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YESHIVA UNIVERSITY—THE CHALLENGE OF HIGHER JEWISH EDUCATION

The American Jewish Community has a fourfold responsibility in the sphere of higher education and thus far it is Yeshiva University alone that fulfills all four roles.

The American Jewish community owes it to the United States to do what other religious sects have done a thousand times since the first college was established in the western hemisphere. It must build universities as Christians have done, to increase the educational opportunities available to all Americans. When Yeshiva University successfully projected and launched its Albert Einstein College of Medicine, Dr. Belkin made an immortal announcement, "At long last Jews will no longer be only guests in American medical schools; now they will also be hosts." And this sentiment is also applicable to almost all of Yeshiva's graduate schools. They serve the nation as a whole. Jewish resources must be in the employ of our country's aspirations for a more learned citizenry.

Second, the American Jewish community shares with Israel a major responsibility for the advancement of higher Jewish learning. The Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary and the Bernard Revel Graduate School of Yeshiva University are two of the most important schools in the world dedicated to this task.

Third, the American Jewish community has need of trained personnel for its own survival—teachers, rabbis, group and case workers, and above all else—a knowledgeable Jewish laity. Yeshiva University is the largest institution in the world fulfilling this purpose.

And lastly, Yeshiva University is producing the "Jewish in-

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tellectuals" who, whether as professors in other universities, creative writers, research scientists, or government officials, are demonstrating by precept and example that the light of Torah can still brighten man's horizons. The day of the self-named Jewish intellectual, whose principal claim to fame was his rejection of his Judaism, is approaching its end. A new day is dawning and devout and observant Torah-loving Jews are teaching in many departments of scores of American universities even as they serve state and nation in sundry capacities, and achieve prominence in the professional and industrial worlds.

The students of Yeshiva University do not readily see the process of which they are so indispensably a part. Alumni, like myself, who have been observing the American scene with anxiety for three or four decades can appreciate the transformation that has taken place since first from Henry Street, or Montgomery Street, or East Broadway we entered Yeshiva's portals for a more intensive study of Talmud. Then we were a score or two. Now there are thousands. Then secondary education under Yeshiva's auspices was all there was. Now there are educational opportunities including the most advanced study in the natural sciences. Then we had to cope with the intellectual challenges to orthodoxy as lonely pioneers with few or no teachers who were ever troubled by the need for a synthesis of the truths of their ancestral faith with the ideas constituting the modern temper. Now even *roshei yeshiva* teaching Talmud include experts in social and natural science as well as professional philosophers and historians.

Furthermore, Yeshiva's faculty on every level now includes hundreds who are themselves alumni of Yeshiva and share the institution's religious commitment. Many of these faculty members are not only writing scholarly books and essays but are also forging significant paths for the effective exposition of Judaism to our contemporaries. Their colleagues—alumni—on the faculties of other universities are making the same contribution—on the one hand, enriching scholarship as a whole, and on the other, making the insights of our heritage available to those in quest of their birthright. True, the literary output thus far is not an avalanche. And no Maimonides has yet appeared to write a definitive "Guide" for the twentieth century. But a Maimonides never appears until a few generations have done considerable spadework so that the system builder can perform his task. This spadework is in evidence today and Yeshiva University has a lion's share in the achievement.

And among the service personnel of the American Jewish community—the teachers, the directors of youth activities, the staffs of centers and social and fund-raising agencies, the leadership of congregations, even the non-orthodox rabbinate—the very young people through whom the American Jewish community hopes to achieve at least survival—among all of them the alumni of Y. U. are legion. Perhaps of many of them it can no longer be said that they are as pious as one would hope. Nevertheless, we must remember that that only the smallest percentage of the alumni of Wolozin, Slobodka, Mir, Telz and other great centers remained committed after they emigrated to America. Yet, they did, and still do, contribute to Jewish survival. Their outlook on Jews and Judaism is generally more positive than the outlook of the Jewish illiterate. This is also true of Y. U. alumni who are active in Jewish communal affairs even though they themselves may no longer be observant. They will support the applications of day schools for funds from Jewish federations; they will support *kashruth* and Sabbath observance in Jewish centers; in short, they will rarely be guilty of Jewish self-hatred.

Yet it is not only Jews and Judaism that Yeshiva University serves. It serves America and humanity as well. This point need not be labored except for the fact that a very small percentage of our co-religionists have brought with them to our country an understandable hatred of all non-Jews. They had suffered so much in Europe at the hands of Gentiles that they distrust all. And sometimes, though they should feel grateful for the welcome they received here, they are so embittered and so suspicious that they do not yet want to give of themselves to America as they should—as Torah bids them give. That explains their reluctance to serve in the military—even as chaplains. And Yeshiva University by itself must provide virtually the full quota of orthodox rabbis. That also explains why they cannot fathom the wisdom of Yeshiva University's concern for excellent graduate schools in medicine, natural science, education and social work. They are not impressed by the need for helping America to become not only the land of the free but the land of the most learned. But the overwhelming majority of American Jews do feel intensely patriotic and Yeshiva University not only feels this way but demonstrates it in the loftiest and most expensive manner—the establishment of facilities for higher education.

What is depressing is that Yeshiva University, precisely because it fulfills all four responsibilities of the American Jewish com-

munity in higher education, is denied support by many because it is not concentrating on one role only. The extreme "right", for example, would give support if Yeshiva were only a *Yeshiva*—though it is Yeshiva's character as a university that has given orthodoxy a status in America that it never enjoyed in any country in the world—including Israel. And most American Jews would support Yeshiva if it were only a university serving America alone and accelerating the process of acculturation and assimilation instead of insuring the survival of an intensive Judaism and the commitment of devout, observant Jews.

At least alumni and students of Yeshiva University should appreciate the historic achievement of their *alma mater* and contribute to her growth and reputation.

SOME UNFINISHED BUSINESS OF AMERICAN ORTHODOXY

The United States has often been referred to as the melting pot into which the rich assortment of ethnic, religious and cultural spices of the world have been poured. On a most intimate level it has also been the pot into which tragedy, opportunity and hope have also poured a variegated collection of orthodox Jewish ingredients. As the products of this *pot-pourri*, the contemporary orthodox Jew has good reason to feel proud and confident. The achievements of orthodoxy in the United States have been truly noteworthy if only for two major accomplishments.

First of all, we have survived. Despite all the scholarly eulogies by the latter day prophets of doom that rang out during the '20's and '30's, we have not vanished. Although orthodoxy in America has frequently been pronounced dead, a victim of enlightenment, wealth and acculturation, the corpse has refused to lie down.

Second, we have done more than merely survive. We have staked out a claim on an even brighter tomorrow. The slow increase in the number of modern, observant young people, the development of *yeshivot ketanot*, and the entry of committed Jewish young people into the mainstream of American science and technology have all given us good reason to feel that in many ways orthodoxy in the United States has "arrived".

These achievements, however, are like the radius reaching out to a greater circumference. They point up vital problems which the orthodox Jew has not yet resolved. In this article I shall examine some of these problems and their implications.

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The Non-Jew

The modern orthodox Jew has not yet come to grips with the problem of the non-Jew and his secular world. Despite his having ventured forth into the larger society of 20th century America, he has done so with a measure of self-consciousness, anxiety and religious guilt. He seeks membership in the world of credit cards, television and Cape Cod vacations but he also wants to be recognized as the legitimate heir to the traditions of Volozhin, Vilna and Pressburg. He proclaims this dual loyalty to be both possible and good. He strives mightily to be an all-American boy with *tzitzis*. This effort is not without strain.

The truth is that he doesn't feel fully successful with either role. He lives like the non-Jew but not with him. He observes the *halacha* but feels that he is not the religious equal of his more pious brother of the "right".

In his pragmatic adjustment to the world around us he has developed a curious dichotomy between the secular world in general and its non-Jews in particular. He has accepted the former and ignored the latter. The advantages and skills of the secular world are now all but universally recognized by modern orthodox Jews. He has learned to respect its chemistry, sociology and IBM computers. He has become very comfortable in the laboratory, the lecture hall and the market place.

The non-Jew, however, is a problem for him. He feels that he has become too sophisticated for the attitude of *tov she'b'goyim harog* and yet he can't seem to really accept him. While he can honestly say that he does not dislike him, he confesses that, with some exceptions, he doesn't seem to like him either. The Torah Jew would be perfectly content to remain a friendly stranger to his non-Jewish neighbor. For him the non-Jew represents a phenomena akin to hotel lobby furniture. He realizes that the landlord put it there for some unknown reason of his own, but he has neither use for nor interest in this furniture.

In earlier times this formula may have been both safe and satisfactory. Today's world presents issues which force us to re-examine the wisdom of such thinking. One major issue that illustrates this is the field of interfaith work. Orthodoxy has had a strong disdain for interfaith work as either currying favor or as the first step down the road to assimilation. We were quite content with the idea that interfaith work properly belongs to the reform because

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they are the "outside Jews", while we are concerned with Torah and *mitzvot* since we are the "inside Jews". In the spirit of *al tistakel b'kankan* we have identified the reform as the superficial Jews while we are the substantive ones. This arrangement, whether valid or not, operated for many years without any serious consequences for orthodoxy's posture in the broader non-Jewish world. The recent civil right crisis is forcing orthodox Jews to reconsider this former theory of the "division of Jewish labors".

