

Our Children's Circle

My Dear Little Cousins,

There is an ancient Jewish saying: "This is the way to study the Torah: Eat bread and salt, drink water by measure, sleep on the earth and live a life of care."

That is how Elijah Gaon, the great rabbi of Vilna, used to study the Torah, the Talmud and other Jewish books. From the time he was a very little boy he loved to study; as he grew older he became so interested in his books that he took very little to eat or drink, and when he did sit down to his meals he ate only the simplest food. He may have slept in a comfortable bed instead of on the earth, but it is certain that he did not go to bed early or sleep late, for he did not want to steal a single moment from his studies.

One day a messenger came to Rabbi Chayim, one of the Gaon's favourite pupils, and asked him to come to his teacher's house at once. When he reached Elijah Gaon's house he found the rabbi in bed.

"Master," he cried, "are you ill?"

"No, my son," answered Elijah Gaon sadly, "I am not ill in body, but I am sick with care." And he turned his face to the wall.

"He has not eaten for three days," cried the rabbi's wife, who stood by the bed. "And he has hardly slept at all. Soon he will be really sick unless you coax him to take better care of himself."

"Tell me what troubles you, master, and I will do my best to help you," whispered the student, bending over the pillow.

"There are certain passages I cannot understand in the Talmud," answered the wise rabbi. "I have puzzled over them until I am really sick. But come, let us study together, for 'two heads are better than one,' and maybe we shall be able to work out what puzzles me."

The two men bent their heads over the heavy book. Hours passed; the sun began to set. The rabbi's wife, who had swept and cleaned the house until it seemed to shine in honour of the "Sabbath Bride," and had blessed the Sabbath lights, went to the window to wait until she saw three stars in the sky; that would mean the beginning of Sabbath Eve. But would her husband and their guest be ready for the Sabbath meal? But she did not dare disturb them.

It grew too dark for the men to read. Suddenly Elijah Gaon gave a great cry of joy and sprang out of bed. He almost wept for joy; for at last he and his pupil had worked out the meaning of the hard passage in the Talmud.

The rabbi's wife helped him dress in his Sabbath garments. Soon they were all seated round the family table, rejoicing in the coming of the Sabbath Bride. The face of Elijah Gaon shone with happiness; he had often known the "care of the Torah"; now he knew the joy which comes to one who studies the holy book with all his heart.

Your loving,

COUSIN HELEN.

Great Synagogue Youth Circle.

The Youth Circle which it is hoped will act as the continuation of the Great Synagogue Children's Services has been started under the supervision of Rev. S. Kassel.

The objects of the Circle will be to afford the Youth an opportunity for spiritual, social and sporting activities. The inaugural meeting which will take the form of a Mincha Service conducted by members of the Circle and followed by a reception will be held in the Great Synagogue on Sabbath, the 6th March. Rabbi Abrahams will deliver an address during the course of the Mincha Service.

The Circle will be conducted by the members themselves who have elected their own committee under the chairmanship of Solly Kessler. All those desirous of joining the Circle should communicate with the Secretaries, Bennie Kassel or Cecilia Gammerman, c/o the Great Synagogue, 84 Hatfield Street, Cape Town.

Worcester Study Circle

A meeting of the Worcester Study Circle Group was held on Thursday, 11th February, at the residence of Mr. and Mrs. Kessel. Mr. M. Rabinowitz was in the chair.

The Chairman welcomed the visitors and new members.

Mr. Wolpe gave the news review, which provoked quite an animated discussion.

Mr. Goodman gave an address on "Psychology for Everybody." Members put questions to Mr. Goodman and also elaborated on some of the points he had mentioned.

The Chairman thanked the speakers and the host and hostess.

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Mr. Arthur Miller presided, in the absence of the Chairman, Mr. J. Melman, who has left on Active Service. The Chairman extended a welcome to the visitors and ex-members present.

The News Service was given by Mr. M. Newman. Mr. Sam Lewis rendered a song accompanied by Mr. Louis Lewis on the piano.

Ten questions were asked by Mr. Eric Markus. Miss Flax, a visitor, rendered a few Hebrew songs, which was followed by a paper read by Mr. Louis Lewis entitled "Farewell to Uganda."

Before the general elections took place, Mr. Harry Miller explained the precarious position of the Society as he saw it, and appealed for a strong committee and more interest in the Society than was shown until now.

The resulting Committee are: Chairman, Mr. H. Miller; Vice-Chairman, Mr. M. Newman; Secretary, Miss S. Gottlieb; Treasurer, Mr. G. Batzofin; Additional member, Miss P. Markus.

A change in the existing Constitution was made by reducing the number of Committee members from seven to five.

The elected Chairman has, however, been suddenly appointed to a position at Saldanha Bay and left on February 15th. The Vice-Chairman, Mr. M. Newman, became Chairman.

Zionist Youth Activities.

An Oneg Shabbat arranged by the Cape Zionist Youth Executive was held at the Zionist Hall on Friday evening, 19th inst. The speaker was Mr. D. Dunsky, of the Youth Council, who gave an interesting analysis of present Zionist needs stressing the necessity for convincing those who stood without Zionist ranks. There was animated singing of Hebrew songs during the evening and Mr. Herzl Konwiser rendered solos of Hebrew songs which were greatly appreciated.

The Executive was represented on Sunday evening, 21st inst., at the Annual General Meeting of the Muizenberg Young Israel Society by Mr. A. Walt, and at a meeting of the Cape Town Zionist Youth Society by Mr. W. Sebba, who discussed their future programme with them.

Societies are reminded that Shekel Drifts falls on Sunday, March 21st, and that they are required to co-operate with Senior Societies in their respective areas in providing canvassers.

A meeting of the G.O.Z.S. was held at the residence of Rita Cohen on Saturday, 13th inst. A hot debate ensued, which included many controversial subjects. The introductory speeches were enthusiastically attacked and led to heated arguments. After a tea interval the debates adjourned until each member contributed her share. The singing of Hebrew songs then commenced. A vote of thanks was given to Mr. Alec Walt for attending the meeting as representative of the Executive.

The last meeting of the Young Poale Zion proved an extremely interesting one. There was a record attendance and the members showed a keen and lively interest in Miss Phyllis Rabkin's lecture on the existing social system in Palestine. She explained fully the aims and organisation of the Histadruth and very vividly sketched kibbutz life there. The next meeting, on Friday evening 26th, will afford interesting addresses on Zionism and Socialism by our own Chaverim. All member and friends are promised a very interesting evening.

A general meeting of the Worcester Junior Zionist Society was held in the Zionist Hall on Saturday, 13th February. The attendance was good. The Chairman welcomed all the members present, and a General Quiz followed in which all participated. Next followed a Mock Trial. The concluding two items were a watermelon feast and sing-song.

The Stellenbosch Junior Zionist Group held an Oneg Shabbat on Friday, February 19th, in the Minor Talmud Torah Hall. After welcoming the members Miss Segall proposed Miss Zea Lurie as Chairlady for the evening. A debate on the subject "Britain had failed to carry out her obligations to Jewry as set out under the Balfour Declaration" followed. Mr. I. Sherman moved the motion and Miss N. Segall opposed. The subject was keenly debated and after much heated discussion the motion was won by a majority of one vote. Refreshments were then served and a very enjoyable meeting was concluded with the singing of Hatkivah.

Oudtshoorn Young Israel Society.

The first meeting of the year was held at the Hebrew School Hall on Sunday night, February 7th.

(Continued in Second Column).