

# G E S H E R

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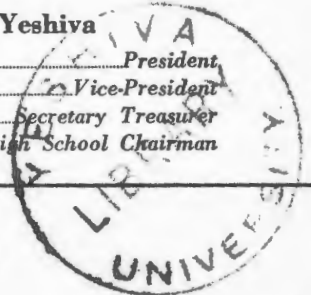
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## FOREWORD

Rebecca demanded from Jacob that he wrest the blessings from his father. . . . Why was she so insistent that Jacob obtain the blessings under any circumstances? Evidently Rebecca knew that if Esau were to be the only "יודע ציד איש שדה," the only savant, technician, landowner, speaker, politician, the only one to rule over the temporal world, there would be no future for Jacob. . . .

"לך נא אל הצאן," my son, learn how to go out into the fields, learn how to struggle for "טל השמים ומשמני הארץ." Do not allow Esau to rule over everything! Teach yourself how to hold a gemarah, to daven mincha, to keep the laws of the Sabbath and kashruth, and to teach your children Torah not only in the private tents of Shem and Eber but also in the far away land of Haran, in the field, where with one hand you will hold a gemarah and in the other you will hold a plow. . . . Jacob, the large field need not be a place of impurity. Judaism believes that the field . . . can become a flower-garden, if only Esau—the agnostic, the vulgar materialist, the cynical non-believer—will not remain in sole control. Jacob, you can bring divinity into the field, you have the power to sanctify the field. . . .

To the contrary, Esau finds no spiritual rest in the field; he is tired and disillusioned. On the one hand Esau is a victor, a conqueror of worlds, he is arrogant and full of pride. . . . On the other . . . he is tired, spiritually bankrupt and torn away from his metaphysical, existential roots. He wanders about in a world of emptiness. Isaac, who was afraid lest Jacob leave his tent and become enmeshed in the field, ultimately agrees with Rebecca's position that Jacob is not merely capable of dominating the field . . . but through him it will achieve . . . the blessing of G-d. Jacob's field will reflect the light of the divine Presence. . . . Only Jacob has the ability to transform the brutal, mechanical field into a garden of G-d, into a place of spiritual joy and tranquility.

Certainly it is easier to remain in the tents and never to depart the field. Certainly it is less difficult to grasp the gemarah with both hands. But when the historical circumstance forces the Jew to involve himself also with the field and to hold onto a gemarah along with the modern weapons of life's struggles, he must be ready and able to fulfill his mission. In short, Jacob must sanctify the field.

—from a speech by Rabbi J. B. Soloveitchik for the Mizrahi Convention, 1962  
(translated from the Yiddish by Steven Riskin)

# SYNTHESIS

as discussed by

Dr. Samuel Belkin

Perhaps now the significance of Yeshiva College may become more apparent. The Yeshiva College was established, not for the sake of adding another college to the many excellent institutions of higher learning already in existence in this blessed land. Yeshiva College has endeavored to blaze a new trail of its own in conformity with the great American democratic traditions of education and in harmony with the spiritual heritage of Israel. It is a true college of liberal arts and science. It is not our intention to make science the handmaiden of religion nor religion the handmaiden of science. We do not believe in a scientific religion nor in a pseudo-science. We prefer to look upon science and religion as separate domains which need not be in serious conflict and therefore need no reconciliation. If we seek the blending of science and religion and the integration of secular knowledge with sacred wisdom, then it is not in the subject matter represented by these fields, but rather within the personality of the individual that we hope to achieve the synthesis.

The Yeshiva is the living incarnation of divine wisdom of the Torah which sends out rays of spiritual and moral light to thousands of Jewish souls. The Yeshiva endeavors to perpetuate the Jewish spiritual philosophy of education. It

\* Excerpts from his Inaugural Address delivered on May 23, 1944.

seeks to implant in its students a spiritual and moral concept of life based upon the Torah, the prophets, and the endless traditions of Israel. The Yeshiva considers its primary function to be the training of spiritually minded men into a collective force for the perpetuation of the spiritual and moral essence of historic Judaism and for the benefit of our great American democracy. The college of the Yeshiva, like any other American college, endeavors to acquaint its student body with the mysteries of the universe, with the researches and discoveries of the human intellect, with the theories and speculations of the human mind.

We shall always look upon the Yeshiva College with its curriculum of liberal arts and sciences as indispensable for the intellectual development of our student body. We shall consider, however, the Yeshiva with its spiritual and moral teachings as the end, for a moral and spiritual way of life must be the aim and striving of every society. It is our intention to give to secular education a higher purpose and make the Yeshiva and Yeshiva College a living symbol of intellectual progress and moral activity. We believe that by reintegrating our lives with the ideals of the Torah and with our search after G-d's knowledge we may succeed in establishing a medium of unification for human knowledge.

# Synthesis in the College

by DR. ISAAC BACON

Dean, Yeshiva College

Yeshiva College constitutes the bedrock of Yeshiva University. To understand more fully Yeshiva College and its prospect for the future and to put the College into sharper relief, it may be helpful to list some of the major criticisms being leveled against American higher education in general.

Many claim that undergraduate colleges are placing too much stress on professional preparation, thereby helping to create what Ortega y-Gasset calls the most specialized barbarians who know the finest nuances of their specialty but are illiterates in every other respect. Few liberal arts and science colleges, under the pressure of our utilitarian-oriented society, have been able to resist the trend of becoming, through their curricula, semi- or almost fully professional and vocational schools. In an ever-widening circle including people from various walks of life, it is deeply deplored that our schools neglect to impart to students a sense of values and thus in no small degree are responsible for the breakdown of the moral fiber of our society. Undoubtedly, such neglect is a direct result of a loss of faith in our world, our destiny, our religion. But the area of criticism that perhaps has caused the most turbulent discussions and disagree-

ments lies in the endeavors of the schools to satisfy the demands of society rather than to meet the needs of the individual.

By rejecting the Jeffersonian educational philosophy, committed to intellectual excellence and superiority, and by accepting the Jacksonian philosophy, committed to broadening educational opportunity for all, the American conscience has become premeated with the erroneous conception that it is undemocratic to place emphasis on anything which all the people cannot share or to accord special treatment to any group or individual. The prevalence of such an attitude has not facilitated the establishment of a system which would reconcile education for the individual with education for the great number. No wonder that, by and large, curricula are tailored to fit the average student at the expense and to the detriment of the gifted and superior student, with little regard for the below-average student, and with disregard for the nonconformist.

It is sad to comment that many educators who vehemently espouse the very criticisms cited above continue in practice to belie their professed principles and beliefs. Few will disagree that ideally a liberal arts and science college should keep a happy balance between equipping the student for a professional career and enriching him culturally and intellectually as an individual, and

none will deny the noble desirability of providing every opportunity for a true education. Yet we find a large number of faculty members constantly involved in an effort to increase the requirements for a major in their particular area of study. Surely, they must be fully aware that their action limits opportunities for a well-rounded education, and they must be equally aware that if the student does not receive such an education in his undergraduate years he may never again have the opportunity to do so. They can hardly be amused to hear the college graduate typified as a well-rounded man with the shortest possible radius.

Yeshiva College has basically remained unscathed by the trends and cross currents in American education which are presently under fire. This is not surprising. One contributing factor to this situation is that Yeshiva has always recognized the aristocracy of the intellect and has always given full scope to superior talent. From its inception, Yeshiva has never compromised the Jeffersonian ideal of educational democracy. This is not to say that the founders of Yeshiva needed to draw on Jefferson's educational philosophy, but rather that Jeffersonian educational philosophy came close to that of our sages. A more important contributing factor is our dual program, which has proven that the potentialities and capabilities of the American undergraduate student, spoon fed and pampered in most colleges, can go beyond the limitation of the some 17 credits he may earn in a semester. This dual program of תורה ומדע requires the

student to work to his highest potential, it duly exposes him to the teaching of values, and it challenges him to come to grips with the conflicts between religion and science. Through his constant attempts to resolve these conflicts for himself, through acquiring the habit of working to his highest potential, through the transfer to his secular studies of the attitudes gained in learning Torah, the Yeshiva College student is well on his way to becoming a truly educated man.

I am convinced of the educational soundness of our dual program of תורה ומדע. To the secularist who questions the place of Torah learning as part of a program in a liberal education, one may say, assuming as one must from the very nature of his question, that he is foreign to the idea of תורה לשמה—one may indeed confidently say, that Isaiah and Jeremiah have as much to say to our humanity today as להבדיל a Shakespeare or a Goethe. And to the confused young man who misguidedly transfers to the לימודי קודש—the pragmatic and utilitarian concepts to which he has been exposed—thus finding himself incapable of reaching the מדרגה of תורה לשמה—to this young man who asks such questions as “what do I gain or what good will it do my career if I study תורה אתה הפרה,” it may be pointed out that the traditional learning of Talmud represents an approach and method in liberal training in its purest form. If, as is indisputable, the essence of a liberal education lies in the teaching of any subject in such a manner as to expose the workings of the human mind in arriving at decisions and

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judgments, and to attempt to bare the elements of logic, imagination, historical perspective, or social and moral meaning in the subject, then the treatment of, say, ביצה שנוולדה בני"ט is in the truest liberal tradition. The Talmud does not simply hand down a decision but gives us the opinions of both Beis Hillel and Beis Shammai and then goes on for several pages into a thorough and fascinating discourse in the whys and wherefores of the divergent opinions.

Fully cognizant of the strength of the principles upon which Yeshiva College was established, we must continually plan for the growth and development of the College. Presently, under the leadership of our President, we are concentrating our efforts on a re-evaluation of the College. Uppermost on our agenda is the curriculum. From the time Yeshiva College first opened its doors with an enrollment of 30 young men and offered 7 majors, to this day when the enrollment has grown to about 635 and we offer 20 majors, the curriculum has not undergone substantial change. It is extremely urgent that we revise our curriculum and bring to bear upon it all the imaginative foresightedness at our command. Otherwise it will become increasingly difficult — in this rapidly changing world — to continue to stimulate our students to a life-long interest in the life of the mind, implant in them a deep

appreciation of the significance of our rich heritage, and subject them to an endless process of discovery, an endless voyage of exploration, all of which constitute the primary function of a college education.

Closely allied with the need for a re-evaluation of our curriculum is a re-examination of the admission process. As we update and upgrade our course of instruction and as we continue to tighten our standards, it will be necessary to become even more careful in our selection of incoming students, or rather, more severe in the weeding-out of those who do not measure up to our standards.

In all the changes that may be contemplated, we must remain firm on the principle of תורה ומדע for only within the framework of that principle can Yeshiva College continue to make a significant contribution to the Jewish community in particular and society in general. However, if the Torah as the essential part of the philosophy of תורה ומדע is to have its full impact, then we must diligently labor at the task lest the gravitational pull of our traditional commitment become a retarding block rather than a continuing and continuously revitalizing force of spiritual and intellectual inspiration within our halakhi framework. Indeed, this is but translating into modern terminology the beautiful old metaphor of עץ חיים.

## A Consideration of SYNTHESIS from a Torah Point of View

by Rabbi Aaron Lichtenstein

Few matters concern us—both disturb and affect us—more than the relation of our religious and secular studies. As students committed to Torah and its study and yet deeply engaged in the pursuit of a general education, we feel—and should feel—a strong need for understanding their respective positions in our lives. The need is related to both our outlook and experience. Philosophically, we recognize the necessity of determining how these varied aspects of our pluralistic culture coalesce within our overall *weltanschauung*. Practically, we are often confronted with the need for reconciling the demands which these aspects make upon both our loyalties and our energies. The formulation of a Torah attitude towards this question thus becomes of paramount importance.