The orthodox community lags far behind its counterparts in Jewish life in addressing itself to the civil rights revolution. Our voice is all but silent on the subject. Some months ago a friend who is a non-observant Jewish leader in civil rights work told me of a conversation he had had with a Negro minister at a recent NAACP meeting. The minister had told him that in the course of his extensive work for Negro rights he had met numerous conservative and reform rabbis, but never an orthodox rabbi. This puzzled and disturbed him. He told my friend that he had imagined that the orthodox rabbis, as the religious leaders closest to the biblical story of the redemption from slavery, would be the ones to best appreciate the negroes efforts to achieve equality. Yet, he had never seen an orthodox rabbi participate jointly with him in this work. He ended his comments with the question, "Don't they care?"

I fear that for many of us the civil rights battle remains a "goyishe problem". This is very unfortunate. Aside from the inherent moral responsibility that the Torah places upon us to fight injustice, we must recognize the community relations implications of our silence on the most important moral issue of the century for America. It is reasonable to expect that our non-Jewish neighbors are going to become increasingly knowledgeable about the various forces in Jewish life. As their understanding increases, they will be capable of increasingly sophisticated evaluations of the psychological, social and religious attitudes of the orthodox community on this most important issue. I confess that I am not comfortable with the image we now project.

If the format of interfaith work has developed along lines which are *halachically* and esthetically objectionable to us, we are entitled to no complaint at this late date. We share responsibility for this format because of our indifference and default. Within the framework of Jewish law and tradition, we must develop our own religiously creative approach to this field. I am confident that it can be done and convinced that it must be done.

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Non-Orthodox Jews

A psychological analysis of the feelings of the orthodox Jew toward his conservative and reform brethren would, I am sure, make a revealing study. It has been my observation that he is on a continuing seesaw in his feelings, alternating between envy and disdain for their distorted theology, diluted Judaism, religious ignorance and misreading of Jewish purpose. When he meets them in communal gatherings, he is self-conscious and he sometimes exhibits the type of uneasiness that reveals his inner discomfit. Nor is he entirely honest. He walks down the street and passes a magnificent conservative or reform edifice and then, in contrast, glorifies the poverty of his own buildings as proof of his piety. He refuses to admit to himself that in synagogue architecture, administration and procedure they have stolen his thunder. He still find it necessary to deprecate the good points of others in order to justify his own shortcomings.

Our internal malaise also manifests itself in our relationships to the general non-religious Jewish community. Our Anglo-Jewish newspapers and periodicals from time to time report on community battles in which a day school is fighting for inclusion by the allocations committee of a local Jewish federation or a group of rabbis are protesting the construction of an old age home without proper provision for *kashruth*. Such battles are certainly just and should be waged with all the resources we command. I fear, however, that our effectiveness in these areas is sharply hampered by the fact that we confine our efforts to areas of parochial concern to us.

One non-orthodox lay leader, in remarking about a battle over *kashruth* in a hospital remarked that "the orthodox Jews don't care about anything except ritual. None of them ever inquired whether we will have a good out-patient clinic or whether we are planning to provide an up to date social service program. All they care about is the kitchen." Incidents of this kind give currency to the myth that reform is ethical and orthodox is ritual.

We live in a world of labels. These labels, though not fully accurate sometimes cast a revealing light on groups. Orthodox Jews, when talking of themselves invariably identify themselves by the words "*shomer shabbos*". For us, *shmiras shabbos*, the actions of omission and commission called for by the *halacha*, are the criteria by which we measure fitness for the term "orthodox". In contrast, it is revealing to note that non-religious Jews far removed from ob-

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servance often describe us with the adjective "religious." This term implies more than bland ritual performance. It signifies some type of qualitatively superior spiritual orientation. We are credited with being a rather special elite group with some type of unique religious proximity to the Al-mighty. Our unknowing non-religious friends generously bestow this tribute upon us because they feel that we work longer and harder at the business of being Jewish than anyone else.

The problem is that deep down most of us don't really feel very spiritual. True, we *daven* longer and more often, we put on *tefilin* and worry about the *shkiah*. With all this, I think that a general sense of lack pervades us. What we feel, I fear, is that we are not better, only different. The recent zeal with which some of us have turned to *Hasidus* stems, at least in part, from the seeking of the modern observant Jew for some of the inner feeling that he lacks.

Religious Jewry has begun in recent years to reach out to bring back its neglected youth. If the process of capturing Jewish souls for Torah is to continue, we shall have to come to grips with the problem of transforming observance into an exercise that would identify the *goy kadosh*. The sophomoric idealism of the JSP student has jarred the mechanical religious complacency of more than a few *yeshiva bachurim*. We need only add *dai l'chakima-birmiza*.

Within the Orthodox World

We would hope that at least within our own *daled amos* we should be spared the problems of living honestly with our beliefs. Unfortunately, this is not the case. A brief glance reveals some areas of serious deficiency. Space limits us to a glimpse of three examples:

The Synagogue: If there is any single setting which should give evidence of our spiritual qualities, it is the *shul*. The conduct of our *tefilos* and our demeanor during *davening* should clearly demonstrate, if not our religious superiority, at least our higher yearning. The sad fact is that synagogue behavior is still a major problem for us. Lest there be any misunderstanding, I am not suggesting any of the artificial pomp and fanfare that has become the trade mark of non-orthodox. I speak of religious decorum as defined in the *Shulchan Aruch*. I speak of *kavana*, of not being *mafsik*, of *derekh eretz* for *seforim*, *taleissim* and *siddurim* and the like. In these areas we fall short of the standards which, we so proudly claim, distinguish us from our less

scrupulous brethren. The usual answer, of course, is that the orthodox *shul* believes in warmth rather than formality. This is a spurious argument. There is an uncomfortable accuracy in the observation that it's a very short trip from *heimish* to *beheimish*. It would appear that many of us have been riding too long.

Learning: The crowning jewel of orthodoxy is the *keser Torah*. We pride ourselves on the tradition which recognizes *limud Torah* as the highest form of worship of G-d. The elite of our society is the *talmid chacham*. We admire the person who continues his learning, particularly the one who learns *l'shmah*. Candor, however, demands that we face the fact that in some respects our learning reflects less our *yiras shomayim* than a special form of intellectual chess whose mastery has snob appeal. In some circles, we relish the probing of a scholarly capacity of our fellow for weakness. If we succeed in catching him we can then pronounce the checkmate of orthodoxy—*am ha'aretz*. Have we not allowed our pursuit of learning to become a race to accumulate more *blot*? Has not our *lumud* become slightly tarnished with the mildew of spiritual irrelevance—the removal of our learning from the purposes which give it meaning?

Respect For Others: Of all the internal problems we face, few are more frustrating than the problem of *bitul*. *Bitul* does not lend itself readily to translation into English. It can be translated as deprecation or belittling but it's something more. *Bitul* is a corrosion of the Torah personality. Its symptoms are varied: An empty lunch bag littering a *beis medrash* table . . . a torn *gemara* with its covers missing . . . the wise guy tilt of a hat . . . looking in a *sefer* when the rabbi begins his *drasha* . . . failing to keep an appointment and not calling to explain . . .

All these are problems which exist. All of them lend themselves to solution, Jewish solution. It requires honesty to see them and courage to correct them. These are attributes that orthodox Jews have always had in full measure.

ANI LEDODI—I AM MY BELOVED'S

How little we really knew about the average American Jew during our student days in the Yeshiva. He was a nebulous irreligious individual who troubled us *halachically* from time to time. We wondered whether we could drink the wine he touched and whether we could permit the average American *kohen* to recite the Priestly Benediction on the Festivals. We never devoted time and thought to understanding our non-observant Jewish neighbors. Thoughts of making Torah meaningful for him were relegated to Lubavitch or to the Community Service Division of Yeshiva.

Since I entered the active rabbinate three High Holy Days ago I have come to know the typical American Jew and to understand his way of life. He is no longer an enigmatic, obscure figure but rather a person with whom I communicate daily. I am convinced that he is a good candidate for Torah and Tradition if we will only succeed in bringing the message of Judaism to him. Within the context of this article I would like to offer some words of encouragement to the prospective practicing rabbi and to express my ideas concerning how we may succeed in presenting a meaningful Torah to our brethren.

When we first leave the Yeshiva and meet the average Jew we may easily be overwhelmed with his religious illiteracy. He will have only the vaguest idea of what the *Amidah* is and he may very well consider the person who buys kosher meat (although he has only one set of kitchen utensils) an extremely pious Jew. The young Rabbi might very well exclaim, "Can these bones live?"

A look at Jewish history will encourage us during these mo-

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ments of doubt. Many great Jewries began in atmospheres of ignorance which bore little resemblance to the ultimate accomplishments of Judaism in these countries. The Talmud tells us about the spiritual conditions in an area near Sura during the time of Rab. Rab once happened to be at Tattlefush and overheard a woman asking her neighbor, "How much milk is required for cooking a litra of meat?" (Hullin 110a).

The Jews of this Babylonian area did not even know that the mixture of meat and milk was forbidden. We can well imagine on what level their observance of the Sabbath or *taharas hamispacha* (family purity) was if they were so ignorant of even the rudiments of *kashruth*. Nevertheless Ray was not discouraged and he continued to preach and teach until the Talmud could exclaim: "Rav found an open space and put a fence around it." (Hullin 110a).

