistance to Jewish families in crisis, has seen an increase in the number of haredi families requesting help. While the organization's statistical data was not created in a way that could quantify the amount of assistance given to the particular community being studied for this thesis,¹⁰¹ a trend is evident. While this may be indicative not only of a growing need but of an increased willingness to request help from a non-haredi agency, the increased strain on the mainstream Jewish community's financial resources is evident. It is also possible that requesting help from this agency, once seen as taboo within haredi circles, has now become accepted. One or two haredi individuals are known to have referred many families from their community to JFS. Whether this is due to need, a new awareness of the program or a blurring of boundaries between the haredi community and the mainstream Jewish community is unclear and warrants further exploration.

On a community level, the Jewish Federation struggles with how to relate to the haredi community. While interested in serving all Jews in Montreal, haredim do not seem interested in supporting the Federation. In fact, not one haredi respondent admitted

¹⁰⁰ A family with 10 children under the age of 18 can receive more than fifteen hundred dollars per month. With welfare income, this can provide enough money to eke by.

¹⁰¹ The JFS data on the haredi community includes members of the Lubavitch Hasidic community who are not included in this study.

to making a contribution to the Federation's annual appeal. In addition, the position taken by the haredim in regard to the State of Israel (generally neutral or anti-Israel) prevents the question of haredi financial stability from becoming a priority for the rest of the Jewish community.

They (the haredim) don't give any money and the donors are getting tired of their anti-Israel stance. They don't want their money going to support someone who is opposed to Israel.¹⁰²

The direct effect of requesting financial assistance on adolescent deviant behavior is difficult to prove. However, the effect of turning to outside sources for assistance is a weakening of communal boundaries. Even young children are aware of an outside social worker coming for a home visit to view living conditions.¹⁰³ Older children ask questions about the source of new beds or other concrete aid. For those who may already be questioning their religious commitment, this may be another push to seek an alternative lifestyle.

8.6 Population Explosion

As stated, the worldwide haredi population has increased manifold in the past fifty years. One of impacts of this, coupled with the increased expectation of post high school Torah study is the strain on financial resources. Whereas one working man with a

¹⁰² It should be noted that haredi attitudes toward the State of Israel and whether or not it should be governed by Jews is a complicated issue that is not within the scope of this study. It should be noted though, that during my research I met those who were in favor of the existence of a Jewish State, some who were opposed to it and those who were generally neutral towards it.

¹⁰³ JFS is quite thorough in their evaluation of a family for financial assistance to ensure against fraudulent use of their resources.

modest business used to be able to support a couple of children, this man cannot support twenty grandchildren. One rabbi summed up the problem.

-There is a huge population explosion. And economics I think is going... to drive a lot of this. I mean, I don't know enough about the economics, but I think the economics are going to drive things to the point where the following: One generation basically worked for a living, and 2 generations have already lived off it. Those after the war did work. But now no one is working. Well, when I say "no one," you know what I mean. So everybody...already 2 generations have parasitically existed off of one generation's work. And in the meantime, a mother and a father have turned into 150 people. Because 10 kids had 10 kids each, and there was an explosion everywhere. Huge explosion. It's not unusual to have 13, 14 children in a family. So somebody is going to have to go to work. The question is, is there enough work within the community, and I don't just mean teaching in the community, slaughtering animals in the community, writing *mezzuzahs* in the community, but is there enough work selling shoes in the community, making plastic bags for the community, car service for the community. Is there enough jobs in the community that people won't have to leave in order to earn a living.

You think people will eventually leave to make a living?

-Won't economics determine that?

Mental Health professionals, while understanding the haredi need of religious observance, openly questioned the future of the haredi community because of its shaky financial foundation.

(a) I don't know where the community is going, if they're having so many kids and requesting so many of them to do what they can't do. It's as if a community decided to have eight and up kids, and all of them have to be dentists. You know not everyone is going to be a dentist. Or if they are going to be dentists, they have to hang around dental schools.

(b) I think that they should be giving them a practical education, those that need. I think that their goal should be keeping devout Jews and providing them with some kind of practical and income-producing skills and this should be more closely built in to what they are doing. I am talking about math, reading, and enough writing to...they don't have to be poets, but enough writing to fill out forms. I think there also should be practical education; this is for later on. There should be practical education depending on the skill level of the kid. And there are kids who need help just to be useful helping in a store. We're talking all different levels. There are others who could learn a practical trade so that they are employable.

Rabbis agreed with the problem but differed on the solution.

(a) So there are a lot of...a father, a *rav* (rabbi) has 10 kids, not all 10 will take his place eventually. Or let's say he lives to 95 years old, he should live to 120, and they have to make *parnasah* (a living) and not always the case that the father has 100,000 followers that they would support him, so that he could support his kids. So they gotta do something. Some of them they become *melamdim* (teachers)...

(b) I think he has got to be a...vision quest where he is going. Is his goal to be a high school *rebbe*, an elementary *rebbe*, a *beis medrash rebbe*, or a *rosh yeshiva*? Of course the worrisome thing now with the way that boys are being led by their *roshei yeshiva*, is stay on in learning, marry a girl that can support you. That is a very scary thing, because what about all the people who can't afford it? What about the *rebbes* themselves - and I am speaking as one - who are struggling to make ends meet. What do they do when their daughters start going on the market, especially a small market city like Montreal. It's a very big problem, because we are heading for disaster. We are heading for economic disaster, The money is going to eventually run out. Even if it doesn't run out now, its going to run out in the next generation. And we're seeing that already tremendously... there is not enough money to go around.

Rabbis are very hesitant to allow their students to learn other skills while in yeshiva for fear that they will abandon their religious studies. Today, this remains the primary reason that changes are not taking place and why the mental health professionals fear for the future of these communities.

8.7 Adolescent Financial Freedom

Haredi adolescents who wish to have an above average income after yeshiva have very few options. An adolescent who wants to have any income while still in yeshiva has no option other than to ask his parents. One student felt that he could work and study at the same time and that this was preferable to sitting in yeshiva and doing nothing.

If someone wants to go to work, if someone thinks they're better off by working than just sitting around in yeshiva and futzing around and doing nothing, so be it. There is nothing wrong with working. A bum not doing nothing is even worse than somebody who actually works. And that's my main...I still have, like my aunt is still involved in yeshiva or whatever...I think that's important...For them, yes it's still strict, it's still Hasidic, but they gotta look at it from the other side and be realistic in other words... You gotta understand. When you're in yeshiva it's like the way you support and the way you pay for food and whatever is daddy send me. Daddy send me. Daddy send me. You know? It gets to a point when, if I want to go out and have a pita, I don't have to report.

The inability for this adolescent to have some financial freedom was one of the factors that led him to leaving his yeshiva and ultimately his Hasidic group. This person is no longer religious at all. Perhaps the "delayed adolescence" explored in the previous chapter impacts adolescents in their search for financial independence. As their desire for independence grows in the later teen years, their interest in controlling their own money increases as well.

By the time I'm 16, I want to be able to buy something for myself without asking for money from my parents. If my mother is going to ask what I do with every cent, I'm gonna get money elsewhere. I could get a job somewhere...

I: Have you ever done that?

I've thought about it. I know someone who works a few hours a week. He still goes to yeshiva but he has some money for himself.

When asked if he thought his parents or *rebbe* would approve of working, he was emphatic that they would not approve nor would they understand his need to have some "pocket money."