### Torah as a Way of Life

How is such an attitude to be formulated? I think it must rest on three fundamental premises. The first must be a clear and unwavering recognition of the absolute primacy of Torah as a way of life. This we

posit as the supreme value—in a sense, as the *only* value. Fulfilling our spiritual destinies, furthering—in ourselves and in others—the development of Torah, strengthening and deepening our consciousness and experience of G-d, stimulating our love, fear, and knowledge of Him—this is the alpha and omega, our first, last, ever-present goal. Religion demands axiological monopoly; *yichud hashem* means simply that religion alone has absolute and comprehensive value. Everything else—no matter how socially or intellectually desirable—has only relative and secondary importance. Its worth is derived solely from the extent to which it contributes, however remotely, to the fulfillment of the divine will. On this point there can be no compromise and should be no misunderstanding. A man's religion means everything or it means nothing.

### Torah Study

Our second premise is that the achievement of *chayei Torah*, a Torah life, is dependent on *talmud Torah*, Torah study. *Yahaduth* has always held that the highest development of the Jew's spiritual personality is impossible without the fullest exertion of his intellectual faculties—*lo am-haaretz chasid*.

This article is reprinted from the April 27, 1961 issue of the *Commentator*, official undergraduate newspaper of Yeshiva College.



And this is true for many reasons.

Most obviously, study is a necessary prerequisite to proper religious observance. The fulfillment of moral and ritual norms is hardly possible without clear and accurate knowledge of both their general nature and particular details. But—as was pointed out by the *Beth Halevi*, *talmud Torah* is not merely a preliminary to observance. It is itself a *mitzvah*—indeed, one of the most basic. Torah study—ideally conceived, as both an intellectual exercise and a religious experience—has been imposed by the Halacha as a universal daily obligation. Insisting that G-d must be served with the head as well as with hands and heart, *yahaduth* has seen intellection as an integral aspect of the religious life of every individual. It has never seen religious study as the private preserve of an ecclesiastical hierarchy or of a privileged intellectual elite. On the contrary, it has posited *talmud Torah* as the duty and destiny of all. It has realized that great success in the exercise of reason as part of man's search for G-d cannot come to all—or to many—but it has considered this no reason for abandoning the attempt. It is precisely for the effort, the *process* of the *recherche*, that the Halacha has pressed most insistently. Of *y'diath hatorah*, the knowledge of Torah, *Chazal* had relatively little to say; but of *talmud Torah* they can never say enough.

The significance of Torah study *per se* is twofold. First, it gives the Jew an insight—as direct and as profound as man is privileged to attain—into the revealed will of his Creator. It affords us an op-

portunity to get (*salve reverentia*) a first-hand knowledge of the divine will, to deepen and broaden our minute understanding of G-d's infinite reason. In its essence, the Torah—particularly the Halacha—constitutes an immanent expression of G-d's transcendent rational will. Through the study of its texts, the analyses of its principles, or the development of its ideas, we are able to approach haltingly that unattainable goal towards which Moshe Rabbenu strove so desperately—“*hodian na eth drachecha*,” “let me know thy way.”

### Insight into Divine Wisdom

Secondly, Torah study—where properly pursued—affects our total spiritual personality. Partly because it does afford us a better insight into inscrutable divine wisdom, and partly because it engages the mind—and with it the whole man—in pursuit of religious knowledge, it transmutes our innermost being. The knowledge we can acquire of G-d's will increases our consciousness—and subconsciousness—of Him; the very act of weighing His words or of analyzing His law draws us imperceptibly nearer to Him and to them. *Shemaor shebd machziron Lemutav*. It matters not what segment of Torah we study. Provided that we approach it with an awareness of its true character, *Baba Mezia* will do as well as *Brachot* and *Chalot* will affect us no less than *Avot*. As both the *Baal Hatania* and Rav Chaim Voloziner—respective pillars of *Chassiduth* and *Mithnagduth*—agreed, within the proper context, an analysis of the most technical

minutiae of *meگو lehotzi* or *chometz nukshah* is, at bottom, spiritually uplifting. Torah study leaves an indelible imprint upon our total personality and, in the process, transforms it. Of course, it can only effect this spiritual renovation if we approach it with the proper attitude. If the fundamental awareness of the divine character of Torah is lacking, its study can have little force. Indeed, if negatively approached, it may even have a pernicious effect—*lo zachah lilmodah lishmah ulekaima*—Rashi, *naaseth lo sam mitha*. But given this basic acknowledgment, Torah study becomes the prime agent in effecting a gradual spiritual regeneration. Paradoxically, through a constant reciprocal process, it both sustains piety and is sustained by it. Keener study leads to greater piety and more fervent devotion leads to profounder knowledge. The dialectical interplay of *talmud Torah* and *yirath shomayim* is the heart of Torah life.

### General Studies

If our first two premises are an insistence upon the primacy of Torah, and the awareness of the overriding importance of its study, our third is the recognition of the great—albeit ancillary—value of a broad spectrum of general studies. Their practical value is of course obvious. They help provide both professional or vocational training and a general orientation towards the innumerable pragmatic exigencies of human life. These are in themselves, matters of little moment; but I am presently rather concerned with general studies' di-

rectly spiritual significance. To begin on a negative note, secular knowledge is invaluable for the understanding of the environment in which we all, willy-nilly, find ourselves. No matter where we live, we are in the midst of a society which is generally indifferent if not hostile to religious values, one in which advancing the development of Torah entails an almost perpetual struggle. “Paganism,” said Eliot, “has all the best advertising space.” And “paganism” (to adopt a remark once made about the “genteel tradition”) is best defeated “in the classical way, by understanding it.” We cannot combat worldliness until we know what it stands for; we cannot refute the secularist unless we have mastered his arguments. Furthermore, if we wish not merely to react to our environment, but to act upon it, we must be thoroughly familiar with its mores and its values. If *hnei Torah* are to exert some positive religious influence upon modern society, they must clearly maintain some contact with it. To this end, secular study is virtually indispensable.

We may go even further. In our circumstances certainly, general knowledge is necessary not only for influencing others; it also helps us to preserve our own faith. The *Apikoros*, whom, according to the *Mishnah*, we should be able to answer, need not be a free-thinker nor idolator. There is an *Apikoros* within, a serpent potentially lurking within the finest of Edens, and we must be ready to reply to *his* proffer of the bittersweet apple. But we must first read a treatise on serpentine psychology.

## Aids to Torah Study

Secular knowledge is not merely a tactical weapon, however. It possesses considerable intrinsic merit. We may consider it under two headings. First, secular studies are often invaluable as a direct accessory to *talmud Torah* proper. Consider simply the aid we derive, by elucidation or comparison, from semantics in *Amos*, history in *Melachim*, agronomy in *Zeraim*, physiology in *Niddah*, chemistry in *Chometz Umatzoh*, philosophy in *Yesodei Hatorah*, psychology in *Avodah Zarah*, political theory in *Sanhedrin*, torts in *Baba Bathra*—one could continue almost indefinitely. As the Gaon insisted, there is hardly a province of Halacha for whose mastery scientific, historical, and linguistic knowledge is not only helpful, but indispensable. If its pursuit is not *talmud Torah*, it is, at the very least *hechscher talmud Torah*. And contrary to the general assumption, it is precisely the weaker student who stands most in need of such auxiliary aid. While learning *Sanhedrin*, R. Chaim Brisker could evolve his own practical theory. Most of us merely fumble.

## Develop Spiritual Personality

While the importance of general knowledge as a direct auxiliary in the study of Torah is great, it is perhaps even more significant in a third capacity. Secular studies possess immense intrinsic value insofar as they generally help to develop our spiritual personality. Time and again, they intensify our insight into basic problems of moral and religious thought. History and the sciences show us the divine revela-

tion manifested in both human affairs and the cosmic order. The humanities deepen our understanding of man—of his nature, functions, and duties. In one area after another, a whole range of general studies sustain religion—supplement it and complement it—in a sense deeper and broader than we have hitherto perceived. Of course, we cannot always see how a specific isolated detail can have such an effect. One could easily seize upon a minor point—say, the Hospital Rule or the dates of Louis-Philippe's reign—and ask how that will prove us in any way. We should not member, however, that knowledge is attained only by degrees—by minutes and seconds. Whether a specific fact is sufficiently relevant to merit study is a question which must be decided with reference to a particular context. No doubt one may lose wisdom in the search for knowledge and knowledge in the search for information, but we shall continue to pursue all three. No one would contend that metrics or grammar have any intrinsic merit. Yet their value as instruments of knowledge led the Ramban and Baal Hamaor to master the one, and all *gedolei yisroel* to learn the other.

Nor should we be deterred by the illusion that we can find all we need within our own tradition.

Arnold insisted, one must seek "the best that has been thought and said in the world," and if, in many areas, much of that best is of foreign origin, we shall expand our horizons rather than exclude it. "Accept the truth," the Rambam urged, "from whomever states it."

Following both the precept and practice of Rabbenu Bahyye, he adhered to that course himself; and we would be wise to emulate him. The explicit systematic discussions of Gentile thinkers often reveal for us the hidden wealth implicit in our own writings. They have, furthermore, their own wisdom, even of a moral and philosophic nature. Who can fail to be inspired by the ethical idealism of Plato, the passionate fervor of Augustine, or the visionary grandeur of Milton? Who can remain unenlightened by the lucidity of Aristotle, the profundity of Shakespeare, or the incisiveness of Newman? There is *chochma* of degrees—nay, by *agoyim*, and we ignore it at our loss. Many of the issues which concern us have faced Gentile writers as well. The very problem we are considering has a long Christian history, going back to Tertullian and beyond. To deny that many fields have been better cultivated by non-Jewish rather than Jewish writers, is to be stubbornly—and unnecessarily—chauvinistic. There is nothing in our medieval poetry to rival Dante and nothing in our modern literature to compare with Kant, and we would do well to admit it. We have our own genius, and we have bent it to the noblest of pursuits, the development of Torah. But we cannot be expected to do everything.

## Realistic Problems

I have so far been dealing with our question in a more or less ideal, abstract plane, that at which the respective positions of Torah and *madah* can be neatly charted and at which they can be seen as exist-

ing in easy, perfect harmony. We are all well aware, however, that no such easy concord exists. We are rather only too familiar with complex problems and recurrent conflicts. Certainly, these problems neither can nor should be ignored; we slight them only at our own peril. Indeed, they are so formidable that they have led many to question whether religious and secular studies *can* enjoy any fruitful relation; whether, in the life of a *ben Torah*, there is any room at all for serious general education. At Yeshiva, we of course take this for granted. Historically, however, the question has been persistently and fervidly debated—and at the very highest levels. *Chachmei yisroel* have clearly been divided. As the Rama put it, "*zu machloketh yeshana bein hachachomim.*" In *Chazal* proper, references to the problem are relatively few and, taken as a whole, rather inconclusive; they can be—and have been—interpreted in either direction. Subsequently, however, two conflicting views have developed and they have persisted, with alternate ascendancy, through the centuries. If the Sephardic *rishonim* were mostly in favor, the Ashkenazic were generally opposed. If the Maharal extolled philosophy, the Maharshal condemned it. R. Yisroel Salanter might send his prime students to the finest universities in Europe; but Volozin—easily the greatest Yeshiva of modern times—shut its doors rather than introduce the most limited of secular programs. We are dealing here with *gedolei yisroel*, not mere obscurants. The problems arising from the in-

tegration of Torah and secular studies must have been pressing indeed if they produced such controversy—and they are still pressing. We would be committing the gravest folly were we to regard this controversy (as I am afraid many of us do) as a remotely irrelevant issue, almost as a historical curiosity. I have referred to it briefly to underscore its seriousness and, at the same time, to remind us of its pertinence. A question *gedolei yisroel* could discuss with such fervent interest cannot be lightly dismissed. Even if we feel justified in rejecting the verdict of some—we cannot, after all, agree with all—the very awareness that so many of our greatest men, before whom the best of us can only stand with bowed heads, steadfastly opposed secular studies, should in itself prove a sobering influence. It may, above all, by giving us the proper perspective, enable us to grasp the basic problems. For in the course of the controversy, virtually all the major questions concerning the relation of religious and secular studies have been raised. They are so fundamental that any formulation of a Torah view regarding this question must not merely answer them but consider them as part of its basic frame of reference.