The dawn of Spanish Jewry as related to us in the *Sefer HaKaballah* of R. Abraham ben David should also provide encouragement for the American Rabbi. He are told about the four Babylonian rabbis who were taken captive while sailing. One of the captives, R. Moses ben Enoch was redeemed by the Jews of Cordova, Spain. He went to the synagogue and listened as the *dayan* of the community, R. Nathan, expounded the Talmud. The *Sefer HaKaballah* relates,

"When R. Nathan came to the laws concerning ritual sprinkling in the tractate Yoma, he was unable to explain them. R. Moses, sitting in the corner, rose and explained this law to R. Nathan. On that day R. Nathan the *dayan* said, "I am no longer your *dayan*, but this man, our guest, is my mentor and teacher, and I am his student from this day on. You should appoint him *dayan* in Cordova'." (from *Sefer Hakabala* R. Abraham b. David; Neubauer edition p. 68.)

The spiritual leader of the Jewish community of Cordova was teaching the Talmud to his community and he could not explain a Talmudic passage. Only R. Moses of Babylonia knew the correct explanation and no one else in the audience could assist the *dayan*. R. Nathan was so impressed with the new arrival that he insisted that R. Moses replace him as *dayan* of the community. The *Sefer HaKaballah* relates that R. Moses had to answer many inquiries and to explain many passages to the Cordovan community as this was their first contact with a true rabbinic scholar. This was the

same Cordova which was later to be the birthplace of the great Maimonides.

In the *Or Zarua* we find a description of the dawn of Judaism in Poland, Russia and Hungary which reads like a portrait of contemporary Jewish life in many of the smaller American Jewish Communities.

"In many parts of Poland, Russia and Hungary there are no Torah Scholars, due to the oppressive economic situation. They, therefore, hire whomever they can and he serves as their cantor, judge, and teacher." (*Or Zarua*, *Avodah Zarah*, 128.)

Despite these humble beginnings, we are all aware of the ultimate outstanding development of Polish, Russian, and Hungarian Jewries.

With these historic precedents in mind I am not dismayed when I receive inquiries from my congregants concerning the proper word representing a Rabbinical seminary for a cross-word puzzle which consists of eight letters, beginning with "Y" and ending in "H". These are the questions they ask today, but their grandchildren may very well ask the questions of Rashi and Tosafot if we plant and cultivate the tree of Torah with patience and dedication.

An Attitude of Love

Perhaps no better description of the attitude necessary for us to maintain in America can be found than that described by Maimonides as the proper approach towards the Karaites of his time.

"But their children and grandchildren, who, misguided by their parents, were raised among the Karaites and trained in their views are like a child taken captive by them and raised in their religion, whose status is that of an '*anus*' (one who abjures the Jewish religion under duress) who, although he later learns that he is a Jew, meets Jews, observes them practice their religion, is nevertheless to be regarded as our '*anus*', since he was reared in the erroneous ways of his fathers. Thus it is with those who adhere to the practices of their Karaite fathers. Therefore, efforts should be made to bring them back in repentance, to draw them near by friendly relations, so that they may return to the strength giving source, i.e., the Torah." (Rebels (*Mamrim*) Chapter 3 law 3. From Yale Judaica Series, Code of Maimonides, vol. III, translator A. M. Hershman.)

Maimonides instructs us to be friendly with our deviating brethren and to wean them back to the Torah with a peaceful and friendly attitude. Our attitude must be one of love and not enmity. We must be confident of ultimate success and we must not despair because of the magnitude of the challenge facing us. Even if we do not succeed in helping all the people we wish to aid, we may still accomplish a great deal. Even if we only return one person to Torah ideals we have still succeeded. Let us not forget the dictum of our sages:

"Whoever saves one Jewish life is considered as one who has saved the entire world." (*Sanhedrin* 37a)

Two Types of Love

How do we begin our task? What must we first attempt to teach our brethren? How do we inculcate an attitude which will ultimately inspire a commitment to authentic and historic Judaism?

I believe that "Love" must be the central theme in the solutions one may propose to these problems. In accordance with the attitude of Maimonides, we must display love towards our brethren. We must also teach them to love G-d and Torah.

In our tradition there are two important concepts of love which are constantly alluded to by prophet and sage. One great area of love is the love which we are commanded to nurture for the Almighty. Indeed, the love of G-d is one of our positive commandments. There is also the notion of love between man and woman which is constantly described in our sacred writings and traditions. Despite the usage of the word "love" to describe these two concepts, they are still two extremely different spheres of relationships. The achievement of the love of G-d is described by Maimonides in the following fashion:

"And what is the way that will lead to the love of Him and the fear of Him? When a person contemplates His great wondrous works and creatures and from them obtains a glimpse of His wisdom which is incomparable and infinite; he will straightway love Him, praise Him, glorify Him, and long with an exceeding longing to know His great name; even as David said: "My soul thus thirsteth for G-d, for the living G-d" (Ps. 42:3). And when he ponders these matters, he will

recoil in fright, and realize that he is a small creature, lowly and obscure, endowed with a slight and slender intelligence, standing in the presence of He who is perfect in knowledge. And so David said, "When I consider Thy heaven, the work of Thy fingers—what is man that Thou are mindfull of him?" (Ps. 8:4-5). In harmony with these sentiments I shall explain some large, general aspects of the works of the sovereign of the universe, that they may serve the intelligent individual as a door to the love of G-d, even as our sages have remarked in connection with the theme of the love of G-d, "Observe the universe and hence you will realize Him who spake and the world was." (*Mishna Torah*, Laws Concerning the Basic Principles of the Torah (*Yesodei Torah*), Chapter 2 *Halacha* 2, trans. M. Hyamson, Jerusalem 1960.)

Love of G-d is not based upon any material or physical gain that the person may be obtaining but is rather an intellectual experience achieved after contemplating the majestic beauty and magnificence of G-d's creation. And love itself engenders more love and longing to understand and comprehend the ways of the Almighty. However, love between man and woman is different. This love is achieved because of material and physical impetus. This is a state of love which our sages characterize as:

"Love which depends on a temporal object." (*Aboth*, chapter 5, *Mishna* 19.)

When we approach the average American Jew, I believe that we must utilize both concepts of love in bringing him closer to Judaism. We must awaken a deep and penetrating intellectual and emotional commitment to a transcendent purpose. We must win his total dedication to authentic Judaism. In addition, we must also realize that a human will love an object which he feels is of deep and abiding benefit to him. We must show him the manifold benefits which Torah provides to modern man living under the stress and tensions of the twentieth century.

Love of G-d

We must strive to reawaken the inherent drive within every human to know the L-rd. The American Jew may occasionally utter the name of G-d and he may claim a belief in a supreme being. But these pious thoughts are greatly removed from the au-

thentic Jewish belief in a maker who governs and guides our lives and has given us His Torah. We must kindle, and in many cases we must ignite "an exceeding longing to know his great name."

The rabbi's mere mention of G-d in real terms and as the supreme force in our daily existence will in itself be a new concept to many of our brethren. They will realize that G-d is more than simply a pious thought to a committed Jew.

The American Jew is looking for a purpose and direction in life. He has "arrived" and he is no longer struggling to gain acceptance by his neighbors, and to establish himself economically. The suburbs are now dotted with successful Jewish families. I find that it is among these outwardly happy families that the greatest emptiness is felt when they pause to ask, "Why and where is our goal and destiny?" People are searching for a life that will be illuminated by a transcendent commitment and we must attempt to inspire them to accept Torah as the focal point of their existence. We must restate their question of "why and for what goal and destiny" in religious context.

We should make them "G-d conscious" and we should attempt to guide them to feel "a great yearning to know G-d". We must preach and teach about G-d and we must make the "Supreme Being" a reality for them. Ultimately, we will see the words of our sages fulfilled and through a properly directed reawakening of longing and love for G-d our brethren will recognize "Him who spake and the world was."

Love of Torah

Our approach must not only be to fill the spiritual vacuum in their lives but simultaneously we must attempt to translate the Torah into relevant terms and concepts. The average Jew's knowledge of Torah is almost entirely nil. He has more misconceptions of than true facts about the few Torah commandments that he may happen to know of. The more erudite know more about Torah from *Commentary* and their local Federation paper than from the *chumash* itself. They accept the "putrid meat" theory for *kashruth* as a truism, and the Sabbath is viewed as an antidote to the labor required in rubbing two stones together. Needless to say, a *mikvah* is viewed as the bath tub of yesteryear. How enlightening it is for them when *kashruth*, Sabbath and *mikvah* are discussed in terms of holiness and separation. "Sanctify yourself with that which is permissible." On some occasions we may perhaps indulge in some rationalizations as we view *kashruth*

as the great historic barrier against inter-marriage and assimilation. How meaningful this should be today when inter-marriage is becoming increasingly more prevalent throughout the United States. We should discuss the Sabbath in relation to the tensions under which modern man operates. What happens to our nervous system when we are alone in a room and the phone rings? Immediately, we rise and go to answer the phone. How relaxing it is on the Sabbath to hear the same phone and not to react. The phone may be ringing but the person is soon oblivious to it and his great day of true relaxation continues. And perhaps we may view *taharas hamishpocha* in the light of the present literature which has appeared to discuss a widespread modern problem of "boredom in marriage." We must show the "light in the Torah" in contemporary terms and our brethren will be tempted to love Torah for the enhanced beauty, meaning, and aid it can give to their lives. It is true that we may be creating "Love which is dependent on a temporal object," but our sages only deprecate such a love when there is a chance that the object upon which the love depends will be removed. However, Torah, the basis of this love, can never be removed or abrogated. (See *Aboth*, Chapter 5, *Mishna* 19.)