Like with other issues such as television and clothing styles, there seems to be a greater flexibility among non-Hasidic families when it comes to taking a job. Certainly all yeshiva boys are limited in the amount of time they can work as they spend so much of their day at school, but the tolerance of someone wishing to work part time is far greater in the non-Hasidic world. Not to say that a parent would prefer their children to work than to attend a post-high school learning program, but the marital implications would not be as severe.

8.8 Exceptions

To every rule, there are exceptions, and the existence of haredim who are well trained in secular matters is one of them. In both the Hasidic and non-Hasidic communities, there have been men (although few) who have gone to college, remained within their communities, and are well respected as well. Here are two examples, one offered by a rabbi and one by a mental health professional.

Look at Rabbi Twersky, the psychologist. The beard and the *kaputah*, is he stigmatized by the Hasidic community? They love him. He went to university. He did something *traif*.

The fact that Rabbi Twersky is an extremely well respected rabbi means that it is possible to buck a trend and remain a community leader.

-I know 2 boys who I know personally who got into Fordham school of Law without having gone to school anywhere but yeshiva. And they were allowed to go because they were married. They did well on the LSAT, and Fordham believes in religious law,

How did the community see the people going there?

-Both of them were from affluent families. The children of the affluent often are excused. And the one that I know, my son's friend, they thought it's great, because they're in the diamond business and they need a lawyer.

So then he could go work in the family business.

-Yeah, he's going to work in the family business; he's not going to work downtown or whatever. He's going to work on 48th street. He's getting an MBA along with the law degree.

It is difficult to say why some men attend college without serious repercussion. Family affluence may allow for greater freedom. If one defies the community and goes to college and subsequently maintains his religious identity and is prepared to use what he has learned to support the community, he appears to be embraced upon completion of his studies. If he assimilates and does not return to serve the community, then there is no

further contact with him and haredi fear of secular institutions is reinforced by his actions. Communal response may also depend on which college he attends. Yeshiva university, an Orthodox, all male college in New York City is a far more acceptable choice than another school. Other colleges offer day and evening programs specifically for the religious community, although none exists for men in Montreal.

Ironically, the rise of college courses that can be taken over the internet provides an attractive option for many haredim, although using the internet creates another concern about what else will be seen while having access to the Web.

There are also many families within the haredi community who have become quite affluent without the need to obtain a secular education. For some, shrewd business decisions, family inheritance, and sound investments have paid off. These individuals frequently take it upon themselves to support others in the community, both individuals and community institutions, such as synagogues and schools.

8.9 Conclusion

Though not the focus of this research, ample evidence points to the financial instability of the haredi community. Rapid population growth coupled with an increase in importance and status given to those who engage in religious learning has led to many families living below the poverty line. Strategies undertaken to address these problems have helped to a certain extent, but the underlying issue of having few skilled and marketable workers remains. Today's adolescents know that, in a few short years, they will be the providers for their families, as their parents are less capable of helping their many children and grandchildren. A limited number of adolescents see a life of poverty

as something to be avoided by any means, and at least one teenager in Montreal left his community for greater financial freedom. Should the potential of living a life below the poverty line lead adolescents to leave their communities, then financial instability would be a direct cause of increased deviant behavior.

Increased blurriness of boundaries between haredi and mainstream communities have shown adolescents that there is more than one way to live. Teenagers see affluent neighbors and some yearn for the materialism they see that would not have been evident when visiting the homes of wealthy friends. Haredi children are as susceptible to the addictiveness of gameboy, computer games, and other expensive entertainment as anyone else. Haredi leaders fear the effect that use of mainstream entertainment will have on the haredi adolescent (Falk, 1998).

Merton's theory of social strain would seem to apply to financial issues as well. The value of being wealthy is not compatible with many of the means necessary to get there, such as certain types of education and employment. As an increasingly widespread materialism develops, turning to means that may not meet community standards may become more common, such as working in non-traditional environments or occupations.

The haredi community needs to consider how members will support themselves as the population continues to grow at a rapid rate. As one rabbi stated succinctly:

The economics of it are untenable. The economics just don't work.

While things may still be (barely) manageable today, this may not be the case in the near future. Whether this will lead to more adolescents leaving the haredi way of life for one where one can take any job will be seen.

Chapter 9

CONCLUSION

Ultra-Orthodox Judaism is not at risk for extinction, as it was at the end of the Second World War. Huge population growth, the establishment of the State of Israel, greater civil rights, and government financial assistance coupled with rigorous counter-acculturation strategies have made the haredim a formidable and resilient community. Yet, despite the community's resolve, there is a growing trend of young males leaving it to assimilate into the mainstream world, the epitome of deviance for the haredim. While there have always been those who have decided to end their religious lifestyle, the perception that many more are leaving the faith and engaging in other sorts of deviant behavior is alarming to members of these communities and to those mental health professionals who attempt to help those in need.

The results of this research indicate areas within the ultra-Orthodox community that have created an environment where a rise in deviant behavior can happen. Specifically, I have looked at environmental changes rather than at biological factors that may contribute to deviance, based on the theories of Bronfenbrenner and Merton. Gradual changes over the past several decades have allowed weaknesses to develop at the individual, family, and community level that require specific and creative responses. Some trends have much in common with mainstream society, while others are specific to the haredi community and other insulated communities like it.

I believe that Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Model, an attempt to explain an individual's social development, offers important insight into the changes taking place in the haredi community. Bronfenbrenner's model has been described as a series of

concentric circles around the individual, each representing a different level of interaction. Every level of interaction can have long-term impact on the individual and as risks change, institutions must evolve to meet the challenges.

Perhaps one of the most important findings of this study is the ease with which those wishing to engage in certain deviant behaviors can do so in secret while maintaining a good standing within the community. The ramifications for the community as a whole are significant, even if the actual number of deviants is relatively low. Many of the techniques employed by the haredim to prevent assimilation and ensure survival of the group may no longer be effective. Prevention, the elimination of opportunity to transgress, is less useful to them as technology allows deviance to take place in secret. Technology can also connect youth to other resources, allowing them to create a network of support prior to leaving the religious community. Finally, while engaging in these behaviors, secret deviants can continue to reap the rewards and benefits of living within the haredi community, namely emotional and financial support. To counter these new threats, haredi leadership may need to explore alternative strategies to aid its youth.

Another recurrent theme was the ramification that an acknowledgment of a problem could have on an individual and his extended family. If a boy's behavior becomes public, or even if it becomes common knowledge that there may be an issue, such as attending a special school, he and his siblings will experience a difficult time obtaining suitable spouses. The result is a difficult time convincing the parents to intervene with their children. While there seems to be some acknowledgement of a need for intervention with children facing learning or emotional difficulties, the community still has a long way to go.

Sixty years ago, television was non-existent, internet and cell phones were fantasy, drug use was significantly lower, and sexual promiscuity was an exception. An increased ability to access mainstream culture means that individual decisions to deviate are easier to take and act upon. Technological advances have allowed it to become easier to deviate. Innovations just beginning to come on to the market, such as videophones, have rabbis panicking as to the impact they will have on their communities. The increased sexuality of society means that avoiding the temptations that one sees on a daily basis are becoming more difficult.

Applying Bronfenbrenner's model, one could say that the macro-system, the underlying belief systems and ideologies that form the basis of an individual, has broadened as influences from more sources increase. Traditional strategies for keeping outside influences out are increasingly ineffective as many children and adults succumb to the temptations of the modern world.

Merton's theory of social strain, emphasizing a discrepancy between culturally defined goals and the means of obtaining them as a source of deviancy, may also be affecting the community at the macro-level. If the community is facing increasing financial pressure, alternative means of supporting members, including those that may cross otherwise unacceptable boundaries, may become more common. While the goal of perpetuating the haredi way of life does not change, the means by which this is done may have unintended consequences. Herskovits' "cultural drift" may be at play here as well whereby it becomes acceptable to engage in certain behaviors (fundraising, for example) while the community attempts to further isolate itself from what it perceives as the harmful effects of the modern world.