### Danger of Secular Studies

What are those problems? The principal objections against secular studies will bring them into clear focus. It has been asserted, first, that secular culture, especially of a freethinking nature, may exert a dangerously powerful influence over its student, luring him from the fold

of Jewish tradition. Hence, the discussion has tended to center around the question of studying philosophy.

Secondly, it has been argued that the study of even innocuous subjects constitutes a waste of precious time, time which might—nay, might more profitably be spent in deepening and expanding one's knowledge and understanding of the Torah. Vocational training, so the argument, might be necessary, but every moment available for spiritual or intellectual concentration must be devoted solely to Torah study. Finally, many have objected that, quite apart from the time which they consume, secular studies weaken the individual's religious position simply by diverting his interest and thus sapping his personal resources. By focusing his attention elsewhere, often by riveting it upon trifling vanities, they drain him of his intellectual and emotional energies. Diversification leads to both diversion and distraction; it leaves the student involved with irrelevant matters but unmindful of his own vital religious concerns, "weeping the death of Dido for love of Aeneas, but weeping not his own death for want of bread to Thee."

### "Influence"

First, the problem of "influence" do so can only lead, at best, to intellectual schizophrenia. What our initial premise. We have seen the Hegelians may say about been concerned with the primary story, in education, the successive Torah on the axiological plane independent study of thesis and the realm of value. The primary synthesis hardly produces synthesis. of Torah is also logical, however literary criticism," Eliot has written. We recognize it as the basis of criticism, "should be completed by criticism which all human culture, all

and sciences, must stand. This cognition is twofold. First, on the objective level, we see the Torah as the logical groundwork of all truth.

principles constitute the premises which everything else is related; they provide a philosophic framework within which all knowledge attains meaning. Of course, the details of thermodynamics or of the declension of *pes* can hardly be referred back to a specific *pasuk* or *halacha*. In its totality, however, Torah constitutes the objective foundation of all truth: *istakal Toraha, bara alma*.

### The Torah — the Basis

Secondly, Torah must be the subjective basis from which we, as students, shall judge all else. From a religious point of view, secular studies—especially the social sciences—should derive their value but their meaning from a religious source. For Torah is at once the criterion of truth and the touchstone of value. Whatever the *ben Torah* studies, he must judge its standards. Its *weltanschauung* becomes the prism through which everything is seen. The importance of viewing all subjects with a critical appraisal of their relation to Torah can hardly be exaggerated. Failure to do so can only lead, at best, to intellectual schizophrenia. What the Hegelians may say about the successive independent study of thesis and synthesis hardly produces synthesis. Eliot has written, "should be completed by criticism from a definite ethical and

theological viewpoint." The remark may be applied to virtually every field of study. Of course, it does not apply with equal force to all areas. Some subjects—the humanities, for instance—are closer to our religious life than others. Even within the same subject, some aspects are more significant—potentially more enlightening and more dangerous—than others. In all areas, however, Torah furnishes at least a perspective. In some, its relation is much more direct, as it may give us specific guidance.

In a larger sense, the need for a religious approach to secular culture is universal. At one point or another, everyone is in contact with secularism. And critical appraisal in the light of Torah is particularly necessary precisely at those points at which we tend to lower our guard.

I doubt that any Yeshiva student was very much corrupted by Augustine's *Confessions* or Aquinas' *Summa*. But can the same be said of Ibsen's drama and Whitman's poetry? Berlioz' music and Titian's art? Do we recognize the determinism latent in the writings of so many social scientists—often so pervasive as to be assumed rather than stated? Are we taken in by the quasi-religion of an Emerson or Carlyle? Do we judge political events by religious standards? Our scrutiny must perhaps be keenest when we are furthest from the library or lecture hall. To return to Eliot, "Explicit ethical and theological standards," must be especially applied to "Works of imagination." By these, all of us may be influenced.



## Primacy of Torah

The position I have been advancing suggests a practical corollary. If secular culture is to be judged from a religious perspective, religious knowledge is an obvious prerequisite to its study. Ideally, the primacy of Torah should therefore also be chronological. This is, indeed, what the Rambam held—*venimuko imo*. The student's understanding of his religious outlook should always be more perceptive and more advanced than his appreciation of corresponding secular viewpoints. There is, however, a practical difficulty. How is one to know, when he is ready? There is no simple answer. The context of every student differs, and each case must be decided on its individual merits. With regard to the study of idolatry, Chazal established the principle of *lo thilmad laasoth avel ata lomed lehovin ulhoroth*—"you shall not study (if it may lead) to practice but you may study in order to understand and pass judgment." When can one venture, confident of his purpose? The question must be decided on the basis of individual circumstances. A second difficulty is that, in some cases, the lack of early religious training makes the priority of Torah knowledge almost impossible. Under these circumstances, the gap may be partially filled by guidance from friends and teachers (to some extent, such guidance is of course needed by all). But in any event, it is important that the principle be kept intact.

Some may find my position illiberal. Perhaps it is. But are we to sacrifice eternal salvation on the

alter of untrammelled objective inquiry? The danger of having our faith undermined by our studies, one which we dare not underestimate. Ideas are potent. They are powerful agents, directly affecting the growth of our spiritual personality.

"It must never be forgotten," Whitehead declared, "that education is not a process of packing articles in a trunk. . . ." Its nearest analogue is the assimilation of food—a living organism, and we all know how necessary to health palatable food under suitable conditions. When you have put your boots in a trunk, they will stay there until you take them out again; but this is not at all the case if you feed a child with the wrong food." In our course, we prefer to think we have passed out of nonage. But adults also watch their diets.

If nothing else, modern propaganda has taught us how naive we are. Mill's notion that the free clash of ideas must result in the triumph of truth. Falsehood does not always stick to the rules. We must be on our guard and we must not venture out of our depth. Objectivity is fine, but one should beware of its difference. If knowledge is to be meaningful, it must be approached with a point of view. In engrossing ourselves in the "objective" study of a subject, there is danger that we may forget why we wanted to study it in the first place; hence the need for seeing it in a Torah perspective. Absolute *perishuth* is a wrong solution, but *zehiruth* must be unrelenting.

Our second major problem is less pressing than the first,

more practical nature—simply a matter of budget. Working within the bounds of limited time and energy, we are constantly confronted by the need for balancing the conflicting demands imposed by our various studies. We return once again to our fundamental premises. Thus, translating the primacy of Torah into pragmatic terms, we must make the study of Torah our principal intellectual endeavor. Especially during our formative educational period—the high school and college years—it is imperative that we devote the major portion of our time and effort to *talmud Torah*. First and foremost, above and beyond all personal and professional ambitions, every student at Yeshiva College should have one overriding aim: to become a *talmid chochom*.

If *talmud Torah* gets the lion's share of our attention, general studies nevertheless are left with a sizable portion. The purists of our course see them as a waste of time. One must point out, however, that we are dealing with a quantitative rather than a qualitative problem—not a question of whether to study but how much. If the principle of *bitul Torah* were to be carried out consistently to its logical conclusion, in applying it to, say, mathematics, we should stop teaching children how to count. The suggestion has yet to be entertained. Where, then, are we to stop? With multiplication? Fractions? Square roots? Logarithms? Determinants? Complex numbers? Clearly, budgeting is a process of weighing *schar keneged schar*, advantage against advantage; and it should be obvious

that again no single answer can be offered. It would be ridiculous to insist upon a uniform standard of so much or so little secular education for all students at all times. Conditions vary, and vary widely. The point of diminishing returns—that at which the loss due to time spent on secular studies exceeds their contribution to the cause of Torah—differs in every case. No doubt for some a double program at the college level is too much. Certainly, for many if not most, stretching the college program over summers, a fifth year, or both, would be highly advisable. The principle should be kept in mind, however—the student's development as a *talmid chochom* must come first. As to everything else, a proper sense of proportion must be preserved.

I have hitherto been concerned with the liberal phase of education, that which merely concerns our development as human beings. As Chazal recognized, however, education also has a professional aspect—*lelamdo umnuth*. This aspect presents a new problem. Of course, hopefully, many students—especially the better ones—will go on to find a career in working for Torah, either in the rabbinate or in education. For these, professional study (one hates to call it that) will happily coincide with further intensive *talmud Torah*. Such a course cannot be followed by all, however; and for those hoping to enter other fields, the problem of budgeting time acquires a new dimension. Particularly in a period so dominated by specialization, placing the primary emphasis upon the study of



Torah would seem to block the path to professional success. Our fundamental thesis remains unshaken, however. As liberal educators from Newman to Hutchins have argued, full professional preparation should come in graduate school rather than in college. The graduate student, like the practitioner, may admittedly have to shift his emphasis. However, the critical college years should focus upon our personal development, and this means upon our growth as *bonei Torah*.

Of course, college also has a strong bearing upon a student's future. Some will never attend graduate school, and even for those who will, previous college preparation is important. But no matter—first things first. Students who find that their general education interferes unduly with their religious studies could, as I have suggested earlier, stretch out the former. However, many should be able to combine them. An undergraduate program is not quite that rigorous. Good students putting in what most schools consider a full day on the study of Torah should still be able to pursue a serious college program. Of course, this would require diligence. Full concentration, no frills, no flimflam. But it can be done.

### Commitment

The final problem—that of diversion—must be met by a single word: commitment. Realizing the danger of possible distraction, we can avert it by sincere dedication. We must recognize that, deeply involved as we are in other fields, we are committed to only one thing—Torah. This commitment should be

both profound and comprehensive. It cannot merely involve an occasional resolution. Commitment is the permanent recognition, both emotional and intellectual, that Torah is our principal concern. Whether or else we may be doing, we know that Torah and its study, the conscious development of our spiritual personality, is the main thing. Compelling reasons may temporarily force us to lay it aside; but we can hardly wait to return. As Rabbi Tam said, there can be no *hesed hadaath*, no distraction, with regard to *talmud Torah*. Any other activity, whether auxiliary to Torah or independently necessary, we regard as incidental. We have only one spiritual destiny: *Lolecheth b'hem*, says the *Sifre*, *velo lipoter mitochom*. We can never be done with the study of Torah.

Hence, even in later life, when many will find it necessary to devote the bulk of their energies to earning a livelihood, *talmud Torah* can never cease. Indeed, one should always recognize that *toratho u'nutho*, his main occupation is *talmud Torah*, all else secondary. The Rosh pointed out, the prime is not measured by the crude yardstick of time. Most likely, the fancier or grocer spends more time working than studying. What is important is, first, the value-judgment and secondly, the determination to devote one's spare time to the study of Torah. A person's avocation, that to which he turns with joy when the letters of obligation have been cast off—reveals more of his character than does his vocation. *Bonei Torah*, committed to a life of Torah, we shall know where to turn

lifelong study, quite apart from its intrinsic importance, is what gives this commitment a focus. It provides us with an activity which indeed renders everything incidental. Only through study, furthermore, can our total religious life become meaningful.

As Coleridge so keenly perceived, faith can be neither profound nor enduring where the intellect is not fully and actively engaged in the quest for G-d: "The energies of the intellect, increase of insight, and enlarging views, are necessary to keep alive the substantial faith in the heart. They are the appointed fuel to the sacred fire." Where the mind is dormant, the whole man becomes torpid.