I am positive that we will succeed if we dedicate ourselves to the great challenge of making Torah meaningful to the average American Jew. With the help of G-d, and utilizing the proper approach, we will some day see American Jewry continue the traditions of Babylonian, Spanish, and Eastern European Jewries. We will hear the new voice of American Jewry exclaim with historical pride "Ani ledodi ve dodi li."—"I am my Beloved's and my Beloved is mine." (*Song of Songs*, Chapter 6, verse 3.)

ON TEACHING TALMUD IN THE DAY SCHOOLS

A reluctance to abandon old ways and to adopt new ones is characteristic of any organized religion. Such a spirit of conservatism doubtlessly caused a taboo to be placed on iron for ritual use in many ancient cultures, since it was a new-fangled discovery to stone age man. Others would read similar motives into our insistence upon hard written parchment for the *tefilin* and *mezuza*. Thus one expects to find the educator's traditional conservatism to an even greater degree in religious education, and indeed this is the case, at least insofar as the teaching of Talmud is concerned. However, as the wise king said: "If you train the youth in accordance with his nature, he won't forsake this training even when he grows old," and educators should bear this constantly in mind. The higher the value that is placed on the goal the more pragmatic one should be in choosing the methods to be used, provided of course that the methods themselves don't contradict the goal.

Bearing this prefatory remark in mind, we shall turn to an examination of Talmud study in the day school. This isn't intended to be a precise statistically studied report, and thus in evaluating the results, we shall assume that Talmud is taught from the fifth grade through the twelfth for 8-10 hours a week. In order to evaluate the average end product of the day school as far as his Talmudic education is concerned we must set the standards, that is, the goals that should be achieved. Under the assumption of eight

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On Teaching Talmud in the Day Schools

years of study, 8-10 hours a week, a reasonable set of goals would be:

- a) The ability and desire to continue the study of the Talmud on his own;
- b) A knowledge of most of the basic concepts of Jewish law insofar as they pertain to living today in accordance with the Torah, and their source in the Talmud;
- c) An orientation in *aggada* which will enable the student to find the Jewish view of and attitude towards the problems of the world and the individual;
- d) A general familiarity with the Talmudic literature;
- e) A specific familiarity with several tractates.

Perhaps a word of explanation will not be amiss. By b) I mean that the student should know most of the basic concepts in the laws of *Shabbat* for example, such terms as *hotsa'ah*, *muktsa*, *melechet mackshevet* and *pesik reisha*; while he needn't know the laws of the leper, for example, in such detail. Putting it differently, he should have covered in the *Mishna* parts of *Zeraim*, most of *Moed* and selections of *Nashim* and *Nezikin*. The third goal means he should have studied parts of the *aggada* in addition to that which occurs in the tractate that he is learning to orient him in the sources of what is called *machshevet yisrael* and mistranslated as Jewish philosophy. The next one means he should be able to refer intelligently to those parts of the Talmud which he didn't learn in school. The reader might at this point stop and say such goals are by no means reasonable and can't be achieved; I hope to indicate by the end of this essay how such goals can be achieved.

As has already been implied at the end of the last paragraph, the average graduate of the day school falls far short of these goals. Indeed, the majority of those graduates who enter Yeshiva College, and the presumption is that these are the select in the sense that they have the most desire and ability to continue their Jewish studies, also fail to achieve these goals. This well known fact should cause the teachers to sit up and take stock of themselves to see where it is that they are failing, for such a result reflects not on the students but on the teaching. The guide line for teaching Talmud seems to be to bring the students to the level of learning a *sugya* with all the commentaries in the way of the European *yeshiva*. Thus, almost before he can read Rashi's commentary, his teacher is explaining to him the *Tosafot* together with such super commentaries as that of R. Sh. Eidel. The result of this is great

emphasis on content and little on form and on the whole the Talmud remains a closed book. An aggravating factor is the choice of tractates to teach these fledgling students of the Talmud. The usual choice is one of the chapters of *massechet nezikin*, not a chapter destined to have much relevance for the average day student aged 10 or 11. A third feature of the methods used is that relatively little attention is paid even to those *aggadic* portions encountered in the course of studying a particular chapter. In addition insufficient attention is focused on the exegetical methods used in interpreting the Torah, even in the *halachic* portions, so that the students on the whole have but a dim picture of the Talmud as the Jewish commentary on the Bible. Anybody familiar with the European yeshiva, or its offshoots in America or Israel will recognize the methods described. In the context of Jewish life in Lithuania or Poland the methods were valid and, so it is told, by and large they succeeded.

Probably the key to why they won't work here in the day schools is precisely because they are day schools and devote half of the day to secular studies. There is no background or atmosphere of Jewish tales, legends or life backing up the work in the school. In general the youth's entire sum of Jewish knowledge is that which he learns in school. If in Europe there was no need to dwell on the *aggada* portions for any length of time it was in large part because most of the material was already familiar to the youths from his *recreational* readings which consisted not of comics or even of *Tom Sawyer* but of collections like the *Book of Comfort*. If there was no need to make a conscious effort to teach such phrases as *seudat chidka*, it was because they were imbibed from the daily speech of the home. Needless to say such is not the case in America today and this may explain the failure of the traditional methods.

The fact that half the day is spent in secular study also causes a great reduction in the amount of time at the teacher's disposal. When the entire day is devoted to study in depth in spite of intensity a fair amount of ground can nonetheless be covered and in the end the desired breadth of knowledge is attained. With only a few hours a day such intensive study precludes the possibility that the student acquire a familiarity with the whole of the Talmud.

This brief analysis serves to justify my dissatisfaction with the present teaching methods. If the reader doesn't agree with this

analysis he can nonetheless consider the alternative approach that I shall now outline on its own merits.

The goal to concentrate upon is a). If sufficient interest is aroused so that the student wants to continue studying, and enough skills are given to him so that he can, it becomes possible to achieve the other goals without difficulty. The key to achieve this seems to lie in changing the emphasis to learning *in extenso*. In order to explain what I mean by this let me outline a course of study over a period of 8 years, grades 5-12. The first two years should be spent exclusively on *Mishna*, with a commentary such as that of R. Bartenura used as an aid (not a second text) with the object of covering say *Berakhot*, a third of *Moed*, and parts of *Nashim* and *Nezikim*. Where necessary, portions may be skipped, for example in the course of studying *Chagiga* one needn't dwell in detail on those parts dealing with the law of purity. Attention should be paid to methodology, characteristic phrases, exegesis and so forth so that the underlying structure and processes become clear. In the next two years the study of *Mishna* should be continued but with selections of the *Gemara*, especially those parts that deal directly with exposing the *Mishna*. Here again the stress should be on understanding every word, phrase and construction of the Talmud so that the student is able to read it freely at the end of the two years. At this stage of extensive studying Rashi should be taught but not the Tosafists. To be sure the stress on the form is not to be obtained at the expense of content. During four years the basic recurring concepts and laws should begin to become daily tools, for without such a background the tasks I am setting for the high school will be impossible to achieve. The same cautionary note should be sounded about the study in high schools. I am emphasizing other things because they have been neglected.

The first two years of high school should be devoted to covering with Rashi and occasional selected Tosafot, namely those that deal directly with explaining the text, as much ground as possible. Say for example *Berakhot*, *Beitsa*, *Megilla* and *Makhot*. Again the emphasis is on understanding the text, including the *aggadic* portions, and the way the *gemara* tackles the various problems and difficulties. The last two years should essentially continue the program of the first two years with the following differences. At this stage the student should begin preparing the text before hearing the teacher explain it and there is nothing wrong with assigning such a task as homework rather than spending time during school

hours. At this time he should be introduced to the use of certain tools such as Jastrow's dictionary to enable him to study by himself. Secondly, he should also learn certain *sugyot* with the Tosafot and possibly certain other *rishonim* so that he at least tastes of intensive study. However, the ability to study the *rishonim* too on his own is not one of our goals at this level, and therefore the study of *rishonim* shouldn't be allowed to seriously minimize our effort to have him cover more and more ground so that he feels completely at home with the Talmud.

One further word about the tools with which we should equip our students. There exist some excellent ones readily accessible in English, which should not be forbidden in the teaching of Jewish subjects simply because they are in English. One such was mentioned already. Another is a collection of *midrashim*, probably the most complete one relating to the Bible stories, Ginzberg's *Legends of the Jews* (JPS, VII vols. and abridged in 1). The students should be encouraged to read through such a book on their own, with class discussion, say, of certain parts. Only slightly less accessible along this line is the *Sefer Aggadah* of Bialik and Ravinitski. Such collections should serve to broaden their knowledge and appreciation of the *Midrash*.

To summarize, the disappointing results of the system used today in teaching the Talmud in the day schools suggest a reevaluation of this system. Such an evaluation reveals that it is not well adapted to the needs of the American Jewish youth and an alternative method is suggested. This method is based upon the belief that the Talmud can speak for itself and if only the student becomes sufficiently aware of the vast panorama of all aspects of Jewish life and thought which is presented in multitudinous forms he will be drawn towards it. If this is achieved the interest generated and the needed skills imparted the day schools can produce graduates willing and able to embark upon a lifelong study of the sea of the Talmud, the numerous rivers that flow into it and the many harbors and bays which it engenders.