At a familial level, part of the micro and meso-system in Bronfenbrenner's model, a gradual increase in size and more families with two working parents has resulted in less parental attention per child. An increase in divorce and single parent families means less support within the traditional family model, a value highly regarded by the haredi community. Marriages by haredim taking place at a younger age, and poorer parenting skills among parents unprepared for the realities of child rearing, mean that many children are growing up in less structured environments. The result is that many children do not have the same supportive homes their parents did.

The community as a whole is struggling on several levels. Although the school system has evolved so that each male is now entitled to a yeshiva education, whereas in the past it was only open to the elite students, the yeshiva itself has not adapted to meet the needs of every child. Untrained teachers are unprepared to handle the myriad of learning and emotional needs of their students. Often with more than twenty students in a class, teachers must choose who will receive the bulk of their attention, and this is often going to the top students, creating an even larger gap between the top tier and lower tier students. More students are becoming truant or dropping out of school to pursue other agendas.

Finally, the community has failed to secure itself financially. With such an emphasis placed on religious learning, an endeavor that does not produce much income, many expressed concern regarding the financial stability of the community. While there are certainly wealthy families, many families receive financial assistance from the Quebec government or community funds. Increased family size, considered a blessing to the haredi family, is stretching community resources.

My own experience with the haredim was of interest as well. I did not feel that those I interviewed perceived me as a threat. Perhaps to them I was merely a superficial interaction, and therefore not a threat as described by Loomis (1960) and Barth (1969). It was certainly harder to engage adolescents, and they and their parents were more wary of contact with me, also consistent with the practice of insulating children the most. I suspect that had I been attempting to meet with even younger children, my goal would have been more difficult.

While I do not believe that the number of haredim leaving the fold today will have any significant impact on the ultimate survival of the haredi movement, potential for increased attempts at isolation and further fragmentation of current haredi groups is possible. Will more groups look to move out of urban areas? Given the advances in technology and the dependence on a global economy, is this even feasible? If so, will advances in internet, videophones and the like mean that physical isolation will have no effect at all on deviance?

History is a useful method of determining future tendencies. One of the strengths of the haredim has been their ability to adapt to meet new challenges and threats. Their capacity to remain committed to their religion in Europe during the Industrial Revolution, in America amidst the "melting pot" mentality, in Israel despite its dominant secularism, and everywhere despite the Holocaust's destruction has been a testament to their resolve and commitment to their faith. Whether they will adapt to the current challenges by becoming even further restrictive in what is permitted, or attempt to make changes to their current establishments, or allow greater freedoms to those needy boys in the hope

that compromise will keep them as part of the community, some evolution will soon take place.

Earlier, I spoke of the necessity to use qualitative research in order to explore the intricacies of the haredi world. It offers the possibility of gaining information about relatively unknown phenomena with sincerity and depth. It has allowed me to see the faces of parents and community members as they describe the struggles they encounter on a daily basis. I met individuals who agonized over the future of their children and who sincerely pray for the well-being of their souls. I hope what has been produced herein is a starting point for addressing some of the challenges the community faces in meeting the needs of all its adolescent boys.

While qualitative research gives a flavor to trends and beliefs within a group, one of its weaknesses is that it does not generate numerical data that help identify a phenomenon in absolute terms. Knowing a percentage of youths who engage in deviant behavior or who choose to abandon some of their religious identity would be useful to demonstrate the extent of the problem. In addition, one is limited to the information given by those willing to talk, regardless of their motives or the accuracy of their data. Interestingly, the more community members opened up to me, the more they, in fact, blurred the boundaries between their world and that which is outside. Simply stated, this research proved not only that current boundaries do not keep outsiders out, but that there is an interest in meeting and speaking to different people. Motivation for this as well as its impact on community functioning and influence is a whole area for future study.

It is hoped that this study and the cooperation and interest it has generated within the ultra-Orthodox community will begin to make the haredi community aware that

scientific research can benefit their community, and thus will open the door to future studies as well. Certainly, a similar study focusing on deviance among haredi females is essential and would be a first step to a proper understanding of their needs and struggles. It would also be a basis for comparing the needs of boys and girls, whose needs I would suspect are quite different. I would hope that ultimately some sort of quantitative research could be undertaken in order to gain an idea of how widespread the problem is.

Many haredi leaders have long sought to minimize the existence of certain behaviors within their communities to the detriment of their communities. Consequently, there is a widespread belief that these behaviors do not exist within the haredi world. Thus, social workers working with the haredim may be less inclined to look for these issues. Recently, the existence of various behaviors (such as drug use) has been acknowledged, allowing them to be addressed systematically for the first time. The willingness of many to openly discuss these behaviors has been a huge step. For social workers, research is most beneficial when it has implications for practice. Social workers serving these communities must be aware of behavior taking place. This research begins to lay the foundation for preventative strategies to protect vulnerable youth as well as for intervention for individuals and families seeking help. Clinicians with an understanding of the changes that have taken place in the last half century will be better suited to assist their haredi clients.

On a communal level, certain haredi policies should be reexamined to see if they are still effective at protecting children in this day and age. For example, given the risks of mainstream culture, children spend more time in the insulated school environment. But given the difficulty schools have at managing all children, would children be better

off spending more time at home? While there are no simple answers to these types of dilemmas, they do need to be addressed. Collaboration between social worker and community rabbi to address these needs would be ideal.

Another area of future research would focus on the individual factors possibly contributing to the rise in deviance. For example, are there higher rates of learning disabilities among haredi children and does this contribute to yeshivas having difficulty managing them? This sort of research would also be highly sensitive, requiring the utmost respect and comfort with the community.

On a broader level, researching patterns of deviance among adolescents of other small, insulated communities might be useful to ascertain whether other groups are seeing an increase in these types of behaviors. If so, it is possible that similar strategies to help counter the threats will be appropriate. One could also explore causes of deviance and whether it seems to be increasing there as well. It would be interesting to compare the stated reasons for the (possible) changes in behavior. Finally, while this research focused on causes that may be leading to individuals leaving the haredi community, it would be interesting to examine causes of people choosing to enter this lifestyle. Numerous secular Jews have adopted this stringent lifestyle. There is no doubt that much more research needs to be done to gain a greater understanding of the changes and struggles that are taking place in insulated communities. I hope to have demonstrated that it is possible to gain access to such communities and to explore delicate matters with leaders and members.

APPENDIX A

Examples of Posters from the Montreal Haredi Community

As mentioned, posters are a popular way of disseminating information in the haredi community. Here are several examples of posters found within institutions serving the Montreal haredi population. They are generally written in Hebrew or Yiddish, but occasionally in English.

The first poster is an edict from the Rabbinical Court of Montreal advising readers of the potential harm of the internet. The last underlined sentence states that it is forbidden to bring the internet into a Jewish home under any circumstances. Guidelines for internet use in a business setting are provided as well.

The second poster is an invitation to boys aged 12-14 to come study Torah Saturday evenings between 8 and 9 P.M. This class would teach the boys age appropriate material as well as ensure that they are in a safe, sheltered environment on Saturday evenings. Numerous such programs exist for children of all ages, not just to get them into the yeshiva, but also to train them to spend virtually any free time studying Torah.