### Conclusion

In conclusion, I should like to place our whole problem in a somewhat broader perspective. Ultimately, one's view of the relation of secular and religious studies depends upon a corresponding attitude towards the relation of religious and secular life. On the one hand, there may be a dualistic conception which would set up a rigid barrier between the two; which conceives of man's purely natural life as intrinsically corrupt; which sees the religious as being established not upon the secular but despite it; which, in short, considers *kodesh* and *chol* not simply distinct but disjoint. On the other hand, we have a unified conception which stems from a deep-seated belief that life is basically

one; that the secular and religious aspects of human experience are in fundamental harmony, the latter perfecting rather than destroying the former; that, finally, while *kodesh* and *chol* are neither identical nor coextensive, they are both contiguous and continuous. I think the attitude of Torah is clearly aligned with the latter view, with what a Canadian scholar has called "the principle of integration." Our whole *weltanschauung*—from eschatology to ethics—is firmly grounded upon the profound conviction that the physical, the natural, the secular, is not to be destroyed but sanctified. The Halacha stresses not rejection but inclusion, not segregation but transmutation. It never sought to mutilate life in some Procrustean bed. Rather, with its vitality, flexibility and breadth, the Halacha has repeatedly proved to be as expansive and as inclusive as life itself. Its catholicity, its magnificent sweep, and its extraordinary scope—these are of its essence. The Torah is neither world-accepting nor world-rejecting. It is world-redeeming. In the education of a *ben Torah*, therefore, there is room for both secular and religious studies. Not equal room to be sure—the obverse of integration is the hierarchy of value, and within that hierarchy, Torah reigns supreme. At the bottom, however, the comprehension of Torah's outlook establishes a rich education as the basis of a rich life. The final word is with integration and harmony.

# The Problem of the Yeshiva College Student

by Daniel Kapustin

Every student who enters this institution is aware that he will face difficulties arising from the dual program of studies. However, the exact nature of these difficulties is never clearly defined on a formal basis, and it is only after four years of bitter experience that the individual can begin to crystallize his reactions into a coherent view of the problem. Unfortunately, by then it is too late. The first difficulty, therefore, is that one does not initially understand the problem.

In a curriculum which subjects the student to secular and religious ideas simultaneously it seems clear that intellectual conflicts will arise. It seems inevitable that both in the humanities and the sciences the student will encounter concepts which are contrary to what he has come to accept as an orthodox Jew. It is the sciences, however, which have received the greater notoriety as an organized inquiry whose conclusions are often diametric to Jewish belief. It is significant that this is not at all the case: significant because it reveals a superficial understanding of both religion and science.

Any student of science who has delved into the implications of his textbook knowledge realizes that science is entirely postulational. It seeks to explain natural phenomena

and it does so by direct observation. Observation leads to theory. It is at this stage that science renders its chief contribution to human understanding. The scientist develops the theory not only to explain what he has seen but also to predict phenomena which he hopes to observe in the future. His theory is valid only if confirmed experimentally, and even then the word *valid* implies only a postulational truth. Given a set of postulates and a set of observations one has a scientific validity. There may be other postulates which would serve equally well and other observations which would violate all postulates. Scientific investigation is a passive inquiry. It seeks to put together a vast jigsaw puzzle. It has no interest as to who created the puzzle and no delusion that it can reshape any of the pieces. This is the basic characteristic of science, but unfortunately it is not the basic characteristic of scientific

If one uses the word *truth* with regard to a scientific validity then it is necessary to use the word *absolute truth* with regard to religion. Religion has no validities, no logic, no empirical confirmation and above all no mutability. This statement has to be well understood. Religion does not rest on any

these qualities. It rests on pure faith. The Jew accepts his religion "in toto." If he could not rationalize even one commandment he would still accept it without any reservations. One of the most beautiful and human facets of the Torah is that it encourages a scientific type of approach. It does so because it was created for human beings who are characterized by a need for such an approach. In the final analysis, however, it relies on the purely basic emotions which characterize human belief. The belief is primary; the scientific approach is secondary.

It is clear that a contradiction between a scientific validity and a religious truth is emotionally upsetting to the orthodox Jew. It does not affect his basic belief, but it is most effectively refuted by a scientific approach. This concept has formed the basis of Jewish exegesis throughout the ages.

It is worth noting that it is not the sciences but the humanities, notably philosophy, which fosters the most insidious disapprovals of religious belief. This is only because the postulational basis of the humanities is much less apparent. The philosopher often presents himself and his theories as if they were both above ordinary human scrutiny. He believes that philosophy makes the temporal divine rather than the divine temporal. This philosophical schizophrenia is best avoided by not trampling where angels fear to tread. The import of this to the Yeshiva student is simply that his problem does not lie in this direction.

Is an orthodox Jew justified in

studying secular subjects? This question poses two problems: is the acceptance of secular ideas contrary to religious belief and is the Jew fulfilling his religious destiny through the study of secular ideas?

In view of the previous argument the answer to the first question is an emphatic no. The acceptance of secular ideas is not contrary to religious belief. The second question, however, presents a very serious and basic problem. Its answer requires an unambiguous definition of Jewish destiny whose only basis is a Torah which is accepted purely on a principle of faith. This is the Jew's most difficult task for it requires a working relationship between the human and the divine. The fulfillment of a divine purpose by a mortal is the one and only approach the Jew can make to the divine. By its very nature it is the most difficult approach, and the Jew is the only person ever to undertake its fulfillment.

I do not propose to answer this question because I cannot. I do not believe that every student at Yeshiva College has resolved this question. I believe that he merely hasn't thought about it very much. He regards his efforts as a courageous undertaking to resolve the conflict between Torah and Madah, a conflict which does not exist and whose nonexistence renders empty the entire concept of a synthesis.

It is obvious that the founders of this institution believe that the Jew cannot survive in society today without a secular education. It is by no means obvious that they have resolved the question of Jewish destiny. This in itself is no disgrace.

It is inane, however, to create a concept of synthesis between intellectual forces which do not conflict. Synthesis is not an intellectual concept. It does not resolve Judaism with secular dogma. It is merely a practical effort to condition the Jew to live in the society which secular dogma has produced. The distinction between dogma and practice does not exist in Judaism as it does elsewhere. It is this very distinction which Yeshiva University is creating. The Jew's daily life is his

religion. If he accepts secular ideas they will not conflict with his religious beliefs, but the very act of studying secular ideas presents the question of whether such an undertaking violates the practical way of life that a Jew must follow.

In lieu of an answer to this question the Yeshiva College student must content himself with trying to accomplish two things at the same time under circumstances which are hardly conducive to such an achievement.



*. . . You are no doubt aware that the Almighty, desiring to lead us to perfection and to improve our state of society, has revealed to us laws which are to regulate our actions. These laws, however, presuppose an advanced state of intellectual culture. We must first form a conception of the Existence of the Creator according to our capabilities; that is, we must have a knowledge of Metaphysics. But this discipline can only be approached after the study of Physics; for the science of Physics borders on Metaphysics, and must even precede it in the course of our studies, as is clear to all who are familiar with these questions. Therefore the Almighty commenced Holy Writ with the description of the Creation, that is, with Physical Science; the subject being on the one hand most weighty and important, and on the other hand our means of fully comprehending those great problems being limited. . . .*

—Maimonides: Introduction to Guide for the Perplexed

# The Concept of God's Kingdom

by Steven Riskin

Judaism demands an all-embracing commitment to One G-d. It recognizes no realm of life apart from Him, considers no aspect of human thought alien to His province. To be a "Jew in one's tent and an individual on the outside" is a contradiction in terms; "All of one's deeds must be for the sake of heaven" and all of one's life must be committed to G-d. There is no dichotomy between the holy and the profane, the religious and the secular, the spiritual and the physical, the church and the state. Man must integrate himself and his world to become one in dedicated service to the G-d Who is One.

It is this complete devotion which the Torah stresses in its commandment to "love the Lord thy G-d with all thy heart, and with all thy soul and with all thy might." Even Maimonides, the arch-rationalist, maintains: "And what is the love which is fitting for love of G-d? It is a very great and strong love . . . in which one is constantly involved as when one is afflicted with lovesickness and his mind is never freed from the love of a certain woman; he is involved with her constantly, whether sitting or standing, eating or drinking. Even mightier than this should be the love of G-d in

the hearts of those who love Him."

Just as the ardent youth directs all of his attention to his beloved, so must we channel all of our desires to the worship of G-d. The only universally understood area of total commitment in the human experience is in man's love for woman; it is therefore this relationship which stands not merely as the example of, but rather as the stepping-stone for, man's relationship to G-d. Adam was created before Eve, explain our commentaries, in order to teach us that man cannot properly relate to G-d, that man is incapable of that complete dedication which is a *sine qua non* of oneness, unless he first experiences it in his love for woman. The *Song of Songs* does have two distinct levels of interpretation; the one is actually a prerequisite for the other. It is only after the shepherd loves the shepherdess that he can begin to feel and understand an all-encompassing love for G-d.

In truth, is it not that organ which most expresses man's physical love for woman that G-d chose as the symbol of the sanctity of Israel (in the rite of circumcision)? Does not a cardinal belief in the Resurrection of the Dead bear eloquent testimony to the importance of the



body in the service of G-d? Man dare not atomize his personality or his world into different spheres of influence. All must be viewed as one in dedication to the only One.

The unity of man and the world is significant not only in the philosophical but also in the political sense. There is a spirit of rebellion and striving for independence in the early part of Jewish history which is unparalleled among the nations of the world. From the Exodus from Egypt to the Bar-Kochba rebellion, the Jewish people have refused to endure political submission although it meant struggling against overwhelming odds. This is not merely an accident of history; it is a designed corollary of the total G-d commitment. If an individual must accept the yoke of the kingdom of heaven—עול מלכות שמים—how can he possibly assume the yoke of the kingdom of a foreign government? If the individual's G-d is his king and his law is the Torah, how can he serve a pagan king and accept a non-Jewish law? I shall attempt in this essay to define fully the concept of עול מלכות שמים, the yoke of the kingdom of heaven, and apply its significance for Jewish history and theology past and present.

The Bible abounds in imagery, but no image is more prevalent than that of G-d as King. From the declaration of Moses as he stood before the miracle of the Red Sea that "the Lord shall reign for ever and ever" to the statement of the humble Gideon that "I will not rule over you and neither shall my son rule over you; the Lord shall rule over you," G-d is pictured as the great Cosmic King. Even the

prophet Isaiah, overwhelmed by his glimpse into the Divine, calls out in mortal distress:

"Woe is me! for I am undone;  
Because I am a man of unclean lips,  
And I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips:

For mine eyes have seen the King,  
the Lord of hosts."

G-d, therefore, is King, the ruler of the universe. Man must be His servant, the bearer of His heavenly yoke. If G-d is *melech*, man must be *mekabel ol malchut shamayim*.

There is, however, one complication in the system. G-d's kingdom is not yet complete. His rule has not been manifestly realized. Most images are projected towards the future and the majestic scepter seems a promise for tomorrow. It is almost as if G-d's kingdom is in the realm of Aristotle's becoming rather than of Plato's being. "The Lord will reign for ever and ever," sang Moses, and our Rabbis comment:

"The kingship of God is not complete, for as long as the sons of Esau are in the world and enthroned idols, G-d's throne cannot be complete. (*Dvarim Rabba, Hotsaat Lieberman*)

Zecharia, in a purely eschatological wish, prophesies:

"And the Lord shall be King over all the earth;

In that day shall the Lord be one and His name One."

And even Daniel, the most mystical of our prophets, insists on a future kingdom:

"And in the day of those kings shall the G-d of heaven set up a kingdom which shall never be

destroyed; nor shall the kingdom be left to another people; it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, but it shall stand forever."

But this is not to assume that there is no present heavenly kingdom. Isaiah and Ezekiel both divined a Kingly Court in the present, and Daniel speaks of the Most High whose "dominion is an everlasting dominion, and His Kingdom is from generation to generation." The Biblical attitude may best be expressed in the words of the Psalmist: "The Lord reigns, the Lord reigned, the Lord will reign for ever and ever." Certainly there is no real contradiction between the notion of the future kingdom of Zecharia and the present one of Isaiah. No one would deny that G-d's Kingship exists *de facto*, but *de jure* it will only become manifest at a future time in the end of the days. G-d is assuredly the king of the world today, but His rule will not be complete and thus realized in the physical world until it is recognized as such by all mankind, until "that time when He will be one and His Name One." It is the sum and substance of our prayer to make G-d's rule visible to the entire world. This is the meaning of the passage in *Masechet Sofrim* (14, 6):

"And for all these things magnified and hallowed, praised and glorified, exalted and extolled, beautified and uplifted be the Name of the King of all kings, the Holy One blessed be He, the revered and awesome in the world which He created, in this world and in the world to come. May His kingdom be revealed

and be *made visible* speedily and in our time, and may He rebuild His Temple. . . ."