A VALEDICTORY FOR MUSMACHIM

One of our instructors in the *Semicha* program, attempting to prepare us for life in the outside world once quoted the oft found statement in the Maharam, "The World Asks." Whenever there would arise a particularly difficult problem in the Talmud, it would be predicated with: "The World Asks" and, our instructor continued, there is the anecdote of the proverbial *yeshiva* student leaving the walls of the *beis medrash* and chancing upon a distraught gentleman rushing to and fro. Obviously, thinks the *yeshiva bocher*, the gentleman is perturbed about the question in the Maharam, the question which the world is asking. He then perceives a youth happily strolling along, hand-in pocket, a whistle on his lips. From whence his joy? Obviously he has discovered a solution to the universal question plaguing the world. Imagine the frustration and chagrin of the student—concluded the instructor—when he learns that neither the distraught gentleman nor the whistling youth has ever heard of Tosafot, no less of the intricate question of the Maharam, and that the world asking the question consists of a number of rabbis no longer among the living and a handful of students swaying over their Talmud tomes in the *beis medrash*.

Nevertheless, I must take issue today with the intent of the example. The world of the Maharsha is our world; the world of R. Judah, R. Meir, Abaye, Ravah, Rambam, Rashi, Ramah, Hazon Ish, R. Akiba Eiger is our world, and their questions are our questions. Theirs is the voice of Torah which inextricably binds the generations, the promise of Torah which weds man to the Divine, the fire of Torah which contains the secret of Eternity. Theirs is the spark which will never be extinguished, the flame which en-

Rabbi Riskin delivered this address at the 1963 *Semicha* Convocation.

kindles but never consumes, the fire within which is far stronger than the fires without. It is our task to enter this world, to couch it in the scientific and philosophic idiom of the twentieth century, but above all to transmit it *intact* to those whom we are privileged to teach. We must endeavor to demonstrate to them how piercing and how painstaking, how fervently ardent and how uplifting, how applicable and how ennobling, is that chant of *gemara* which we've chanted these all too few years in the Yeshiva.

We are living in a generation which has lost faith both in G-d and in man. From the time that Nietzsche declared "*G-d is dead*" until the destruction of the martyred 6,000,000, it is almost as though the great cloud separating man from his G-d has descended and we are not even worthy of a Moses who can enter the Sanctuary and speak face to face. Our art forms have become meaningless, and our literature structureless, our music cacophonous, and our theatre absurd. There is no visible order in the cosmos, and the voice of G-d is silent. Even man, who was seen by the Greeks as the measure of all things, about whom Sophocles declared: *Many are the wonders, but none as wonderful as man*, of whom great tragedies were written and noble songs were sung, has sunk to the level of a rat in a laboratory whose every action can be determined, to a "Willie Loman" who lives a life of pretense and delusion, whose days are empty of content and whose encounter is with nothingness.

However, we the *musmachim* must understand and transmit to others as well, that underlying every line of the *gemara*, that silently connecting every word of the Rambam is a Jewish *weltanschauung*, a *halachic weltanschauung* which rigorously refutes the distance of G-d and the smallness of man. *Halacha* and the world of Talmud serves as the bridge between the world, horizontally connecting man with past and future—Revelation at Sinai and the days of the Messiah—and vertically, both elevating man and causing the Divine to suffuse the earth.

Moreover, how can G-d possibly be distant if He is concerned with our every action? How can man be considered insignificant when the slightest detail of his activity is vehemently discussed and debated? The true message of *halacha* states that G-d did not merely descend upon Mt. Sinai once in Jewish history with the declaration of—I am to be your G-d,—stated to every single Jew at that time. G-d spoke then and speaks now through the words of the Torah, the pages of the *gemara*, the chapters of the *Shulchan Aruch*, the classes of every *godol*. This

is the—still small voice of a living G-d—contained in a living Torah. *Halacha* is the only true content of revelation (despite what Buber and the Christians may believe), because it tells man that G-d cares, that G-d loves, that G-d lives. If G-d loved not, why would he care? And if G-d cared not, why would the *gemara Hagiga* say: G-d weeps over everyone for whom it is possible for him to learn Torah, and he doesn't learn. And if G-d cared not, why expend so much time and energy in endeavoring to understand the *mitzva* of *matza*, the prohibition of work on the Sabbath! It is only through *halacha* that we realize G-d's all-abiding concern, and it is in the midst of a class pertaining to the smallest detail of *halacha* that we come to truly understand His love.

And can man be insignificant when his every action contains cosmic significance, when he is involved in those eternal principles and ideals which were the blueprint for the creation of the world? The Torah is eternal, and the *talmid chocham*—walking in eternity—is constantly involved in bringing G-d down to earth, in taking the *halachic* principle and applying it to the present human situation. The Torah scholar is constantly endeavoring to make both worlds meet, to both apply the ideal to the present situation as well as to apply the present situation to the ideal. This is why the *yeshiva* student can become excited about a tractate in *Kodshim* as he can about a tractate in *Moed*. He is not simply endeavoring to apply the *halacha* to the present; he is likewise striving to create and shape the present in accordance with the dimensions of the *halacha*.

And even more, is not man elevated to a partner with G-d, when he is allowed to interpret, to broaden, to enlarge and to enrich G-d's Torah through the media of Oral Law? Does not man become ennobled when, in the eternal world of the *halacha*, both sides of every argument are imperishably recorded.

G-d is not so far away that he lacks concern with each detail of our existence. Man is not too small that he cannot help fulfill and perhaps even create. This is the vision of our *lomdes*. This is the unspoken philosophy of our *halacha*, and it is only through concentrated study, through combined delgings in *halacha*, that we can keep the message of Abaye and Ravah, Yosef Karo and the Ramah alive forever in our minds and our consciousness, and it is ultimately by means of the orderly structure of the *halacha* that we may begin to perceive the orderly structures of the Universe.

THE VALUE OF CHALUTZIUT

Is there a justification for the existence of Zionist youth movements on today's American scene? Many would unhesitatingly answer this question with an immediate negative response. Such an answer is not unjustifiable. There was a time when these movements served a definite purpose, but when the state of Israel emerged as an independent government among the nations, American youth, by and large, ceased to be vital to the state. During the year that preceded the establishment of *Medinat Yisrael*, youth was decisive in creating the state. Many were the American boys and girls who went to Israel in order to participate personally in the all-important battles that brought about independence. They went on aliya to be of aid to the embryonic state of Israel in any way that they could. But today, as the realization of Israel's political independence is almost sixteen years behind us, we can look at a totally different reality.

Apathy is the key-word! True, the youth movements today do give a smattering of education about Israel, but, in the main, their activity lies in the raising of funds and even this is done mainly because of a social impetus. Today, young boys and girls join Zionist youth movements almost exclusively in order to have a good time. Starting with the organizations that deal with the very youngest "Zionists" to the one which deals with Zionism on the college campuses, the drawing for membership comes through social activities and light-hearted programs rather than from the desire on the part of members to participate in intellectual pursuits dealing with Zionist concerns. Membership grows in proportion to the number of successful programs, and it shrinks with failure

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in such areas. True, programs are sponsored which deal with Israel on the serious level too, but these are usually poorly attended unless there is a guarantee that there will be adequate socialization.

About the highest point in the educational programs of the movements is reached when the member goes to Israel for a summer tour or studies there for a while. Upon his return, he leaves behind him the bad will of Israelis whom he has completely failed to understand and whom he has succeeded in insulting by living as an American temporarily transplanted to Israel. He views Israel as a place in need of foreign aid to be supplied, not by the American Government, but by the American Jewish community. And so, the social activities which at one time had a smattering of educational purpose tied to them, now become overtly for the sake of raising money.

Even as simple and pleasant as this process may seem to be, many fall by the wayside. For the irreligious Jew, Zionism often provides the only contact that he has with Judaism. Often, even this contact is too much and too demanding. Influenced by the American community and the materialistic values that surround them, all too many members find devotion to a cause which is only understood poorly (the usual approach being that Israel is a very worthy charity—nothing much deeper than that) to be too taxing and they leave. The Zionist movements seem to move with the tide. They present no new values and do not add deeper meaning or valuable content into the lives of their members. Today's young Zionist doesn't have anything which makes him stand apart from non-Zionists. His Zionism comes and leaves with his organizational associations.

However, there is a small core within the leadership of the various movements which see more deeply into Israel. They feel that, for American Jews too, Israel should be a homeland. Those few who overcome the multitude of barriers that stand in the way of *aliya* from America finally manage to settle almost exclusively in the cities: Tel Aviv, Jerusalem and Haifa. And the government of Israel, very desirous of American *olim*, has had to grapple with a very serious problem: how to keep the American *oleh* from returning to America. Its solution has been to provide the American with the standard of living to which he has been accustomed. Special homes are constructed for the Americans which have special facilities and special conditions provided. Why? Because the education which is given in the American Zionist youth move-

ments doesn't get across certain basic ideas. The *oleh* today, as a product of his youth movement, is going on *aliya*, not for the sake of Israel but for his own sake. If he finds living in Israel to be too difficult or too demanding, to the extent that he feels the move is not "worth it" for him, that living in Israel is not rewarding enough, then he will return. So in order to keep him happy, the Israeli and his government must bend over backward to satisfy the internal personal and psychological needs of the transplanted American. Things even go to the extreme of providing little American oases in Israel for the American who can't bear to break his intimate needs for the land in which he was born. One such oasis is the Z.O.A. house in Tel Aviv (true, not built by Israel, but by Americans) which, though totally out of place in Israel, would fit in perfectly in New York, Chicago, Los Angeles, or for that matter, in just about any large American city.