The final poster is a letter to haredi parents warning them about various threats to a proper way of life for adolescents, particularly of contact between boys and girls. It also mentions the dangers of various modern technologies, such as television, movies and internet. Although primarily speaking of girls, much of the information is pertinent to boys as well.

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תלמוד תורה תפארת שלמה

= מאנטריאל =

ע"ש הרה"ח ר' שלמה בן ר' צבי ע"ה

בס"ד

מודעה משמחת

הננו להודיע כי בעזהש"ת אנו פותחים חברה לבחורים בני 12-14 ללימוד הלכות תפילין, זימון, קה"ת, ושאר הלכות הנחוצות לגיל בר מצוה, וגם הדרכה והכנה בעניני מוסר ויר"ש לימי הבחורות.

בכל מוצאי שבת, משעה 8:00-9:00

(ממוצאי שבת לך לך הבעל"ט)

בביהמ"ד בערנארד קאר. אוטרעמאנט

1290 BERNARD

המגיד שיעור: הרה"ג ר' זעליג וואלדמאן שליט"א

היות והצלחת כל אחד ואחד מן הבחורים הי"ו לנגד עינינו, מספר המקומות מוגבל. אשר על כן, נבקש את כל אשר יחפוץ להצטרף, להירשם אצלנו בהקדם האפשרי.

הרב יעקב יוסף ווייס

י"ד ארגון "שיעורי תורה"

777-8067

הרב פנחס וויליגער

ראש כולל קול יעקב

501-9800

בית יעקב לנו ונלכה באור ה'

is our credo. We follow מ"ח's mitzvos through the prism of אור ה' and our Torah leaders who show us the אור ה'. The אור ה' instructs us to follow the Torah command of "קדושים תהיו כי קדוש אני ה'". "as I am holy so should you be holy." It is clear that our lives must be conducted with קדושה, and we all know that קדושה cannot exist without the separation of the genders. It is for this reason that we maintain separate schools for boys and girls and allow for no social contact between them until time for marriage.

The concept of קדושה, however, and the consistency in all parts of one's life that is needed to achieve it, extend beyond the issue of separate schooling. There are elements in our daily lives and the world around us that need to be carefully examined for the dangers they pose to our striving for קדושה.

For the past few years, we have all been reading articles and scientific studies about the influence of the media (television, movies, internet) on our society and about the general deterioration of moral values all over the world. Unfortunately, these effects have begun to spill over into our own Torah society to the extent that we must now strengthen our resolve to ensure that we do not weaken or falter. It is also incumbent on us, the administration and staff of Bais Yaakov schools and other חנוכה, to draw your attention to some of these influences which may, unnoticed by you, have begun to filter into your own homes. By becoming aware of the dangers and being on guard against their infiltration, we will be able to preserve our very special Torah heritage.

We teach "ולא תתורו אחרי לבבכם ואחרי עיניכם אשר אתם זונים אחיהם" - "And you shall not follow after your hearts and after your eyes which cause you to go astray." Parents who allow their children to watch television are really saying "ולא תתורו אחרי לבבכם ואחרי עיניכם" - "Do go astray after your hearts and after your eyes."

We, the teachers of your children, have long deplored the watching of television and movies, as they project anti-Torah activities which undermine the ideals and principles that we try to impart to your children. What happens to a child who is enticed by the availability of a television set at home or at a friend's home, with its nearly insurmountable זיצר? Inevitably,

AN OPEN LETTER TO ALL BAIS YAAKOV PARENTS AND FRIENDS

they grow weaker in their values and outlook...Pray tell, where is the harmony between home and school? Where is the cooperation between teachers and parents?

Another point: the internet may function as a valuable and useful tool for business and other financial concerns. It can be allowed no place in the home, however, because its influence is pervasive, far-reaching and insidious - thus even more detrimental than that of television. With the click of a mouse, one is able to download onto the home computer - free of charge - movies, music, TV shows and videos, which are available from lists of hundreds of thousands of pirated programs. With easy internet access, one is able to find, on demand, the greatest depravities, lewdness and lawlessness humanly imaginable.

Aside from this dangerous effect, e-mails, chat rooms, instant messages, etc. have provided a means of communication between boys and girls, even those from "the best" and the most protected of homes. Given this serious threat, we, the teachers of your children, strongly reject the use of the internet in the home. Those who do accept the use of internet in their homes, are promoting a clash between the values of the school and the values of the home, a conflict that is difficult for a child to understand, to navigate and to resolve.

As is well known, the hallmark of a בור ישראל is צניעות. We instruct our students to wear modest clothing with elbows and knees completely covered. We teach our students that a slit in a skirt is like a blinking light that calls out, "Look at me!" Our rabbinical mentors strongly object to fashions that send such messages. Similarly, we impart to our students that tightly fitting clothing is just as unacceptable as short clothing, or even worse. They learn from us about their added responsibility of covering their hair after marriage and

that saying חסד and דברי תורה ברכות is prohibited when facing any threat. One would expect that a student would see these values reinforced in the home rather than ignored or challenged.

And yes, we teach our students that לימוד תורה, the study of Torah, is the most important Mitzvah of all מציאות, that where there is no לימוד תורה Yiddishkeit cannot flourish. If a girl can see that לימוד תורה prevails both in and out of school, the combined message and its impact on her are profound and far-reaching.

We ask you to seriously reflect and to judge if your own family life is consistent with the atmosphere and ideals taught by a "Bais Yaakov School." We hope and pray that your answer is positive, and that these goals are those for which you too are striving - both for the future of Klal Yisroel in general and your daughters in particular.

"because they are our very life." Failing to value and to respect the חנוכה as conveyed to us by our sages, while sending your child to a "Bais Yaakov School" will only cause her great confusion and may ultimately compromise the Torah content of her future life. You are her home - we, her school. Together we can fulfill the ideal of שכינה. If we make our homes into a מקדש, we can create the harmonious life so essential to your daughter's well-being and that of Israel. **FOR HER SAKE, LET US WORK TOGETHER.**

We are signing as a group of (75) concerned Principals (List in formation)

Rabbi Shneur Aisenstark - Bais Yaakov D'Ray Hirschprung - Montreal, Canada Mrs.
 Pearl Altschuler - Bais Yaakov D'Gur High School - Brooklyn, N.Y.
 Rebbetzin Chaya Ausband - Yavne Seminary - Cleveland, Ohio
 Rebbetzin Ruth Assaf - Machon Yaakov L'Banot - Manhattan, New York
 Rabbi Yehoshua Balkany - Bais Yaakov of Brooklyn, N.Y.
 Rabbi Eliezer Ben Porat - Machon Sarah - Ottawa, Canada
 Mrs. Shaindel Blumig - Bais Brocha Stollin Karlin High School - Brooklyn, N.Y.
 Rebbetzin Zahava Braunstein - Bais Yaakov Ateret Torah - Brooklyn, N.Y.
 Rebbetzin Sora Bulka - Soille Bais Yaakov High School - Brooklyn, N.Y.
 Rabbi Yoel Bursztyn - Bais Yaakov - Los Angeles, California
 Mrs. Yael Bussu - Yeshiva Shaarai Torah - Girl's Elementary School - Bklyn, N.Y.
 Mrs. Batsheva Deren - Yeshiva Schools - Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania
 Rabbi Isaac Dwek - Deal Yeshiva - Deal, N.J.
 Rabbi Oscar Ehrenreich - Bais Yaakov of Baro Park - Brooklyn, N.Y.
 Mrs. Esther Elefant - Bais Yaakov of Stanton Pennsylvania
 Rabbi Joseph Elias - Yeshiva Rabbi Shimon R. Hirsch - Washington Heights, N.Y.
 Rabbi Yitzchak Feigenbaum - Tiferes Bais Yaakov - Toronto, Canada
 Rebbetzin Miriam Feldman - Temima High School - Atlanta, Georgia
 Rabbi Chaim Finkel - Bnos Bais Yaakov - Toronto, Canada
 Rebbetzin Brina Fried - Mosdos Ohr Hatorah - High School - Cleveland, Ohio
 Rabbi Raphael Gellay - Bais Yaakov Bnos Chayil - Lakewood, N.J.
 Rabbi Yosef Gelman - Masares Bais Yaakov - Brooklyn, N.Y.
 Rebbetzin Suri Glibber - Bais Yaakov High School - Minneapolis, Minnesota
 Rabbi Mordechai Gewirtz - Yeshiva Elitz Chaim - Girls - Toronto, Canada
 Rabbi Shalom G. Ginzberg - Moolat N.Y. Seminary - Brooklyn, N.Y.
 Rebbetzin Shoshana Glustein - Bais Yaakov Seminary - Montreal, Canada