And this is the import of our additional prayers for the *Sholosh Regalim*:

"Our Father, our King, speedily reveal thy glorious kingdom to us; shine forth and be exalted over us in the sight of all the living. Unite our scattered people. . . . Bring in to Zion Thy city with ringing song. . . ."

The period in time in which G-d's Kingdom will be manifest is bound up with the redemption of Israel and the return to Zion. But this will not bring about a difference in kind as it will a difference in degree; we ask for *malchut shamayim* to be revealed, not created. There is no question that the Jew must accept upon himself the heavenly yoke in the present, and live his life in service to the One and only true King. The Apocryphal *Book of the Secrets of Enoch* (3, 4, 1) describes G-d's rule as being a monarchy, and speaks in terms of the *yoke* which must be accepted in exclusion to any other:

"For I know the uncleanness of men, that they will not carry the yoke which I have laid upon them, nor sow the seed which I have given them, but having cast off my yoke, they will take another yoke, and will sow empty seeds and will bow down to vain gods and will reject My Oneness, and the whole earth will quake with injustice, wrongs, fornication and idolatry."

It is indeed only when the individuals in the world reject false gods and rulers and submit themselves solely

to the Kingship of G-d that the Heavenly Kingdom may be revealed to all.

The political ramifications of this idea are magnificent in their significance. If my submission to G-d is to be a total one, my personality to remain whole and unatomized, there is no room in my life for the submission to any earthly ruler. If I accept upon myself the yoke of the Heavenly Kingdom, I must summarily dismiss from myself the yoke of any worldly one! It is not enough that I remain free to practice the Jewish ritual; it becomes a religious obligation that I be free to denounce political allegiance to any other than the King of all kings, Holy and blessed be He. The religious and political are not two separate and distinct realms. Political freedom is a religious obligation; subservience to the Roman government and the acceptance of the yoke of the Heavenly Kingdom are mutually exclusive.

This idea becomes more clearly defined as we study the attitude of our sages, the transmitters of the Oral Law. Writes the Midrashic commentary on *Deuteronomy* 33:3:

"Yea, He loveth the peoples,  
All His holy ones—they are in  
Thy hand;

And they sit down at Thy feet,  
Receiving of Thy words'  
Said Moses to the Holy One,  
Blessed be He:

'Master of the Universe, You have placed two yokes upon your children—the yoke of Torah and the yoke of submission to kings.' G-d said to Moses, 'Everyone who is involved in the study of Torah,

all His holy ones, are in Thy hands and they sit down at Thy feet.'

Rabbi Joseph taught: these are the scholars who uproot their feet from city to city and from country to country to learn Torah and thus cast off from themselves the submission to kingdoms."

And the *Mishna* in *Avot* (3, 5):  
"Rabbi Nehunyah ben Hakonah says:

Anyone who accepts upon himself the yoke of Torah is freed from the yoke of kingdom and of social conformity.

Anyone who casts off from himself the yoke of Torah is given the yokes of kingdoms and of social conformity."

And finally the Talmud in *Avodah Zarah* (5):

"The Jews only accepted the Torah in order that no nation or tongue may have rule over them."

In effect, therefore, Halacha is enjoining political freedom. The moment I accept the yoke of Torah (which is symbolic for and synonymous with the yoke of the Kingdom of Heaven) I cannot possibly accept the yoke of any foreign ruler. "For unto Him shall the Children of Israel be servants, and they shall not be servants unto servants." Thus we begin to see that the statement in *Eruvin* (54): "There is no free man accept the one who is involved in the study of Torah" is to be taken most literally. The only truly free person—the man who may call no other king except the King of all kings—is the one who has accepted the yoke of the Torah. Tradition even goes so far as to insist that political submission is tantamount to

idolatry. Rashi, in his commentary on *Deuteronomy* 4:27, 28, maintains: "Once you serve the servant of idols, it is as if you served the idols themselves."

At least throughout the Second Commonwealth until the end of the Talmudic period, the ideal of submission to the Kingdom of G-d alone was maintained by the scholars of our people. As long as there was a Jewish state, the problem was not a serious one. [Although any king at all was considered a concession at best. Witness all of the additional laws which the Jewish King had to fulfill: the Jewish King was tolerated only as long as he was a symbolic representative of the King of all kings. See *Maschet Sanhedrin* 21b which insists that the king must constantly carry a Torah about his neck.] But the moment the Roman eagle dominated the dove of Judea, once the Caesars began occupying the throne of conquest, Jewish law enjoined resistance.

And Josephus, in discussing the Pharisees who are the scholars of the Oral Law, writes (*Antiquities* 17, 42):

"When all the Jews confirmed by oath their good will to Caesar and to the Kingly ministers, the Pharisees, being in number six thousand, did not swear, and when the King imposed a fine upon them, Pharaoh's wife paid the fine for them."

Anyone who accepts the yoke of the Heavenly Kingdom can no longer swear allegiance or pay taxes to any foreign government. Josephus, earlier in his work (*Antiquities* 15, 368-371), reports that these men

even refused to take an oath of fidelity to Herod, who was a Jewish king, because he did not rule in accordance with the Torah. And in his *Wars* he writes (*Bellum Judaicum* II, 118) that the uprising of Judas the Galilean, one of the immediate harbingers of the final revolt against Rome, was comprised of those people who "refused to pay tax to the Romans or to submit to the rule of mortal men."

There are few incidents in the history of mankind which can parallel the martyrdom in the fortress of Massada, the last stronghold of the Second Commonwealth. City after city had been destroyed by Roman flame; the Holy Temple itself had been razed to the ground: and now, at the end of a hopeless battle long before lost, the impregnable walls of Massada were beginning to crumble beneath the strength of the enemy. Rabbi Eleazar ben Yair, the leader of the group, proposed a plan tragic in its grandeur, hapless in its might. He asked that each of the ninety-six remnants of Judea die by the hands of his neighbor rather than submit to Roman rule. Josephus (*Wars* VII, 317-324) presents for us his immortal words:

"Long since, my brave men, we determined neither to serve the Romans nor any other save G-d, for He alone is man's true and righteous Lord, and now the time is come to verify the resolutions with our actions. . . . Let our wives thus die undishonored, our children unacquainted with slavery, and—when they are gone—let us render generous service to each other, preserving our liberty in a noble winding sheet. . . .

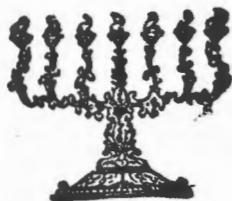
Unenslaved by the foe let us die, as free men with our children and wives let us quit this life together! *This our laws enjoin. . .*"

In *Baba Batra* (7b, 8a) there is likewise a lengthy discussion in which the scholars are freed from ever having to pay taxes. Even when Rav Nachum ben Hisda levied a tax on the scholars, Rav Nachman ben Yitzchak rejoined, "You have transgressed a commandment of the Torah, the Prophets, and the Writings. . . ." Those who are involved in the study of Torah dare not be forced to pay taxes to any foreign government.

Thus we begin to see the all-encompassing character of submission to G-d. I must accept G-d's will *in toto*; He must pervade the political as well as the religious. One cannot be a Jew on Saturday and a democrat on Sunday, a *ben Torah* in the *Bet Medrash* and an all-American on the basketball court. All of our being, every aspect of our lives, must

be subsumed under the "service of the Creator." If *imitatio dei* is more than a meaningless phrase, then just as G-d is One so must we be one. "Thou shalt have no other G-d before me" is merely a restatement of "Hear O Israel the Lord our G- the Lord is One." And when understood in this light we cannot but strongly disagree with the statement attributed to the founder of Christianity:

"Render unto Caesar what is Caesar's and G-d what is G-d's." (Luke 20, 25). This statement stands, in contradistinction to Judaism, for a dichotomy of life and a duality of ideals. If we have accepted an atomization in our own day it is because we have sacrificed the Jewish ideal for the Christian one, the total dedication for the life of compromise. The words of the gospel are the direct antithesis of *kabalot ol malchut shamayim*. It is not synthesis but rather monotheism which is the ideal of our faith.



# The Experience of Unity

by Rabbi Martin L. Gordon

The accelerated pace of modern life, the hypnotic appeal of its creations, the convenience of its values, have stamped their imprint upon contemporary man. In renunciation of genuine experience, man has submitted to the directives of artificiality. Having abandoned the search for depth, he has plunged into the shallow waters of the superficial world. He lies broken, unfulfilled, alienated from his inner being. Man has lost his integrity—the unity of self.

The correction of the breach within man is, to Jewish thought, the objective of the religious experience. Indeed, it was to the bifurcation of the human being thousands of years ago, that revelation addressed its message. After generations of corruption subsequent to the sin of Adam had divorced man from the spiritual encounter, *Ma'amad Har Sinai*—in its promulgation of the *mitzvot hatorah*—established the formula for re-unification.

Man, when first fashioned by G-d, was a harmonious whole. Though dual in structure he was free of discord. Adam represented the coordinated association of spirit and flesh, the Divine image within the mortal frame, functioning without conflict in the experience of life.

Man was identified with the depth of his being. He never abandoned the recourse to the soul. His every experience of the flesh was an adventure of the spirit; his every re-

sponse to the world, an encounter with G-d.

Creation at large was reflective of the unity within Adam. Indeed, the harmony of the universe is a corollary of the integrity of man. (The all-encompassing figure of *Adam Kadmon* looms in the upper level of the Kabbalistic universe as the unifying structure underlying all creation.) Thus, just as Adam in his probe of the world would involve himself to the totality of his being, so the world in its surrender before Adam would expose itself to its very core.

Life could be experienced as a unity alone. The superficial could not be isolated from the essential; the artificial could not be severed from the genuine; the physical could not be enjoyed without the wholesomeness of the spiritual. The world could not be encountered without the discovery of G-d.

Thus, corresponding to the unity within man, there was sustained within the structure of the universe the unity of G-d, the deepest dimension of existence, and his creation, the tangible world. (This unity is reflected simultaneously within G-d Himself, in the terminology of the Kabbalah, as *Yichud Kudesha Brich Hu Ushechintei*, the unity of G-d as the transcendent being and as the sustainer of creation.)

The wisdom of G-d, the source of all creation, lies both at the core of the human personality and at the foundation of all existence. Indeed,



the *neshama* of man and the seed of the universe were actualized by the mind of G-d, according to the Kabbalah, in the identical *sephirah*. The penetration, therefore, by man, in his depth, of the world to its depth would unite the Divine within each.

Such was the glory of the first man during the very first days of his existence. Every dimension of life was thoroughly appreciated by Adam. The tangible within the world stimulated his senses, while the essential was perceived by his soul. Thus was he assigned by G-d the penetrating role of "naming" creation: ויצר ה' אלקים מן האדמה כל חית השדה ואת כל עוף השמים ויבא אל האדם לראות מה יקרא לו וכל אשר יקרא לו האדם נפש חיה הוא שמו (בראשית ב: יט).

The names ascribed by Adam to the various species were not arbitrary. They were, rather, expressive of the essential function of each creature within the Divine scheme. For that deepest level of reality where the purposeless becomes meaningful and where the chaotic assumes a coherent form was perceived with clarity by Adam's soul. Adam, indeed, was at one with the world, and the two were at one with G-d.