If my approach to American Zionist youth organizations and *aliya* from America has been a cynical one, let me say here that I except from all that I have said, one type of Zionist organization—the *chalutzic* movements. These groups can be divided into two main branches—the religious and the non-religious.

Though in many respects they differ, in two crucial areas all *chalutzic* organizations concur. First of all, their specifically stated goal is for *aliya* for all their members and it is toward this that they constantly educate. Secondly, the *aliya* from *chalutzic* movements is quite different than that of those from the general Zionist organization.

The primary concern of the *chalutzic oleh* is not "How good a living will I be able to make in Israel?" but "In what way can I be of aid to the Israeli community?" The *chalutz* is an idealist. He seeks no personal glory but is concerned with greater matters. What bothers him is not the financial success of today's business deal but "What is the future of Judaism?" and "Will Jewish values be perpetuated or will they develop along the lines set for us by centuries of *galut* living dominated by non-Jewish values?" But concern about these questions and for these values is only part of the story. The *chalutz* sees it as his duty to fight for his ideals both as an individual and as a member of a group. The battles he fights are not for his own advancement—this the *chalutz* is willing to forego for the sake of Israel's and Judaism's general advancement.

For such an approach to develop, different values must be stressed. The educational system is not based on social attraction.

The heavy emphasis lies on education toward values. The *chalutz* is usually not ready to accept the world as he finds it. He sees imperfections and the desire to correct them is implanted. As a natural result of this approach the *chalutzic* youth movements differ greatly from those of their non-*chalutzic* brothers.

The most obvious difference is size. The *chalutzic* movements are relatively small and each member has a closer contact with the actual running of the movement. In addition to the intensive Zionist education which is given them, members learn to value those things which are often neglected in American life today. Material possessions are not important. Instead, the group and its internal cooperation comes to the fore. The aid of one to another without concern about "What will it get me?" is a guiding principle. Selfless devotion is not an abstract term in *chalutzic* movements. Members of these movements work in the organization without pay, when they could almost always do the same work elsewhere with good pay. Working in the movements' summer camps is done with great sincerity and devotion, but without pay. The "pay" in a *chalutzic* organization is the self-satisfaction that comes from the knowledge that a job has been well done, be it a big job or a little one. There is not any *kavod* in a *chalutzic* movement. Status is abandoned. The work that is usually reserved for the most lowly is good enough for all. The intrinsic values of study, labor and friendship are emphasized, not the extrinsic values.

It is indeed hard to imagine, without being an intimate part of them, how greatly these movements differ from the American community within which they are found. For that matter, they differ greatly from most societies. The heavy educational direction of these movements leads toward a closed society with similar values—*kibbutzim*. In the *kibbutz*, the *chalutzic oleh* finds people who also are not interested in social advancement, status climbing and increased material wealth. Instead, the joint working toward the common goal of building up the state of Israel guides them.

Not negligible here is the difference in the approach of religious and non-religious *chalutzim*. The non-religious stress *kibbutz* in addition to the above-mentioned reasons, because it is a workers society based on socialism. The stress within the religious *chalutzic* movements comes from their viewing religious *kibbutzim* as the places most conducive towards the living of a complete and well-rounded religious life. The religious *kibbutz* is seen as

providing the framework within which one can best fulfill the *mitzvot bein adam l'chavero* in addition to those *bein adam lamakom*.

The American *oleh* from a *chalutzic* movement gives up much from the materialistic standpoint. However, that which he leaves behind him in America is adequately replaced by the values which he finds fulfilled in Israel. He presents no problem to the Israeli government and does not seek to maintain strong ties with America since his needs are not answered by that which America provides. In Israel, he is not a transplanted American but instead he becomes a new Israeli.

Members of the *chalutzic* movements don't always end up on *kibbutzim*. When they take their places in other parts of Israeli society, it is a selfless concern which places them. Rather than ending up in Tel Aviv, Jerusalem or Haifa, they are more likely to be found in the smaller cities and in development towns where they can have greater impact on the community. Here their work doesn't separate them from the citizens of Israel and create an unpleasant "caste" system, rather it joins them with the people and furthers the overall growth of the state through education by doing.

Many will ask, is it morally right for *chalutzic* organizations to train American youth for such complete abandonment of this country? Though this is a subject for long discussion, I'd like to emphasize one aspect of the answer. Though the *chalutzic* movements don't place this as one of their goals, they are aware of a certain reality: the education which is given in the *chalutzic* youth movements doesn't always succeed in spite of its intensity. Not all members do finally go on *aliya*. On the contrary, America has much in its favor, and most members remain in America. However, even if *aliya* is lost, most other values are not. People who have learned to value work for its own sake don't easily lose that value. Members of *chalutzic* movements may, at first, find it difficult to find their places in the adult American community, but when they do, they bring great devotion and dedication to their activity in their societies. They tend to become the leaders in synagogue activities and community projects while others, interested in their own personal gains, take back seats.

A *chalutzic* youth movement may create a boy or girl who will find difficulties while he is young and in America, but, in Israel, or as an adult American, he leads the way. While those

who were well adjusted Americans in their youth are out of place in Israel and self-centered in their adult actions, the *chalutz* provides the backbone for a more progressive community.

One would hesitate to suggest that Yeshiva University provide a Zionist *chalutzic* education for its students, but it would seem that for the betterment of the school and for American Judaism this institution should at least learn a lesson from one aspect of the *chalutzic* movements. The religious Jewish community in America is not a very strong one when the entire United States is considered. Those who learn in a school which gives its students a deep understanding of their religion should not be allowed to look complacently on the Jews here who don't have this background. Yeshiva University must in its own way, and on a large scale, give the training not only of religious Jewry but of religious *chalutzit*. Graduates of Y.U. should not be content to live as religious Jews for themselves; they must be given the inspiration and direction which will lead them, in great numbers, to feel an obligation toward American Jewry as a whole and to work with it in aiming towards improvement.

RELIGIOUS NATIONALISM— AN EDUCATIONAL PROBLEM

Traditional Jewry always conceived of itself as more than a religious group or a deviationist clan. During the long period of wandering, Jews never lost the conviction that they were a national entity. Three times daily the Jew faced Jerusalem to pray. Paradoxically, he did not face eastward because he felt the *shekinah* was there, but because he *knew* that is was *not*. Jews prayed for the return of G-d to Jerusalem, and realized full well that the return of the Divinity to that city meant the return of Israel to Zion. "When the temple was burned and the Jews exiled, the *Shekinah* went into exile too." The sentiment here is clear. The "wandering Jew" is not a *status quo* to be desired. His existence in the Diaspora is almost meta-historical til the return to Zion takes place.

The yearning for the land of past generations was a tangible expression of their sense of incompleteness as Jews. R. Simlai (*Sotah* 14a) said: "Why did Moshe desire to enter the Land of Israel? Did he have to eat of its fruit and fill himself of its goodness? This is surely not so, but the feeling of Moshe was that there are many *mitzvot* a Jew can only fulfill in *Eretz Yisroel*." Moses felt himself not yet complete and begged to be allowed to enter the land.

* * * *

Judaism for two thousand years has kept alive a legal system which, to a great extent, has little practical application. *Halachot*, many of which treat of matters foreign to our way of life, are studied diligently in Talmudic seminaries. Some would have us believe that this was an expression of traditional Jewry's in-

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ability to cope with reality. The need to closet yourself in the four ells of Talmudic study was pointed to as typical of this inability. The *maskilim* of past and present generations are unimpressed by the fact that the greatest Jewish minds have consistently been among those considered unable to adapt their lives to the world's progress. These *maskilim* failed to realize that the study of *halacha* was never a withdrawal from the world of reality and progress. The great men of *halacha* have always been called upon to deal with the problems of the present and everyday living. The total commitment to *halacha* was, instead, resistance being waged by the Jew against a world which was not molded with Jewish concepts at its base. The Jew had long ago decided that not even the Diaspora would be able to wrench him from his tradition and his people. The tradition had to be kept intact for there is no doubt that the revival of a Jewish nation is imminent. There was never any doubt that the *mitzvot hatehuyot ba'aretz*, the commandments dealing specifically with the land of Israel, had a future in fact. It was clear, to the Jews, that the tractate *Zeraim* would someday be the foundation of practical law. So the Jews, in the days of exile, felt the great loss, just as R. Simlai realized Moses did. The fulfillment of *mitzvot*, which could in essence be accomplished, was denied them by the fact of the Diaspora. We found ourselves, just as Moses did before us, standing on a mountain looking at the land, and yearning to be there too. There is so little that the land can offer, materially, that one wonders why the need is so great. The Jews of the Diaspora are incomplete: ever straining to fulfill the Torah in its fullest sense, and being cruelly blocked by their position atop the mountain of the Diaspora.

* * * *

Our exile may be, in many aspects, meta-historical but redemption always had a clear meaning to the majority of the Jewish people. It is reasonable that Judah Halevi who wrote of "his heart which is in the East," felt compelled to renounce his native land and go to Israel. The same is true for the students of the Gaon of Vilna and the followers of R. Nachman of Breslav who settled in Israel. It is, in fact, this feeling for the land and its place in Jewish life that the Zionists of our time inherited and exploited in their movement.