Mrs. Chanle Gordon - Deal Yeshiva - Bais Yaakov High School - Deal, N.J.
 Mrs. Hena Gottesman - Bais Yaakov D'Chassidel Gur Elem. School - Brooklyn, N.Y.
 Rabbi Shlomo Greenbaum - Yeshiva of Spring Valley/Bais Sarah - Spring Valley, N.Y.
 Rabbi Avraham Greenberg - Bais Yaakov Academy (B.Y.A.) - Brooklyn, N.Y.
 Mrs. Tova Greenblatt - Bais Yaakov High School of St. Louis - Missouri
 Rebbetzin Nechama D. Groner - Bnos Yisroel - Brooklyn, N.Y.
 Rabbi Herschel Grossman - Hanna Sachs - Chicago, Illinois
 Rabbi Hillel Haber - Yeshiva Shaarai Torah - Girl's High School - Brooklyn, N.Y.
 Mrs. Chaya Harnik - Bais Brocha Stollin Karlin Elementary School - Brooklyn, N.Y.
 Rabbi Shmuel Hiller - Bnos Bais Yaakov - Far Rockaway, N.Y.
 Mrs. Ziporah Hollander - Be'er Hagoloh Institute - Brooklyn, N.Y.
 Rebbetzin Rochel Kahn - Bais Yaakov Lower East Side - New York, N.Y.
 Mrs. Sara M. Kahn - Yeshiva Darchei Torah Girls School - Detroit, Michigan
 Rabbi Shlomo C. Kanerek - Bnos Israel/Bais Shaindel - Lakewood, N.J.
 Dr. Ruth Katz - Shulamit High School - Brooklyn, N.Y.
 Rebbetzin Shulamis Keller - Bais Yaakov High School - Chicago, Illinois
 Rabbi Leib Kelman - Bnos Leah Prospect Park Yeshiva - Brooklyn, N.Y.
 Rabbi Nechemia Kibel - R.I.T.S.S. - Cincinnati, Ohio
 Rebbetzin Fruma Kirzner - Beth Gahal - Seminary - Baro Park - Brooklyn, N.Y.
 Rabbi Nachman Kramer - Bais Yaakov Ramapo - New York
 Rabbi Yoel Kramer - Merkaz Teacher Training Program - Brooklyn, N.Y.
 Rabbi Neshanel Lauer - Bais Yaakov High School - Detroit, Michigan
 Rabbi Ephraim Leizerov - Bais Yaakov High School - Miami, Florida
 Rabbi Michael Levi - Bais Yaakov D'Ray M.
 Rabbi Tsvi Levin - Bais Yaakov High School
 Rabbi Joshua Levy - Torah Academy - Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
 Rabbi Baruch Lichtenstein - Torah Academy - Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Mrs. Rena Malinowitz - Deal Yeshiva - Bais Yaakov Elementary School - Deal, N.J.
 Rabbi Menachem M. Mandel - Yeshiva of Brooklyn, N.Y.
 Rabbi Shmuel Mayer - Bais Kaila - Lakewood, N.J.
 Rabbi Michael Meisels - Sara Schenirer Seminary and Associates - Brooklyn, N.Y.
 Mrs. Neche Moerman - Yavne High School - Cleveland, Ohio
 Mrs. Sara Murk - Joan Dach's Bais Yaakov Elementary School - Chicago, Illinois
 Rabbi Moshe Newman - Bais Yaakov of Queens - New York
 Mrs. Sara Rauch - Torah Academy of Milwaukee, Wisconsin
 Mrs. Ety Rosenbaum - Moolat - Baltimore, Maryland
 Rabbi Shimon Rosengarten - Bais Mikra - Monsey, N.Y.
 Rabbi Yonason D. Schick - Mesora High School - Dallas, Texas
 Rabbi Myer Schwab - Bais Yaakov of Denver, Colorado
 Mrs. M. Simon - Bais Yaakov Elementary School - Toronto, Canada
 Rebbetzin Chana Slanger - Machon Bina - Baltimore, Maryland
 Mrs. K. Soratzkin - Mosdos Ohr Hatorah - Elementary School - Cleveland, Ohio
 Rabbi Akiva Stefansky - Bais Yaakov High School - Toronto, Canada
 Rabbi Eliezer Stern - Bnos Leah Prospect Park Yeshiva High School - Brooklyn, N.Y.
 Mrs. Shaindel Teichet - Bais Rivka High School - Brooklyn, N.Y.
 Rabbi Shlomo Teichman - B.Y.A. Seminary - Brooklyn, N.Y.
 Rabbi Moshe Weitman - T.A.G. The Bais Yaakov of Long Island, N.Y.
 Rabbi Yitzchok Young - Machon Academy - Lawrence, N.Y.
 Rebbetzin Sara Ziemba - Bais Yaakov of 18th Ave. - Brooklyn, N.Y.
 Rabbi Yechezkel Zweig - Bais Yaakov High School - Baltimore, Maryland

At our request, Rabbi Joshua Fishman, Executive Vice President of Torah Umesorah, showed this document to the Vaad Roshel HaYeshiva of Torah Umesorah and reports to us that it received the unequivocal endorsement of the Roshel HaYeshiva.

For further info., please call Rabbi S. Aisenstark at Bais Yaakov D'Ray Hirschprung - Montreal 514-739-3614 or 514-739-7730

APPENDIX B

Interview Guide – Adolescents

Background

What is your religious background?
Which specific haredi group are you from?
Have you always been a member of this group?
If no, when did you change? Why?
Family composition
Structure of Day/week
Vacation time/summer plans

Deviance

What would you consider to be deviant behavior for adolescent boys in your community? Consumption of alcohol? Vandalism? Petty theft? Truancy? Drug use? Interaction with females? Loss of religious identity? Others?
Are you aware of deviant behavior among adolescent males in your community?
What kind of deviant behaviors are manifested?
Have you seen a change in the kinds of behaviors being manifested over the past few years? What kinds?
Are the behaviors more or less serious from your perspective?
To what do you attribute these changes?
Has there been a change in the number of adolescents manifesting these behaviors?
Does deviant behavior take place in public or private?
In what deviant behaviors have you participated? How often? For how long?
What led to your behaving in this way?
Do you plan to stop? When?
What might have prevented you from taking up these behaviors?

Peer Group

How does the peer group spend its free time?
How important is your peer group in determining their tendency towards deviant or proper behavior?
Do boys tend to pressure each other to do inappropriate things? How?

Community

How do you do at school? Academically? Socially?

Do you spend time outside the boundaries of the community? If so how do you remain protected from the outside influences?