Suddenly, however, tragedy struck. Adam ate of the *etz hadaath tov vara*. The relationship between man, world and G-d was radically altered. Striking is the analysis of the Zohar: "מכל עץ הגן אכל תאכל... שהתיר לו הכל לאכול אותם ביחוד... אבל עץ זה עץ מות הוא... מי שנוטל אותו לבדו מת... משום שהוא מפרידו מן החיים."

The sin of Adam lay not in his

consumption *per se* of the fruit of a forbidden tree. For he was permitted the benefit of *all* that was spread before him. His sin lay, rather, in his consumption of the fruit of the one tree in isolation of the other. Adam had disassociated the experience of the *etz hadaath* from the deeper experience of the *etz hachaim*. Adam's crime was that of *perud*, separation. He had split the unity of life into a duality. He had fragmented the wholeness of existence into a series of partial experiences. The physical escaped the discipline of the spiritual; the artificial abandoned its association with the genuine. The intellectual, perhaps, had assumed the arrogant air of self-sufficiency in its rejection of the totality of experience as represented by the tree of life.

The crime of Adam was the sin of heresy, the perversion of the *ko-tzetz binetioth*; for he had severed from their roots in *Hakadosh Baruch Hu*, the *Shechinah* and the world which it sustains. Adam had become estranged from his inner spirit, and the universe, estranged from G-d.

The subsequent history of events as recorded in the Torah is replete with records of the disastrous consequences of the bifurcation of life. Unresponsive to the summons of the soul, man surrendered himself to the command of passion: Jealousy engendered the first act of manslaughter in the tragedy of Cain and Abel. Lust silenced the inner-directives of nature, as the various species through illicit unions sought to pervert their identities: The *benei ha'elohim* engaged in intercourse with *benoth ha'adam*, while with

reference to the animal kingdom, *chazal* cite (see Rashi): כי השחית כל בשר את דרכו על הארץ (בראשית ו: יב).

The strange fate of one particular man who lived during this period is a revealing commentary upon the tragedy of the age. Chanoch, an early descendant of Adam, was mysteriously withdrawn from earth in mid-life, and "taken" unto G-d: ויתהלך חנוך את האלקים ואינו כי לקח אותו האלקים (שם ה: כד).

In elucidation of the enigma, the *Midrash Bereshith Rabbah* declares: רבי איבו אמר חנוך היה חנוף פעמים צדיק פעמים רשע אמר הקב"ה עד שהוא בצדקו אסלקנו.

The personality of Chanoch was a contradiction. Alternately, he was thoroughly soul and thoroughly body. His periodic piety was expressive of the sublime potential of the human spirit. But, alas, his cyclic defection to wickedness was poignantly indicative of the independence of the flesh. He had failed to achieve the unity of the two. He may be likened to a young butterfly, graced with wings but as of yet incapable of the consistency of flight.

The rupture within existence was, however, destined to be repaired. The integrity of man was to be restored, the unity of creation, reaffirmed. And the task was to be carried out by man.

When Abraham, in his enlightenment, had pierced the spiritual darkness which humanity as a whole had failed to probe, G-d, in response, spoke to him: ויאמר אני... קל שדי התהלך לפני והיה תמים (שם יז:א). Initiated, with *mitzvath milah*, into the context of G-d's law, Abraham

was informed that within the total framework of the halachic orientation lies the key to reunification. "Walk before me," proclaimed G-d, "and thou shalt be *whole*."

Generations later the entirety of the Torah was revealed as the descendants of Abraham stood before G-d's glory at Sinai. It was at this historic moment that the people of Israel, absorbed in unequivocal commitment to the *taryag mitzvoth*, experienced the restoration of unity, the oneness of body and soul. The words of the Zohar are penetrating: א"ר יהודא א"ר חייא א"ר יוסי כאשר שמעו דיבורו של הקב"ה פרחו נשמתם ועלו נשמות ישראל עד כסא הכבוד שלו להתדבק שם. אמרה התורה לפני הקב"ה וכי לחנם נבראתי... לחנם כתוב בי... ואל בני ישראל תדבר לאמר... באותה שעה החזירה התורה נשמות ישראל כל אחת ואחת למקומה. וש"כ תורת ה' תמימה משיבת נפש.

The initial reaction of the soul to the appearance of the glory of G-d was its abandonment of the body. Having struggled for generations against the corruptive power of the flesh, the spirit within man craved the purity of isolation with G-d. But the disassociation of soul from body was not to prevail. Purity was, indeed, to be achieved, but in unity, not in separation. Spirit and flesh were to be synthesized through the catalytic action of the *mitzvoth hatorah*.

Correspondent to the unities latent within man and world is the unity represented by the *taryag mitzvoth*. On the tangible level they are (generally speaking) addressed to man as flesh and blood; ultimately they are the wisdom of G-d. The *Ba'al haTanya* writes as follows:

יצמצם הקב"ה רצונו וחכמתו בתרי"ג מצוות התורה ובהלכותיהן... בכדי שכל הגשמה או רוח ונפש שבגוף האדם תוכל להשיגן בדעתה ולקיימן.

The religious value is a concretization (so to speak) of the infinite wisdom of the Deity. The halachic norm is the essence of the spiritual made relevant and available to physical man.

The halachic directive insures that the individual experience meaning within each aspect of life. Every bodily performance in consonance with the Divine decree is simultaneously an activation of the soul. One is not permitted the luxury of personally-convenient, short-sighted or rash behavior. He may not freely articulate his superficial, materialistic or selfish desires. He must act, rather, in accordance with the discipline of the Torah, which is evocative of the integrity of response.

Through the experience of life within the framework of the halacha, reality is encountered in its deepest dimension. The value-standard incorporated within the spiritual obligation guides the personality toward the discovery of, and association with the genuine, the purposeful, the Divine, pulsating within every phase of life. The soul of the religious personality becomes "encloded" in the *levush* of the

religious deed, and is thus identified with G-d, the soul of the universe: Through the unity of the mitzvah, the unity within man restores and apprehends the unity within creation.

One final point of crucial import must be made. Although the religious act *per se* is of objective significance, the depth of the experience is contingent, too, upon the degree of *kavanah*, subjective involvement. Furthermore, the most thorough fulfillment of the soul is achieved through the study of Torah in association with the implementation of its obligations. For, as the *ba'ale Kabbalah* record, while the religious act is the cloak (*levush*) of the soul, the study of Torah is its very nourishment (*mazon*).

The dichotomy within man is a very current crisis. Superficiality is the sacrilege of our age. Artificial frames of reference rule us, and in their empty clamor have rendered inaudible the whisper of the soul.

The implication of the unity theme is clear: Life is not merely a privilege—it is a challenge. Man's every response to life must be a quest for meaning; his every experience, a search for value. The rupture within man threatens disaster. Reunification is his sacred obligation.

# Reflections on Freud and Judaism

by Oscar A. Wachstock

## I.

The founder of psycho-analysis, Sigmund Freud, as well as many early prominent psychoanalysts, were Jews. It should therefore not be surprising that attempts have been made to connect the theory of psycho-analysis to elements within the Judaic tradition. One recent writer, Bakan, has suggested that Freud was influenced by the ideas of the Zohar and the Kabbala whose views on the primacy of the sex drive, on the bi-sexuality of man, on the importance of deciphering dreams, and on the general technique of interpretation, closely parallel those of Freud. These ideas, suggests Bakan, were part of the Jewish heritage that Freud imbibed from his Jewish milieu in Vienna. Others maintain that it is not the content of Judaism, but rather the fact of his Jewishness which was the vital influence. They point out that Vienna was the center of Anti-Semitism, and that therefore Freud and other Jews of similar background could not hope to advance professionally as doctors. They were forced to enter other fields of medical research which had less prestige than medicine *per se*. As soon as psycho-analysis became respected many Gentiles came in

and after a while the prominence of Jews even in this field came to an end. One could of course maintain that it was a combination of both factors; while it is true that it was due to sociological factors that Jews were forced to turn to fields other than medicine, what determined the choice of a particular field of endeavor was psychological and cultural in nature, i.e., they chose that field which seemed to have something in common with elements present in their own-cultural tradition.

Leaving the question of why so many Jews were prominent in psycho-analysis to the historians of culture, we will turn our attention to the main theme of the essay. In the past the discussion has evolved on whether specific doctrines of Freud could be traced back to Jewish fore-runners. Many writers have gone in detail showing how the Tractate Berachot, for example, in treating of dreams and dream-interpretation, has many Freudian concepts. Others have tried to show that the Kabbalistic notion of the two elements present in all nature, namely the masculine and feminine counterpart, is identical to the theory of the bi-sexuality of man propounded by Freud.

Still others have traced the idea of the libido and the Super-Ego to Kabbalistic references. What seems to me to be vitally important, and this has to some extent been done by Bakan is to try to compare basic underlying philosophies or Hashkafot.

## 2.

The popular conception of Freud as an irrationalist is mistaken. He was a rationalist par excellence. It is precisely because he was a firm believer in the laws of science, in rigid mechanism and determinism, that Freud began his exploration of the seemingly meaningless dreams, slips of the tongue, errors of memory, and other virgin grounds of human activity in which psycho-analysis has pioneered. Nothing can be attributed to chance. Everything has meaning. No act is done at random, devoid of message. No act fades into oblivion. Every human performance, which superficially reveals little meaningfulness, can, under the careful scrutiny of the psycho-analyst, be analyzed so that it is made to reveal the basic individual and unique personality pattern of that individual.

At first glance such a view, stemming as it does from a rigid scientific framework, seems to have little in common with a religious Hashkafa. Yet, a closer analysis will show that there are striking similarities between the Halacha and this attitude of psycho-analysis.

The Halacha aims to encompass all of man's activity in this world. From the moment of birth to the final burial ceremony, from the waking in the morning to the slum-

ber at night, no aspect of man's activity is deemed too trite as not to be regarded by the Halacha. Unlike those who see the way to G-d by a service of the heart and the uttering of the lips without bothering to concretize these abstractions in the day to day encounter, the Halacha recognizes the importance of every individual act, however minute and inconsequential it might appear to us. Every act performed by humans is carefully scrutinized by the Halacha and norms of behavior are enacted which endeavor to cover every conceivable situation. Those trained in the dialectics of Halacha will readily see how prolonged discussions on seemingly unimportant details are attempts by our Sages to translate Eternal values into the pattern of our daily existence. The Halacha is an affirmation of our deep-felt conviction that every act of man is invested with meaning, that every step we take is filled with purpose.

Just as psycho-analysis would see in our slips of the tongue, in our lapses of memory, in our dreams, basic and dynamic aspects of our personality, the Halacha sees in every utterance we make, in every act we perform, be it a conscious or unconscious act, a reflection of our personality, a mirror of our basic motivational pattern. To cite but one example to demonstrate this point. The Halacha maintains that even acts done unconsciously and seemingly unwillingly constitute at times sinful acts. Deep within the individual's system of values was a sinful intention which ultimately came out, albeit in an accidental

or seemingly chance occurrence. The Halacha agrees with Freud that fundamentally all our activities are directed and meaningful, and not mere accidents. That is why an act committed Beshogeg is a Maasei Aveira. The Halachists and the Freudians unite in the basic belief that everything we do is to be taken seriously, and every act is to be treated as a microcosm in itself. Every act is an expression of man's personality and uniqueness.

## 3.

We have seen that both psycho-analysis and the Halacha stress the individual act, no matter how inconsequential it might appear at the surface. How do we go about deciphering this act and deriving its meaning? Students of Rabbinic exegesis are well aware that our Rabbis formulated rules whereby an obscure sentence or phrase could be understood. The two primary rules of Rabbinic exegesis are: (1) No phrase or sentence can lose its literal meaning. (2) Besides the literal meaning, which is a true meaning, every phrase has a variety of meaning each of which contains some "truth." The mystics, and in this they are joined by many philosophers, claim that the true meaning of a sentence or phrase is not always the literal one, which is like a "cloth" that covers the body, but rather is the inner or hidden meaning. What is revealed to the outside world is but one facet of the truth. The real meaning must be revealed only to those who are trained in the secrets of the Kabbalah, or the true philosophers.