There can be little doubt that the existence of a people as a national entity depends to a large measure, on having a land or a

center for that people. Not even the Jews in their long history of exile were able to defy this law. The wanderings never severed their ties with the land, but aggravated their need for it. It was not the fact that the Jews were a people without a home that kept them a dynamic and flourishing group. It was, instead, the certainty that they were a people who would shortly return to their native land.

Traditional Judaism has of late concentrated its battle with the more liberal wings on issues pertaining to religious practice. The *mechitza*, *shabbos* and the form of the *ketuba*, as examples, have become the touchstones of debate. There is no denying the importance of these *mitzvot* to Jewry, but in restricting the objections primarily to questions of observance we have, seemingly, conceded ground to liberal Judaism on a fundamental issue. Our silence and seeming inability to come to grips with the problem of Jewish nationalism in the modern age, gives one the impression that all branches of Judaism are to a great extent agreed as to their position on this problem; this, of course, is not so.

* * * *

Since the migrations of Jews to America the orthodox leadership has worked to establish the community along traditional lines. Synagogues and centers had to be built, day schools and *yeshivot* established. And they were! Orthodoxy took up the fight against those voices which in the name of liberalism, wished to remake Judaism. The reformers believe that Judaism must lose its nationalistic identity in order for Jews to assimilate fully into the American way of life. Geiger was one of the first to express these sentiments when in 1870 he commented that "cultural evolution is now becoming conscious of its general humanitarian character. Judaism, too, must give up its national limitations and, assured of its eternal content, unhesitatingly penetrate the wide halls of humanity." (A. Geiger "*Die Versammlung zu Leipzig und die zu Phila.*," *Judische Zeitschrift für Wissenschaft und Leben* VIII, 1870). In our own times this does not imply that a Jew may not sympathize with his brethren in Israel or donate to some worthy cause associated with world Jewry but that in doing so he would be expressing his "humanitarian character" and not his "national limitations." There would be no doubt that we are staunch Americans first, who are lending a hand to our coreligionists on the other side of the world. This attitude prevails today in America even amongst the orthodox segment of our population.

We have been deceived into thinking that strong feeling for the land of Israel means dual loyalty and lack of gratitude to our adopted country. In this way the problem of Jewish nationalism has been clouded and distorted to the point where even the orthodox are silent and quick to include itself in the group with those who have single loyalties.

* * * *

To accept Judaism today as being a religion of good works directed toward the saving of the Jewish soul, would not merely be to dilute the chain of tradition. This path leads directly to a negation of the essence of the Jewish religion. We as individuals are products of a western society which claims as its precursor the Greek tradition. Judaism is the creation of a semitic people whose point of view differed fundamentally with that of the Greeks. James Barr (*The Semantics of Biblical Language*, Oxford '61 p. 13) sums up the difference this way: "It is similarly felt that Hebrew thought saw man as person within a totality, while Greek thought tended to see him as an individual i.e. in essence as one separated from others, and then to form collectivities by grouping individuals together, the conflict of individual and collectivity thus arises from Greek tradition. But Hebrew life was lived in a social totality of religion and justice." The people Israel was conceived as an entire nation. Divine revelation on Mt. Sinai was a personal experience within the context of the people as a whole. A covenant with Abraham was not enough—there had to be a people.

The Jews were never very interested in philosophic speculation about religion generally. Judaism was always synonymous with life day to day. Every effort was made to place the individual more and more within the confines of Jewish discipline, the *halacha*. Throughout the long years of dispersion and tragedy, wherever they went, they were always Jews. They developed their own literature, culture, administrative organs and even their own Diaspora languages. Today, liberalism says no! Let us westernize our religion, interest ourselves in Jewish souls and try to forget about the *Jewish people*. It is clear that this is a challenge to which Traditional Judaism must direct its efforts in the future.

* * * *

Judaism, although in some ways rigidly fundamentalist, has never closed its eyes to problems of the world around us. The most perfunctory acquaintance with the *Responsa* literature of the

last few generations easily convinces one of that. There has been no issue which has not been defined and in some way placed in the Jewish perspective. So too with the problem of the Jew as a national entity. The changing fortunes of the Jews and especially their relations with their non Jewish neighbors received extensive treatment (see recently *Exclusiveness and Tolerance*, J. Katz). Long before modern Zionism had been conceived the problem of the land of Israel had been thoroughly considered.

The Tosafot in *Ket.* 110b gives two reasons exempting people of the Middle Ages from going to settle in Israel. Today, neither the first reason, of dangerous roads, nor R. Chayim's point that those *mitzvot* specifically connected to Israel cannot be properly carried out is valid. El Al will get you to Israel in less than one day, and the opportunity to perform *mitzvot* that are relevant only in Israel is clear. The State of Israel is a growing concern and it has been proven by many examples that it is possible for Americans to make their homes in Israel and experience material success. For the first time in the long history of our wanderings it has become possible to fulfill the age old dream every Jew of the Diaspora, starting from Moses, has had. Today it is possible for every Jew to become part of a Jewish nation in their own land.

* * * *

As long as settling in Israel was a practical impossibility, it was a simple matter to teach nationalism as a doctrine that the Messiah would enforce. Today an offhand doctrinaire remark will not do. For if Jews should be in Israel, why don't they go, and if they can't all go now why not me? This is, I believe, a question pertinent to religious education today and not a problem of a by-gone age. If Judaism is to maintain its unique separationist form of existence in this modern world then religious nationalism must be reconsidered. Unless orthodoxy has conceded that Judaism and living are not necessarily congruences; if the part time Jew has not become the new ideal; if the future of the Jews is still a Jewish problem, then Jewish nationalism deserves to be reconsidered, and the Jewish people deserve direction and enlightenment about what is expected of them.

LIFE AGAINST DEATH IN THE BOOK OF RUTH

The commonly accepted view that *Ruth* is a pastoral idyll is one capable of blinding us to its central message. For underlying this simple and charming little tale is a cosmic struggle of profound and manifold implications — the struggle between life and death. There is, of course, no abstract treatment of this theme. It is expressed, rather, through the personal, national and religious experiences of people's lives, experiences which, to the author of *Ruth*, are quite inseparable.

We would be justified, I believe, in dividing the characters of the book into two major camps, that of life and that of death: Ruth versus Orpah, Boaz versus Elimelech, Machlon and Kilyon, the land of Israel versus the field of Moab, and, most important, Naomi versus Marah. The crucial figure in *Ruth* is Naomi, for she is the center of its conflict. She moves from Israel to Moab to Israel, from life to death and back again, and the outcome of the struggle for life in the last three chapters depends upon which aspect of Naomi emerges—does she remain Marah or does Naomi appear once more?

As for the G-d of Israel, He is no doubt responsible for both life and death; trust in Him, however, yields fertility both to the land and to the individual. We shall see, in fact, that the redemption effected by Boaz is simply a manifestation of the work of the true Redeemer. In *Ruth*, then, G-d appears more frequently among the soldiers of life; it is this that assures their victory.

Let us now turn to the text itself.

The book begins by misleading us. Elimelech and his family flee from a land of famine and death to one in which they may live, from Israel to Moab. However, we quickly begin to notice certain indications that the contrast showing Israel as the land of death and Moab as that of life is one destined to bring tragedy to this

family. For the introduction of the ominous names Machlon and Kilyon¹ is followed by the death of Elimelech in the land where he had hoped to find new life.

Yet the flame of hope is not easily extinguished, and Naomi's sons continue to look to Moab for the generation of life—they choose Moabite women as their wives. Ten apparently childless years follow, and then—death. It is clear that the refugees from Judah were wrong in their estimate of Moab, for Naomi now stands vanquished by the forces of death. Could they have been wrong about Israel as well?

Suddenly, Naomi hears that there are signs of new life in her homeland, for "the L-rd had remembered his people in giving them bread." She decides to return. But her feeling that there may be life in Israel is a weak one at best; Naomi appears to be in a state of utter despair. Death is everywhere. If it must be faced, she may as well face it in the land of her fathers. But shall she subject young Moabite women to the famished land from which she herself had fled? This Naomi cannot do. She consequently attempts to persuade her daughters-in-law to remain in Moab where they may "find rest each in the house of her husband," while the journey to Israel would mean the acceptance of the life of a widow and of eternal sterility. Orpah is convinced.

With Ruth's answer, however, comes the death-knell of this false contrast of Israel and Moab which has brought despair to Naomi. "... Thy people shall be my people, and they G-d my G-d; where thou diest will I die, and there will I be buried; the L-rd do so to me, and more also, if aught but death part thee and me." If Israel is death says Ruth, then let me die. But Ruth does not really believe that Israel is death, and her faith will ultimately furnish the saving catharsis required for Naomi's rebirth.

Upon arrival at Bethlechem, Naomi proclaims herself Marah, for the last ten years have seen the famine of her land, the dulling of her national identification, and the destruction of her family. She is wholly oppressed by death. Can the "Naomi" in her be revived? Can the forces of life achieve a new conquest? The answers will depend upon Ruth.

As we read the next three chapters, we are not expected to forget chapter one. A reader who *has* forgotten might indeed read

¹ Both come from roots denoting sickness and destruction.

² Is this reminiscent of God's "remembering" (also "Hashem pakad") of Sarah with the granting of a new fertility?

these chapters as a peaceful idyll; one who remembers will read them as the account of a grand effort to overcome the powerful forces of evil and of death that seem triumphant during Naomi's declaration that she is Marah.