Do you have/require permission to leave community?

Schools

How much of the deviant behavior takes place at school? Why?

As the boys spend the majority of their day at Yeshiva, what is the role of the school in producing proper young men?

Are schools effective at maintaining effective cultural boundaries? (at keeping negative influences out)

Family

Are there other members in your family who had done deviant things?

Do you consider anyone responsible for deviant behaviors?

What have your parents done in response to your (or other) deviant behavior? What do you think they would do?

APPENDIX C

Interview Guide – Parents

Background

What is your religious background?
Which specific haredi group are you from?
Have you always been a member of this group?
If no, when did you change? Why?
Family composition

Deviance and Role of Parents

What is your role in raising adolescent male children?
How do you protect your adolescent male children from the negative influences of the outside world?

What would you consider to be deviant behavior for your adolescent boys? Consumption of alcohol? Vandalism? Petty theft? Truancy? Drug use? Interaction with females? Loss of religious identity? How? Others?
Are you aware of deviant behavior among your adolescent males children?
What kind of deviant behaviors are manifested?
Does deviant behavior take place in public or private?
Have you seen a change in the kinds of behaviors being manifested over the past few years? What kinds?
More or less serious behaviors from your perspective?
To what do you attribute these changes?
How have you (would you) respond to deviant acts by your children?
How do you prevent them from happening?

Peer Group

How important is the individual's peer group in determining their tendency towards deviant or proper behavior?
Do boys tend to pressure each other to do inappropriate things?
Do you see your sons' peer group influencing him in positive or negative ways? How?

Community

Do children spend time outside the boundaries of the community? If so how do they remain protected from the outside influences?

Schools

As the boys spend the majority of their day at Yeshiva, what is the role of the school in producing proper young men?

Are schools effective at maintaining effective cultural boundaries? (at keeping negative influences out)

APPENDIX D

Interview Guide – Professionals

Background

What kind of work do you do?
What is your educational background?
How long have you been working in this capacity?
How long have you been working with ultra-Orthodox Jews?
How did your involvement with ultra-Orthodox Jews develop?
What kinds of clients do you see?
What is the religious background of the clients that you see?
From which groups did they come?
Approximately how many ultra-Orthodox clients have you seen?
Are they mandatory or voluntary clients?
Did you have difficulty being received by the families/individuals/communities?
How do clients come to you? (referral, mandatory clients,...)
What are the ages and sex of the adolescents with which you work?

Deviance

What kinds of issues do you see, specifically among adolescent males or families with adolescent males?
Do people of different religious backgrounds present different kinds of problems?
Are the adolescent males primary or secondary clients?
How are they affected by the issues you see?
What would you consider to be deviant behavior for adolescent boys in your community? Consumption of alcohol? Vandalism? Petty theft? Truancy? Drug use? Interaction with females? Loss of religious identity? How? Others?
Have you seen a change in the kinds of behaviors being manifested over the past few years? What kinds?
More or less serious behaviors from your perspective?
To what do you attribute these changes?
Does deviant behavior take place in public or private?
Has there been a change in the number of adolescents manifesting these behaviors?

Family

What roles do parents have in supervising their adolescent male children?
What supports are available to them?
Do you see multiple children in the same family showing deviant behavior?

Peer Group

How important is the individual's peer group in determining their tendency towards deviant behavior?

Do boys tend to pressure each other to do inappropriate things?

Community

Do children spend time outside the boundaries of the community? If so how do they remain protected from the outside influences?

Schools

As the boys spend the majority of their day at Yeshiva, what is the role of the school in producing proper young men?

Are schools effective at maintaining effective cultural boundaries? (at keeping negative influences out)

Intervention

Is intervention made with individual or family?

What types of interventions are offered or suggested?

Success at meeting goals

Would greater insulation from mainstream culture be effective at reducing risky behavior?

Recidivism

Do you see recidivism among the populations with which you work?

How often?

Do you feel the rate of recidivism is increasing? Why?

APPENDIX E

Interview Guide – Rabbis

Background

Religious background/training

Family composition

Which specific haredi group(s) do you represent?

What is your specific role within the community?

How long have you been in a leadership position within your community?

What is the lifestyle like for adolescent males within your community? i.e. how do they spend their day?

Deviance and Role of Rabbi

What would you consider to be deviant behavior for adolescent boys in your community? Consumption of alcohol? Vandalism? Petty theft?

Truancy? Drug use? Interaction with females? Loss of religious identity?

How? Rebellion? Secular education? Others?

Are you aware of deviant behavior among adolescent males in your community? What kinds?

What kind of deviant behaviors are manifested?

Have you seen a change in the kinds of behaviors being manifested over the past few years? What kinds?

Are there differences between kinds of deviance now from when you were a child?

Are the behaviors more or less serious from your perspective?

To what do you attribute these changes?

Has there been a change in the number of adolescents manifesting these behaviors?

Does deviant behavior take place in public or private?

What causes deviant behavior among religious adolescents?

What protects other children from the risks threatening the youth in the general population?

Describe the concept of free time as it exists in your community?

How do boys spend their free time? Who supervises?

Does too much free time have the potential to lead to deviant behavior?

Who decides what is and what is not appropriate for the children/community?

What is your role in determining what is appropriate for children?

Are you concerned about male adolescents losing their religious identity?

What causes this?

Family

What roles do parents have in supervising their adolescent male children?
How can parents protect their children from, or limit deviant behavior?
What supports are available to them?
Do you see multiple children in the same family showing deviant behavior?

Peer Group

How important is the individual's peer group in determining their tendency towards deviant or proper behavior?
Do boys tend to pressure each other to do inappropriate things?

Community

Do children spend time outside the boundaries of the community? If so how do they remain protected from the outside influences?

Schools

As the boys spend the majority of their day at Yeshiva, what is the role of the school in producing proper young men?
Are schools effective at maintaining effective cultural boundaries? (at keeping negative influences out)

Intervention

What, if anything, can be done about deviant children?
When should intervention begin?
What do you offer to adolescents who go off "the derech" (lose religious identity) or show other deviant behavior?
Is this effective?
What else can Rabbis offer? Parents? Schools?

APPENDIX F

CONSENT FORM – Adolescents

The Examination of Deviance among Adolescent Ultra-Orthodox Males

A Research Project Being Undertaken By:

Jonathan Levy, M.S.W.
McGill School of Social Work
3506 University Street
Montreal, Quebec, H3A 2A7

I am conducting interviews for a study of deviant behavior among adolescent ultra-Orthodox Jewish males, and how these behaviors are affected by one's surroundings. I hope to interview a variety of individuals from the Montreal Jewish community, as well as various professionals, such as psychologists and social workers. I hope to use these interviews towards my doctoral thesis at McGill University.

This requires me to obtain yours and your parent's consent to interview you. In return for your agreeing to the interview, I must promise to protect your privacy. I may talk about my understanding of your experiences with the professors who are supervising my work, and aspects of your data may be published in the future. Your real name will never be used, and any details of your story will be changed so that other people will not recognize you. I am being supervised by Professor Robin Wright of McGill University and she may be reached at 398-7056 should you wish to discuss any matters with her.

In order to make sure that I understand your information correctly, I will be taping our interview and it will be transcribed verbatim (word for word). These tapes will be kept completely private. While we are talking, if you do not want to answer any questions, you may refuse. You may also stop the interview or stop the tape at any time. You may withdraw your consent to participate at any time.

Should you have any questions, I can be reached at 817-8686.

I understand this consent form and agree to this interview.

