

OBITUARY

Rabbi Jacob Chinitz, who passed away recently, was a member of the Editorial Board of the *Jewish Bible Quarterly* and former Vice-Chairman of the Jewish Bible Association. Few people were as prolific as was Jacob Chinitz. Born in 1921 in a small town near Minsk, Belorussia, he came to the USA when he was three years old. The articles that he wrote for numerous English-language Jewish publications included 27 in our *JBQ*; he also authored several books: *In My Opinion*; *My God File*; *Poets Poem*; and *Divrei Torah al Shabbat Ve-Haggim*. Prior to coming on *aliyah* in 1979, he had served for over 50 years as spiritual leader of several Conservative congregations in the US and Canada. He continued to deliver sermons and lectures at various forums when not in the pulpit. Over the past 25 years or more he gave an interesting and novel weekly *devar Torah* for the morning *minyana'irs* at Jerusalem's Moreshet Yisrael Congregation. He always found some support for his views in rabbinic sources, using his vast knowledge of talmudic and mid-rashic literature. This he had gained from his father, his education at Yeshiva Torah Vodaath in Brooklyn and his higher Jewish education at Yeshiva University, where he was a student of Rabbi J.B. Soloveitchik, who granted him *semikhah* (rabbinical ordination). He was always ready to share his knowledge with anyone seeking it, in many informal ways.

Rabbi Chinitz's interests were not limited to talmudic and biblical subjects, but included even *niggunim* (Jewish traditional melodies). He freely expressed his opinion on topical issues in letters to the editor which appeared in many Jewish newspapers and periodicals, especially *The Jerusalem Post*. His most controversial views were probably his argument that all Jews should settle in Israel, and his belief that certain time-honored Jewish practices which he considered unethical or even immoral should be amended, through the use of a rabbinic formula known as the *takkanah*, in the absence of any other halakhic solution. These virtues, combined with his love for *Am Yisrael* and *Eretz Yisrael*, will never be forgotten by those who were privileged to be his friends, students and congregants. May the memory of Rabbi Ya'akov Chinitz remain a source of blessing and inspiration for all of us who knew and loved him.

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