"The Interpretation of Dreams" is the Freudian text-book of hermeneutics. Every dream has a manifest and a hidden meaning. The literal and manifest meaning is carefully analyzed in order to get at the true meaning, the hidden meaning. Many times what seems to be a simple dream is in actuality a dream of profound significance. Similarly we are aware of the many times simple sentences in the Bible are made to convey deep philosophical or mystical ideas. One of the clues to the identity of the hidden meaning is that often a word which in ordinary parlance has but a simple meaning is the representation of deeper symbolic ideas. Thus in Freudian terminology a pencil always symbolizes the penis, and a room the woman's womb. Thus, words are but keys that reveal the hidden meanings. In Rabbinic literature we are aware of a similar procedure. To take but one outstanding example, the whole book Shir Hashirim is interpreted as symbolizing the relationship between G-d and Knesset Israel. The descriptions of the girl and her beauty are metaphors, and the exotic love scenes symbolize the warmth of the love between G-d and Knesset Israel.

... In traditional hermeneutics, the discrepancies which inspire the interpretive effort are attributed either to accidental mutilations or to secret intention. In psychic texts, discrepancies—breaks in continuity, distortion of content—are always presumed to disclose intention. . . . Just as an ethical substrata was discerned by theological or philosophical interpreters be-



neath the events of the Homeric poems or the Old Testament, or the Koran, an instinctual essence of personality is unmasked by the psychiatric interpreter beneath the inconsistencies and civilities of the dream, poem, fantasy, or any symptomatic act" (Freud: The Mind of the Moralists, by P. Rieff, p. 120).

In this passage Rieff has captured the crux of the analogy. The religionist analyzes carefully the texts, tries to harmonize the various discrepancies found in the text, or to harmonize the plain meaning of the text with the dictate of reason. Often he is forced to make the texts say things which are not so readily seen on the surface. This he does by maintaining that there are hidden meanings to the text which can be deciphered only by those who possess the analytical tools. The psycho-analysts analyze the text (dream) trying to discover the true meaning by utilizing the psycho-analytical code. This code they maintain is unconsciously used by the patient in acting out his dream or in acting out his symptomatic behavior. All his dreams must be harmonized to reveal the same intent. Thus the analogy between the methods of psycho-analysis and of religion is very striking.

Rieff, however, makes a very valuable distinction, one that sharply differentiates the approach of religion from that of psycho-analysis. What is hidden in the psycho-analytical text is the baser side of man, his libidinal drives, his base desires, his ego-centric attitude, which have been suppressed by the censor of society, the "Super-Ego." Man appears civilized, but in reality

he is very much of a barbarian who has learned to hide his true nature from society in general, and from himself as well. What is hidden in the religious texts is usually the higher spiritual values or the deeper mystical secrets. On the surface the text reveals man's depravity, his lack of moral integrity, his weakness and his cowardness. The religionist rescues man from this by insisting that in reality man is good. It can not be otherwise seeing that man possesses the Zelem Elokim. All of his acts are reinterpreted and what emerges is a picture of an ethical man. In passing may I suggest that the unusual success that Freud has had might in part be due that his picture of the inherent evil of man coincides with the Catholic picture, and in fact makes it possible to reinterpret the doctrine of Original Sin in psychological terms. The distinction between the aims of psycho-analysis and of religion is always to be kept in mind, but it does not change the important fact that basically the methodology of both disciplines is alike.

#### 4.

Having recognized the importance of the individual act, having undertaken to analyze or decipher the patient's dreams, we have not yet gained a real understanding of the patient's problem, nor have we gone about solving it. Heshel once said, "Mitzvoth are prayers acted out in deeds," and indeed that is true of both our religious and our psychological life. Freud was one of the first to point out that many of our deeds are symbolic in nature, that they are attempts to relate a

tale. A person who continually falls sick before a critical test is trying to communicating to us a message. Freud has gone to great detail in trying to decipher this silent language. The important principle to remember is that our deeds are to be interpreted not only at their face value, but must be carefully scrutinized to uncover the hidden and unvocalized message.

All our traditional commentators unite in telling us that in doing Mitzvoth man is doing more than just the mechanical performance of certain rote procedures. He is communicating with the Divine and expressing a message of significance. Every performance of a Mitzvah is a Dialogue between man and the Commander of the Mitzvoth. What is symbolized in the performance of the Mitzvah and what is the significance and content of this dialogue is something very few commentators agree on. They do, however, concur in the basic conviction that the performance of Mitzvoth is an act that requires much analysis in order to fully understand the nature of the relationship between man and the Creator.

Thus while Freud and his followers believe that in the performance of deeds men engage in a conversation with their fellow men, the religionists maintain that the performance of Mitzvoth provides man with the opportunity of a genuine conversation with G-d.

In assessing a man's personality, psycho-analysis will thus analyze his words, his dreams, and his acts. This method is as we have shown closely akin to the Rabbinic method of exegesis. The acts will be viewed

from the point of view of man's attempt to impress his personality upon the outside world. The religionists will follow the same pattern, but they will interpret man's actions as an attempt to realize G-d's imperatives and commands. Thus while psycho-analysis reveals its secular orientation by being anthaopocentrically oriented, religion is theocentrically oriented. It is interesting to note that in his later years Freud revolutionized psycho-analysis by postulating that all of man's action are expressions of the eternal struggle between the Drive for Destruction and the Drive for Life or Survival. Typically enough the majority of psycho-analysts have rejected this re-orientation in psycho-analysis. It further strengthens Rieff's contention that Freud was the apostle of a new morality, and not merely a pure scientist. The similarity to the religious viewpoint has been seen, and will be further developed in the next section.

#### 5.

All our efforts so far has been to examine the preliminary steps to the psycho-analytical approach and to compare it with the attitude taken by the Halacha. We shall now proceed to the treatment itself. The primary step in the treatment of a patient is that the patient must come to realize by himself (although guided by the psycho-analyst) the nature of his difficulty. No external treatment will help. The most it can do is to relieve some of the symptoms, but it can not cure. The patient must cure himself. This comes through

an intensification of self-awareness, through introspection, and through the gentle prodding of the analyst. Once the patient has seen his problem he is, for all practical purpose, cured. I must make it absolutely clear that what is being discussed here is the pure Freudian theory as expounded and enunciated by Freud himself, and not as it is being used by the various neo-Freudians.

The counterpart of a psychological ailment is the idea of sin. How do we go about curing sin? What are the steps to repentance? The Halachik answer as formulated by Maimonides in Hilchot Teshuva states that the first step is the knowledge of sin.

Regular periods are set aside each year to aid man in his introspection. Certain moral books are read which attempt to get man to look inwardly. Unlike psycho-analysis which maintains that no man can get a true insight into himself (unless that man happens to be Freud), and hence we always need the service of a trained person to plumb the depths of consciousness and reveal the whole sordid past, Judaism has always maintained that every individual is to search for himself. We know of no intermediaries between man and G-d. We have no priests to confess to. Each individual is obligated to investigate his deeds.

Of equal importance is the concept of catharsis where the patient acts out his problem so as to release all of his emotions. Historically this was the first important step in the psycho-analytic movement. Is there a similar notion in Judaism? Or is merely the knowledge of sin

and the determination to do good sufficient? I would like to suggest that in the idea of sacrifices you have the same notion. Nachmanides in his commentary to Leviticus has pointed out that the bringing of the sacrifice and the slaughter thereof represents a symbolic reenactment of the person's sin and the consequence of sin. The person who has sinned should be killed for he has violated a Divine Law. Instead we kill an animal. When the animal is killed the person who has sinned realizes that in actuality he deserves to die. The guilt feelings man has in committing a crime are banished by the act of sacrifice. The whole sin and its consequence is symbolically recreated in the slaughter of the animal. It acts as a catharsis. Is not Yom Kippur a day of catharsis? Whoever carefully follows the prayers and participates in the solemnity of the day is purged of all sin and feels immensely relieved when the day is finished. Similarly such practices as Tashlich and Kaporah can easily be seen as acts which allow the releasing of all anxieties and emotions associated with sinning.

We have thus indicated that the two basic components of treatment, (1) the idea of the knowledge of the sin by the individual himself, and (2) the release of all pent-up emotions by catharsis, is present both in Judaism and in psycho-analysis.

As we have indicated before there are striking differences between psycho-analysis and the Halacha. One of the most essential differences is revealed in the attitude

taken to the effect of the treatment and to the efficacy of Teshuva. The most the treatment can accomplish, according to Freud, is a better understanding of man and his frailties, an acceptance of what he is and of his limitations. The basic pattern of his existence can hardly ever be changed. It is fixed in infancy, and does not change at all. The Halacha states that Teshuva can recreate an individual. As Maimonides puts it so very beautifully, "He is not the same individual that sinned." Teshuva is thus a much more effective and much more powerful idea than treatment and adjustment. Again, let me suggest that perhaps the reason for the popularity of psycho-analysis is that it reinterprets the Catholic conception of Original Sin and the Unworthiness of Man in psychological terms. The difference between this and the Judaic idea is very evident.

## 6.

Perhaps by now the discerning

reader will have realized why it is that many people have claimed that psycho-analysis is in essence a secularistic religion, and why so many individuals—unable to bear the burden of life without a faith, and having discovered no true faith by themselves—have turned to the worship of psycho-analysis. As we have tried to show, its methodology closely parallels that of organized religions; its analysts are religious leaders of sort, and it offers a mythology and doxology of its own.

We have tried to show how sometimes psycho-analysis approaches concepts known in Judaism, and sometimes it accepts Catholic concepts. We leave it to our readers to decide whether it resembles Judaism more than it resembles any other system of organized religion. We likewise leave to the historians of culture the task of uncovering exactly what was the role played by the Judaic heritage Freud inherited in making up the complex theory of psycho-analysis.



# The Unity of God as the Source of All the Commandments

by Rav Levi Yitzhak of Berditchev  
(1740-1809)

Translated by: MORDECHAI MANTEL

A student of the Baal Shem Tov through his Rebbe, the Magid of Mazaryszk, Rav Levi Yitzhak was Rabbi in Pinsk and Zhilkhov where he was severely persecuted by local misnagdim. After 1755 he settled in Berditchev and gained renown throughout the Jewish world for his concern over "the common man" and his profound charity. Deeply admired within Chassidic circles as well as outside them, his love for the Jewish people inspired many legends and won for him the title, "The Defending Attorney of Israel." He is also known for his commentary "Kedushat Levi" on Pirke Avot and for his widely popular prayers, especially his "Kaddish."

One of the central themes of Rav Levi Yitzhak is the all-inclusiveness of G-d. The "ego" of every creature is none other than its divine component. On one hand we have a cognition of G-d as an abstract substance; the transcendent, and on the other hand, He dwells continually within us; the immanent.

We will examine a passage in the tractate Shabbat (Bavli, 31a): "Once it happened that a gentile came before Shammai saying: 'convert me on the condition that you will teach me the entire Torah dur-

ing the time I can balance myself on one foot.' Shammai pushed him away with a yardstick he was holding. He came before Hillel and was answered: 'what is hateful to you do not do to others. All that remains is explanation. Go out now and learn it.'

It appears to be well known that the first two of the Ten Commandments, i.e., I am the Lord thy G-d etc. and There shall be no other etc. (the cognitives) were uttered by G-d, and that they include the entire Torah, for the overall purpose of the Torah is hinted at in the unity of the Creator. Furthermore these hints exist only in order that through them we might gain awareness of our bondage in servitude to G-d.

Aside from the mystic reduction of all the commandments to the basis of unity, one might check the Sefer Hachinuch where a scholar proposed unity as the reason for all the commandments, deducing thereby that we are G-d's chattel and slaves. Therefore, according to him, the first two commandments of the decalogue were announced at Sinai for they are the reasons for the whole Torah. All this is what Chazal commented on in the verse: "And G-d spoke out

all these things . . .", that the decalogue was first given in general outline and afterwards enumerated in detail. In other words, He revealed them firstly as an aspect of His unity upon which all the commandments were instantaneously grasped, then later He provided their individual specifics.