If you do not wish our conversation to be taped, please check here: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

If you would like a copy of the interview when I am done so that you can make changes or additions, please include your address so I can mail it to you.

Address if required:

For Parents of children:

I consent to allow my child (children) to be interviewed. I understand that the results of this interview will remain confidential.

If you do not wish the conversation to be taped, please check here: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

APPENDIX G

CONSENT FORM - Parents

The Examination of Deviance among Adolescent Ultra-Orthodox Males

A Research Project Being Undertaken By:

Jonathan Levy, M.S.W.
McGill School of Social Work
3506 University Street
Montreal, Quebec, H3A 2A7

I am conducting interviews for a study of deviant behavior among adolescent ultra-Orthodox Jewish males, and how these behaviors are affected by the different levels of interaction in which these adolescents take part. I hope to interview a variety of individuals from the Montreal Jewish community, as well as various professionals who work with these populations. I hope to use these interviews towards my doctoral thesis at McGill University.

This requires me to obtain your consent to be interviewed. In return for your agreeing to the interview, I must promise to protect your privacy. I may talk about my understanding of your experiences with the professors who are supervising my work, and aspects of your data may be published in the future. Your real name will never be used, and any details of your story will be changed so that other people will not recognize you. I am being supervised by Professor Robin Wright of McGill University and she may be reached at 398-7056 should you wish to discuss any matters with her.

In order to make sure that I understand your information correctly, I will be taping our interview and it will be transcribed verbatim. These tapes will be kept completely private. While we are talking, if you do not want to answer any questions, you may refuse. You may also stop the interview or stop the tape at any time. You may withdraw your consent to participate at any time.

Should you have any questions, I can be reached at 817-8686.

I understand this consent form and agree to this interview.

If you do not wish our conversation to be taped, please check here: _____

I consent to allow my child (children) to be interviewed: _____

Please Note that your child's (children's) consent will also be obtained before their interview, and that the results of this (these) interview(s) will remain confidential.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

If you would like a copy of the interview when I am done so that you can make changes or additions, please include your address so I can mail it to you.

Address if required: _____

APPENDIX H

CONSENT FORM – Rabbis and Professionals

The Examination of Deviance among Adolescent Ultra-Orthodox Males

A Research Project Being Undertaken By:

Jonathan Levy, M.S.W.
McGill School of Social Work
3506 University Street
Montreal, Quebec, H3A 2A7

I am conducting interviews for a study of deviant behavior among adolescent ultra-Orthodox Jewish males, and how these behaviors are affected by the different levels of interaction in which these adolescents take part. I hope to interview a variety of individuals from the Montreal Jewish community, as well as various professionals who work with these populations. I hope to use these interviews towards my doctoral thesis at McGill University.

This requires me to obtain your consent to be interviewed. In return for your agreeing to the interview, I must promise to protect your privacy. I may talk about my understanding of your experiences with the professors who are supervising my work, and aspects of your data may be published in the future. Your real name will never be used, and any details of your story will be changed so that other people will not recognize you. I am being supervised by Professor Robin Wright of McGill University and she may be reached at 398-7056 should you wish to discuss any matters with her.

In order to make sure that I understand your information correctly, I will be taping our interview and it will be transcribed verbatim. These tapes will be kept completely private. While we are talking, if you do not want to answer any questions, you may refuse. You may also stop the interview or stop the tape at any time. You may withdraw your consent to participate at any time.

Should you have any questions, I can be reached at 817-8686.

I understand this consent form and agree to this interview.

If you do not wish our conversation to be taped, please check here: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

If you would like a copy of the interview when I am done so that you can make changes or additions, please include your address so I can mail it to you.

Address if required:

1. Briefly describe the research topic.

The proposed research seeks to explore certain phenomena relating to the perceived negative behaviors of adolescent boys who are members of the ultra-Orthodox Jewish communities of Montreal. Like certain other cultural groups (e.g. Amish and Mennonites), the ultra-Orthodox community is a closed one that is difficult to penetrate and to study. Both insiders and outsiders have tended to protect the reputation of the community by failing to acknowledge certain behaviors. Research on sensitive issues related to this community has thus been extremely limited, and there is a dearth of scientific data related to the behaviors of its adolescent boys. However, in recent years, leaders within the ultra-Orthodox Jewish community have given increased attention given to these children with perceived negative behaviors, in the hopes of helping them cope with their difficulties rather than ignoring or shunning those who failed to conform to community standards, as was done in the past. With the community paying more attention to prevention and intervention, I have the opportunity to explore the perceived negative behaviors among the ultra-Orthodox boys and discover the factors that may be contributing to them and the community's responses to them. Two main areas of risk factors will be explored. Internal factors stemming from within an individual and his immediate environment, and external ones that may penetrate the cultural boundaries established by one's community. The proposed research will seek to explore the kind of deviant behaviors taking place among male ultra-Orthodox Jewish adolescents in the Montreal area.

2. Who will the participants be?

There will be four categories of interviewees.

1. Respected rabbis from within the religious community.
2. Parents of adolescent children.
3. Adolescent male children.
4. Professionals from outside the community who work with the ultra-Orthodox community (e.g. psychologists, social workers, Department of Youth Protection personnel).

3. How will participants be recruited? (Attach copies of all written or spoken material that will be used in recruiting subjects, such as newspaper ads, posted notices, verbal announcements.)

There is a limited number of rabbis who are actively involved with children and who are able to set policy for the community. As a result, each rabbi in such a position will be approached individually and be asked to participate in the study. Those who initially agree will be given a consent form to read and sign acknowledging their agreement to participate.

There is also a limited number of outside professionals who have worked significantly with the ultra-Orthodox community. These persons will be approached individually as well and be asked to participate in the research study.

Parents and adolescents will be approached differently. It has been suggested (Shaffir, 1985) that the best way to attract ultra-Orthodox community members to interview is to spend time at their institutions and see who is willing to talk. My religious background should make this relatively simple to do. Once individuals have expressed a willingness to discuss their religious identity, they will be informed of the nature of the research, be asked to participate, and given a consent form to read and sign. All adolescents asked to participate will be a minimum of 14 years of age.

Should it become evident that there are certain key informants that should be interviewed, they will be phoned or approached as well, and be told that they were recommended for an interview participant as they have special information that may be pertinent. Should they agree, they will be given a consent form as well.

4. How will organizational/community/governmental permission be obtained (if applicable)?

This does not seem applicable to my research. However, two prominent rabbis are aware of my research intentions and have stated their willingness to support it. Their support should facilitate the recruitment of other community members.

5. How will data be collected, i.e., what will the participants be asked to do?

The participants will be interviewed, and the conversations will be recorded if the participant consents. Participants will be given the choice of selecting a location for the interview themselves, or private office space can be used if the participant agrees. Special efforts will be made to accommodate women, who may not be willing to meet alone with a man. I am willing to meet with them in a public setting such as an office or synagogue, to meet with a group of women, or offer to have another woman in the room at the same time. Such a woman could be an assistant to me, versed in the importance of confidentiality, but not involved in the actual research, or someone brought along by the participant. Questions will revolve around the interviewees' perception of deviance and deviant behavior in their community, or their work with deviant adolescents (in the case of the outside professionals). Other questions will examine the participant's perception of the effect of the different levels of interaction (family, peers, school, community) on deviance.

6. Does the study pose any risks to participants? If so, please state why these are necessary and explain how you plan to deal with them.

There are no anticipated risks to the participants. All interviews will take place in private so that confidentiality can be maintained.

7. Does this study involve deception? If so, please state why this is necessary and explain how you plan to deal with potential negative effects (e.g., by post-experimental debriefing).

No. All participants will be aware of the research and will participate willingly.

8. How will you document informed consent to participate in the study? (Attach written informed consent form. If written consent is not possible, how will you document verbal consent? If it is not possible to obtain informed consent, explain why this is the case.)

Participants will be given a consent form that they will sign stating their agreement to participate in the study.

9. How will participants be informed of their right to withdraw at any time?

The participants have the right to withdraw at anytime and this will be stipulated in the consent form and reviewed with the participant before each interview.

10. How will subject/data anonymity and confidentiality be maintained?

In order to ensure anonymity, I will transcribe the taped interviews personally, and will assign a pseudonym to each participant. In addition, care will be taken to ensure that any identifying material will be omitted from the transcripts. Recordings and transcripts will be kept until the conclusion of the research project and then destroyed. If participants refuse to be taped, they will still be questioned and I will rely on my notes for data.

11. Please comment on any other potential ethical concerns that may arise in the course of the research. If the proposed research involves testing subjects in situations where particular problems may arise, please explain how researchers will be trained to handle matters in a sensitive and professional way.

N/A

Reference

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GLOSSARY OF HEBREW AND YIDDISH TERMS

In the body of my paper two forms of many Hebrew words occur. The respondents regularly used Ashkenazi Hebrew, but most scholars prefer Sepharadi Hebrew. The spellings below reflect the different ways in which these terms appear. Words in Ashkenazi Hebrew regularly appear in Yiddish as well. Terms designated below as Yiddish are not originally Hebrew.

Aveiros (Heb.): Sins.

Besht (Heb.): Acronym for Rabbi Israel ben Eliezer (1700-1760) otherwise as the *Baal Shem Tov*, the founder of the Hasidic movement.

Baal Teshuvah (Heb.): A repentant sinner; generally refers to someone who chooses to begin practicing – or returns to practicing – an Orthodox way of life.

Bein Hazemanim (Heb.): Literally “between the times”; refers to periods around the holidays of Passover and Rosh Hashanah when adolescents are off from school.

Beis Din (Heb.): A rabbinical court that settles differences among Jews who bring their disputes to it. A *beis din* is normally composed of three rabbis.

Beis Medrash (Heb.): A house of study that often doubles as a place of prayer.

Bochur (pl. *bochurim*) (Heb.): Unmarried boys.

Boruch Hashem (Heb.): Literally “Blessed is God.” An expression used to answer the question “How are you?” The Talmud stipulates “when one person asks another how he is, he should mention God’s name” (Berachot 54a).

Chabad (Heb.): Acronym of *chochmah* (wisdom), *binah* (understanding), and *da’at* (knowledge), the slogan of the Lubavitch Hasidic movement and often used as a surrogate.

Daven (Yid.): Pray

Dayyan (Heb.): Judge in a rabbinical court.

Derech (Heb.): Literally “path” but frequently used to describe a religious lifestyle. A boy “off the *derech*” is someone straying from a religious way of life.

Dveikut: (Heb.): Closeness (to God).

Gemara (Heb.): The portion of the Talmud that discusses the Mishnah.

Glatt Kosher (Heb.): Literally "*Glatt*" means "smooth" and applies to the lungs of an animal. Lungs that contain no adhesions are smooth and therefore kosher without question. The term *Glatt Kosher* has thus come to mean the highest standard of *kashrut*.

Goyim (Heb.): Non-Jews.

Halachah (Heb.): Jewish religious law.

Haredim (Heb.): Ultra-Orthodox Jews. *Hasidim* and *Misnagdim* combined.

Hashkafah (Heb.): Religious orientation.

Hasid (pl. *Hasidim*) (Heb.): Literally, "pious one." One of a group of Jews following the movement begun by the *Baal Shem Tov* (1700-1760) who believed one could serve God through prayer and rejoicing and not only through rigorous learning and asceticism.

Hechsher (Heb.): Seal of approval. The term originally applied to the certification of kosher food but has been generalized to include any kind of rabbinic approval.

Kabbalah (Heb.): Jewish mysticism.

Kappatah (Yid.): Black robe worn by Hasidic men over the age of 13.

Kashrut (Heb.): The system of rabbinic law that deals with permitted and prohibited foods.

Kollel (Heb.): Yeshiva for married men.

Kosher (Heb.): Literally "fitting." Originally applied to food that is ritually permissible to eat, the term is often used to describe any permissible object or behavior.

Litvish (Yid.): Lithuanian. Usually used as a synonym for *misnagdim*.

Maggid Shiur (Heb.): Rabbi who gives a formal class in yeshiva.

Mashgiach (Heb.): Literally "overseer" and refers to someone who oversees the production of kosher food.

Maskilim (Heb.): Enlightened Jews. Originally established as a formal group in the 18th century, some contemporary Orthodox Jews who are both secularly educated and halachically observant are identified as *maskilim*.

Melamdim (Heb.): Teachers.

Mezzuzah (Heb.): Small box containing a piece of parchment (also called *mezzuzah*) on which two passages from the Torah are written. The box is affixed to the doorjamb of every room in a Jewish home on the right side as you enter.

Mikveh (Heb.): Ritual bath.

Mincha: (Heb.): The afternoon service. One of three daily prayer services performed by Orthodox males.

Mishnah (Heb.): Set of laws codified by Rabbi Judah the Prince around the year 200 C.E.; the base text underlying the Babylonian Talmud, the most important text in all haredi educational institutions.

Misnagdim: (Heb.): Opponents of the Hasidim.

Mitzvot (Heb.): Commandments, good deeds.

Mussar (Heb.): Ethical literature based on rabbinic sources; exhortations to proper thought and behavior.

Oral Law (Eng.): Law believed by haredim to have been given to Moses at Sinai and transmitted verbally from generation to generation until the time of the Mishnah at which time it was written down.

Payyes (Heb.): Side curls (earlocks) worn by most haredi males.

Pesach (Heb.): The holiday of Passover which falls in March or April.

Rebbe (Heb.): Leader of a Hasidic court, rabbi, or teacher, depending on the context.

Ribono Shel Olam (Heb.): Literally "Master of the Universe," meaning God.

Rosh Hashanah. (Heb.): The Jewish New Year, which falls sometime in September.

Rosh Yeshiva (*Roshei yeshiva* plural) (Heb.): Head of the yeshiva. A learned and highly respected rabbi.

Shabbos (Heb.): The Sabbath, which commences Friday at sundown and ends Saturday after dark.

Shalom Bayis (Heb.): Literally "peaceful home" and refers to marital harmony.

Sheitl (Yid.): Wig.

Shidduch (Heb.): In Hebrew the word means "a match," a spouse acquired through an arranged marriage. In Yiddish, it refers to the spouse as well.

Shul (Yid.): Synagogue.

Siyyum mishnayos (Heb.): Literally "completion of the Mishnah"; refers to a celebration commemorating the completion of the study of Mishnah.

Streimel (Yid.): Fur hat worn by married Hasidic men on the Sabbath, holidays and other important occasions.

Tallis Koton (Heb.): Four cornered garment worn by Orthodox and haredi men and boys. Also known as *tzitzis*, which technically refer to the fringes on the four corners of the garment, not the garment itself.

Talmud (Heb.): The oral law, including the Mishnah and the Gemara.

Tefillin (Heb.): Phylacteries; leather cases that are strapped to the arm and head by Orthodox men over the age of 13 during morning prayers. Each contains four Biblical passages.

Tzitzis (Heb.): See *Tallis Koton*.

Written Law (Eng.): The Hebrew Bible.

Yetzer hara (Heb.): Evil inclination.

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