However, it is equally well known that all of the Torah commandments admit of separation into two groups: first, those relating Man to his G-d as, for example, tzitzit, t'fillin, animal offerings, etc., and second, those relating Man to his fellow Men which are included under the heading of, "And you shall love your friend (re'ah) as yourself," in accordance with what we learned, "And you shall love your friend (re'ah), Rabbi Akivah said, this is a fundamental of the Torah."

Yet we have still to discover a reason for assigning the commandments which relate Man to his fellows, to the unity of G-d which certainly contains the entire Torah.

I would like you to consider that these also were included within the unity of the Creator for do we not believe that one G-d created us all and that "Yisroel" collectively is called the congregation of Israel or otherwise as the Divine presence. It follows, if indeed we are hewn from the same quarry, that if one person suffers, his fellow man can feel a sympathetic pain, just as when one limb of the body should ache the remainder of the body suffers along with it. And since one G-d created us and our souls sprang from one quarry, when one of us suffers pain, his fellow man can feel it also.

Similarly when a Jew experiences joy his fellow man can participate in his happiness, and this is the meaning of "What is hateful to you, do not do to your fellow." This means, when you endure sorrow for whatever cause do not inflict the same upon your fellow, but rather share his grief when he is in pain and join in his happiness. In this fashion we find the commandments relating Man included within the unity of the Creator. If we believe that one G-d made us of one mold, then it is fitting to occupy oneself by acting for the betterment of his fellows.

As for the convert's condition that he be taught the Torah while standing on one leg, he meant that all the commandments be explained on the basis of the unity of the Creator. "I want to convert so that I might understand how even the impersonal commandments should be derived from the unity of the Creator. Then I will worship Him and concede the emptiness of the law of other peoples."

Hillel's answer therefore was as we described and explained—that all the commandments, even those between man and his fellows, derive from the unity of G-d. Consequently the nations of the world must reserve themselves to approach us, thereby fulfilling "Then will nations turn to the people of G-d and many nations will go and say to the house of Yaakov—come and let us go in the light of G-d and walk in His paths."

This is also the meaning of "And you shall love your fellow man as yourself, I am G-d." For inasmuch as I am your sole cause and source,



you are obliged to share in your friend's joy and in the reverse, G-d forbid. So also can we understand in Acharei Mot, "My laws (mish-patai) you shall obey, and my decrees you shall observe, I am G-d your Lord." Rashi explains "mish-patai": "These are the things

brought as law by the Torah, which, if not written would have merited independent enactment." This means that the cause for the commandments between Man and his fellows is His divinity and that we are His creations.



*One Thursday afternoon, while Reb Levi of Berditchev was away from his city, the Rosh Hakahol sent the Rebbetzin, the children, and the Rabbi's meager possessions away from the city. The Rebbetzin fled to a nearby town and pleaded with the Rabbi there to pray to G-d to punish the leaders of the town who evicted her. The rabbi told her, "It's too late. I am sure that by now the great Reb Levi Yitzchak has already prayed to G-d to forgive them."*



## From the Editor's Book Shelf:

The great Biblical exegete Abraham Ibn Ezra has given us a classical classification of the various methods of Parshanut Hamikra. However, for the modern world such a classification leaves out much of what is being presently done in Biblical Research. For an understanding of the Bible we need a knowledge of Semitics, of archaeology, of Ancient History, of comparative religion, of cultural anthropology, sociology, psychology, and a host of varying disciplines besides being thoroughly familiar with the traditional commentaries. Ever present in Jewish exegesis has been an attempt to validate the Torah Shebaal Peh, to show the inner dependence of the Oral Law upon the written text. In recent years, due no doubt to the need to defend Tradition from the onslaught of the critics, this tendency has become more pronounced; such works as the Malbim, Haktav Vehakabalah, and Torah Temimah, were written with this purpose in mind.

Biblical criticism has made many converts in the Jewish and non-Jewish world. Its theories of multiple authorships and redactors, of stages of evolution in religious ritual and thought, became the accepted Biblical school of exegesis with Wellhausen's Prolegomena as the accepted textbook. Unfortunately, Traditional Judaism must share part of the blame for this. It had sorely neglected the study of the

Bible, and as a result it was not prepared to answer the criticisms of the Bible critics. Speaking of the contempt that many of his co-religionists held towards the study of science Ibn Daud in Emunah Ramah pointed out: "There are many who have dabbled a little in science, and... since in such men the light of investigation has extinguished the light of belief, the multitude think it dangerous, and shrink from it. In Judaism, however, knowledge is a duty, and it is wrong to reject it..." A similar situation prevailed towards the scientific study of the Torah. Only a few individuals arose to meet the challenge of the new studies. Rabbi David Zevi Hoffman, the great German Talmid Chacham, wrote devastating attacks on the Wellhausen theory and did much to aid in its eventual overthrow. Rabbi Hoffman was also a great savant in the whole field of Rabbinic and Midrashic exegesis; his commentary on Leviticus, published in German and now available in a Hebrew translation, as well as his incomplete commentary on Devarim, also available in Hebrew translation, are masterpieces of Parshanut, which throw much light on many unsolved problems and controversies. There are many long expositions of vital interest to the reader such as a discussion on the significance of the sacrifices, on the time of composition of the various books of the Torah, on the disputations between the Pharisees

and the Saducees. Rabbi Hoffman utilizes the most modern researches available in his time, and displays a sharp and keen analytical mind. He is especially strong in showing the relationship that exists between the various parts of the Bible. The quality of the translation leaves much to be desired, but it is an outstanding contribution to our understanding of the Torah; it shows up the fallacies of the critical approach, and pioneers in a new method of Traditional Biblical Research, one that combines respect for tradition with the use of the latest scientific tools of analysis. A further contribution to our understanding of Torah was made by Prof. Umberto Cassuto, of Hebrew University. In *Torath Hateudoth* he states that he began his analysis of the Bible with an open mind, willing to accept whatever can be logically and scientifically proven. He came to the conclusion that the major premises of the Graf-Wellhausen theory, such as the theory of the various Codes which are revealed by the varying usage of the name of G-d and by the contradictions and change of emphasis, are all erroneous and cannot be maintained. The book is a popular presentation of a series of lectures he gave on this topic, and should prove of tremendous value to all who are bothered by these problems. Prof. Cassuto compares the history of the controversy over the dual or multiple authorship of Homer's *Odyssey* and *Iliad* to the controversy over the authorship of the Bible. It is a fine example of how comparative literature can aid in the understanding of the Torah. Unfortunately Prof.

Cassuto died before he could complete his masterplan, a completely new commentary on the Torah. The three books he left as his legacy, *Meadam Ad Noach*, *MeNoach Ad Avraham*, and *Sefer Shmoth*, all are very valuable to the serious study of the Bible. Cassuto was not a strict traditionalist in the full sense of the word, and many of his assumptions such as for example that the first few chapters of *Genesis* are remnants of ancient Epic poems are open to grave doubt. Likewise his numerology is out of place in a scientific commentary. The overall tone of the book, however, is traditional, and it has been influential in regaining converts to the cause of Traditional Exegesis. With the emergence of the State, the search for Jewish consciousness and for Jewish identity has turned many to the study of the Bible. As has recently been pointed out in Israel this is due to no small amount to a conscious or unconscious rebellion against the Talmud, which is felt by many to be the result of Galuth. The Bible is a product of Israeli genius and it represents a great national heritage. This explains the fact that confirmed non-believers like Ben-Gurion and others are avid scholars of the Bible. Chugim on various topics of the Bible are very popular. The annual Chidon generates national interest. Traditional Jewry has found two great popularizers of the study of the Bible. Any one who has even listened only once to Nechemia Lebowitz lecture on the Torah becomes her life-long devotee. She has the great skill to kindle a love and an interest in the Bible in stu-

dents who are devoid of any Judaic background. Available now in English and in Hebrew are her weekly sheets on *Parshat Hashovua*. Her method of exegesis is typical of the new type of exegesis that is coming out of Israel. Whereas in the past the tendency has been to comment on points of philology, on individual phrases, and from time to time on whole individual passages, the tendency now is to comment on whole unit of thought. Ideas in the Torah are compared to those expressed in Nach and in other literature, and an attempt is made to critically evaluate these ideas and sketch their development. One part of the Bible is utilized to shed light on the other part. Nechemia Lebowitz utilizes the best monographs available as well as the wealth of traditional commentators to make each section of the Torah more meaningful. She is especially strong in linguistic analysis.

One of the most popular books on *Parshanut Hamikrah* to come out of Israel in the last few years has been *Binah Bamikrah* by Jacobson, which is available in English as *Meditations on the Torah*. Jacobson learned a lot from his teacher Rabbi Wohlegemuth who was another of the great German Talmidei Chachomim. In this book Jacobson takes a central topic from each portion of the week and culls the best commentaries and monographs for an analysis. Many commentaries we are not so familiar with appear in this book, and the author shows great skill in the choosing of topics and in the utilization of commentaries. In *Chazon Hamikrah* he has done the same

with the Haftorah reading for the weeks of the year. These books are extremely valuable in that they point out an approach to the study of the Bible that ought to be more closely emulated. It has been reported that he is preparing a book on the ideas of our Tefilah, and we are eagerly anticipating its publication.

Interpretation of the Bible has never stopped throughout the ages. Each generation has been able to write a Midrash on the Torah based on its experiences and on its need. Great preachers have found references in the Bible to whatever they were looking for. One of the best examples of this continuing phenomena of re-interpreting the Torah in terms of our daily experiences is a fascinating book that has been widely acclaimed, *Hegyonoth Hamikrah* by Dr. Israel Eldad. This book is the result of lectures given during the war against Britain, in Israel. The author is not a religious Jew, but is traditionally oriented and in his introduction to the book acknowledges as his spiritual teachers, Rabbi Simeon Ben Yochai, author of the *Zohar*; Rabbi Yehuda Halevi, the late and revered Rabbi Abraham Yitzchak Hakohen Kook, and the poet Uri Zevi Grinberg. The approach used by the author is a very useful one, one that uncovers many hidden gems. There are many fine psycho-biographical sketches, some of which are the finest I have seen, of the lives of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. He describes their inner experiences and struggles, and finds many parallels to our modern situation. In the past very few commentators have paid much attention to psychological and

sociological factors in explaining incidents in the Bible. There were a few exceptions such as Abarbanel, and in the last century Shadal, but in general the commentators have lost track of the fact that, after all, what is being depicted are individuals with their frailties and their vices. We need a new modern com-

mentary on the Bible that will take into consideration the latest findings in the field of psychology and sociology as well as in the various other disciplines, which however will remain true to the Oral Tradition. This is what true synthesis is all about.

O. A. W.



„כי כפי מה שיחסר לאדם ידיעות משארי החכמות,  
לעומת זה יחסרו לו מאה ידות לחכמת התורה,  
כי התורה והחכמה נצמדים יחד”.

*Introduction to the Book of Euclid, Vilna Gaon*



There have existed in this country for centuries schools for higher learning, founded and maintained by various religious groups. A college for Arts and Science under Jewish auspices and influence will become in time an instrument for and symbol of Jewish self-respect and self-expression. . . . In such a school, the Jewish youth will be free to express itself in its own way. The college will, as it grows up and develops, constitute a contribution to American and Jewish life, and help perpetuate and advance Jewish culture, together with the dissemination and increase of general knowledge. . . . It will be the aim of the college to spread the knowledge of Judaism in its widest sense together with general knowledge. Jewish culture will be there on the same plane of opportunity as the classical and modern cultures. In such a college the religious consciousness of the students will be quickened and will find direction.

*—from an address by Dr. Bernard Revel,  
founder and first President of  
Yeshiva University*