The first regeneration that we witness is that of the land. Chapter one ends with the beginning of the barley harvest, and through chapters two and three there is a recurring emphasis upon the productivity of the land. The very events narrated take place almost exclusively on fertile fields—and this is no accident. For the rebirth of the land is connected with and symbolic of that second, most significant regeneration—that toward which Naomi is striving through Ruth.

It may be meaningful that the barley which heralds the land's renewed productivity at the end of chapter one is given to Ruth by Boaz at the end of chapter three "so that thou mayest not return emptyhanded to thy mother-in-law." Through Ruth, Naomi again becomes fertile. "A child has been born to Naomi," say her neighbors (4.17), not "to Ruth," but "to Naomi."

Naomi herself is most keenly aware of this crucial dependence upon her daughter-in-law. "And she came to her mother-in-law, and she (Naomi) said, 'Who are you, my daughter?' And she told all that the man had done to her" (3.16). Commentators who maintain that it was dark and Naomi did not recognize Ruth are, I feel, missing the point. Naomi has blurted out the key question, one that has been tormenting her since the return from Moab, one whose answer she must know. "Who are you, my daughter? Are you of Moab or of Israel? Are you truly of my family? Can your future be mine as well? *Who are you, my daughter?*"

These questions and their ultimate resolution have deep religious and national implications as well. The regeneration of Ruth (and through her, of Naomi) is intimately bound up with her choice of the G-d of Israel. "May your reward be complete," says Boaz to Ruth, "from the L-rd, G-d of Israel, under whose wings you have come to seek shelter" (2.12). Because Ruth has sought shelter under the wings of G-d, she merits the right to ask Boaz (3.9), "Spread your wing³ over your servant." Here, the result will be new life—a life which the linguistic parallel refers not only to Boaz but to G-d Himself. G-d is the redeemer in 1.6. Boaz is

³ Whether a better translation in this context is "skirt" or "edge of garment" is not directly relevant to the major point which is the fact that the same Hebrew word is used in both cases.

the redeemer in 3.9. The latter is an instrument in the divine plan.

The deep commitment in Ruth's new national identification and the life which it renews offers final refutation to the initial error of Elimelech and Naomi. This too is subtly indicated by parallel expressions. The kindness (*chesed*) which Ruth performed in Moab was "with the dead and with Naomi" (1.8), a Naomi who was at that time in a state of living death. The *chesed* of Boaz (2.20) is with both living and dead. Finally, we reach the *chesed* of which Ruth becomes capable in the land of Israel (3.10), a *chesed* which is not only with the living but which promises new hope for the future; this *chesed* is her marriage with Boaz. The word appears in these three verses and nowhere else in *Ruth*.

While in Moab, Naomi exhorted her daughters-in-law to remain there and "find rest (*menuchah*) each one in the house of her husband." Israel promised cessation of life and of fertility. What is the true outcome? Naomi succeeds in finding a "*manoach*" (3.1), a place of rest, for Ruth in her marriage to Boaz. Another indication of Elimelech's tragic mistake.

In the last chapter we pass from the new life of the land, a life which had been merely preparatory and symbolic, to the culmination of Naomi's efforts at a religious, national and personal rebirth. These elements are united in the statement (4.14-15), "Blessed be the *L-rd* who hath not left thee this day without a near kinsman, and let his name be famous in *Israel*. And he shall be unto thee a restorer of life, and a nourisher of thine old age; for thy daughter-in-law, who loveth thee, who is better to thee than seven sons, hath borne him."

Through its triumph over the death at the beginning of *Ruth*, life is made ever stronger. And the life which springs from the union of Ruth and Boaz is life eternal for the Jewish people and for humanity as a whole. King David is borne, and with him the personification of the Messianic ideal—an ideal striving to inspire all of mankind with a new and more nearly perfect life.

HANNAH ARENDT, THE OLYMPIAN

HANNAH ARENDT

Eichmann in Jerusalem
A report on the Banality of Evil

Viking Press, 1963
 \$5.50 256 pages

In her recently published book, *Eichmann in Jerusalem*, Miss Arendt sets herself up as Zeus to judge the pettiness of mortals—however good—who themselves sat in judgement on their fellow man—however evil (or banal); to unveil the *true* psyche of the defendant Eichmann; and, as was characteristic of the pagan god-in-chief, to whimsically (if not captiously) bestow upon segments of the mortal race scandalous pricks and prejudiced scorn.

On the latter aspect of her book—her shocking and exaggerated accusations levied against organized European Jewry for the part it played during the bitter war years (perhaps derived from a not so articulated desire to see Jewish consciousness go the way of the buffalo and whooping crane)—this reviewer has little to say. So many other better equipped than I have risen to ably discredit the caustic misrepresentation of historical data that is to be found in Miss Arendt's work. What is of major interest to this reviewer are the first two aspects mentioned in the opening paragraph above: Miss Arendt's logic and sense of justice as manifested by her critique of the Israeli trial, including her analysis of Eichmann's psyche.

Throughout her book, Miss Arendt criticizes (sometimes subtly and sometimes openly) Gideon Hausner, the prosecuting attorney,

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and the judgement of the presiding judges. She appears as having a strong personal dislike for Mr. Hausner (or whomever, in her eyes, he may represent), accusing him of vain theatrics and above all of expanding the scope of the trial to include the crime of Nazism and anti-Semitism as such. Foremost in this expansion of the trial proceedings were the historical sketch of anti-Semitism and the emphasis placed on the heartbreaking suffering Jews experienced at the hands of the Nazis. Miss Arendt's objection to the inclusion of such matters arose mainly for her definition of justice. "Justice demands that the accused be prosecuted, defended, and judged, and that all the other questions of seemingly greater import—of 'How could it happen?' . . .—be left in obedience."²

Arendt's definition of justice seems to be most valid. The trial, undoubtedly, should be concerned with only the individual in the dock, clearly defining his crime and meting out proper punishment. Though the prosecution attempted to turn the Eichmann trial into a grand show trial (which, in fact could hardly be otherwise, considering that had Eichmann not already been judged guilty of death in the eyes of the entire world, Israel would not have attempted to kidnap him, nor would she have gotten away with such an affront to Argentina's sovereignty) it was the task of the judges, Arendt writes, to see that such an expansion of the trial proceedings did not occur.

Arendt's stand, however, is perplexing if only for her refusal to abide by it. Later in the book she writes, "one was perhaps entitled to be glad *this was no ordinary trial, where statements without bearing on the criminal proceedings must be thrown out as irrelevant and immaterial*. For obviously, things were not so simple as the framers of the laws had imagined them to be, and if it was of small relevance, it was of great political interest to know how long it takes an average person to overcome his innate repugnance toward crime, and what exactly happens to him once he has reached that point."³ (my italics).

Arendt, therefore, plunges into a highly intriguing psychological analysis for which she is famous. To her, Eichmann was no common Jew baiter, nor was he a blood thirsty madman. He was a civilized citizen with a strong sense of responsibility to his political order, and a typically German drive to "go beyond the call of duty".

"Much of the horribly painstaking thoroughness in the execution of the Final Solution—a thoroughness that usually strikes

the observer as typically German, or else as characteristic of the perfect bureaucrat—can be traced to the odd notion, indeed very common in Germany, that to be law abiding means not merely to obey the laws but to act as though one were the legislator of the laws that one obeys. Hence, the conviction that nothing less than going beyond the call of duty will do."⁴

At this point one cannot help but reflect on how different World War II would have been for the Jews had the Nazis (or at least Eichmann) reacted similarly to scriptural law. One is also reminded of how Arendt herself finds it necessary to classify Eichmann as a "radical" Nazi.⁵

Miss Arendt attempts to defend her psychological theories by arguing that Eichmann had really been vindictively anti-Semitic when he declared time and time again that "I would jump into my grave laughing, because the fact that I have the death of five million Jews on my conscience gives me extraordinary satisfaction."⁶ Eichmann, Arendt says, was merely boasting—a well known weakness of his. She argues further that only those who are too good (as she admits were the judges in Jerusalem) find it difficult to believe that the normal, peaceful and civilized man is capable of becoming a cold calculating cog in the machinery of evil. This is what she calls the banality of evil.

It can be said, however, that only those who, for some reason, must criticize the Israeli trial find it difficult to believe what is simple—that an ardent mass murderer (one who, at the end of the war, had the courage to sabotage Himmler's order regarding the cessation of foot marches to the death camps) relishes his "radical" task. Yet, it is in the name of Justice that Arendt feels anti-Semitism was out of place in the Jerusalem trial.⁷ Nothing more, therefore, need be said than that Dr. Arendt assumes that, in the name of justice, all human behavior hangs motionless in an historical vacuum, waiting for her very own psychological analysis to spark it into life.

In another of her many attempts to discredit Gideon Hausner and his "boss", Ben-Gurion, Arendt declares that "Justice . . . demands seclusion."⁸ Hence, according to Miss Arendt's logic, the prosecuting attorney was forbidden to give during the trial press conferences and interviews for television. What such procedures have to do with justice, however, Miss Arendt failed to clarify. Eichmann was no obscure criminal; many knew of him, were familiar with his participation in the "biggest and greatest" crime ever to appear, and only, too naturally, were interested in his case. Miss

Arendt assumes that Gideon Hausner prosecuted Eichmann only in the name of Israel or of Zionists. The truth is that if Justice is to be our objective, then we must say that Mr. Hausner substituted not only for Zionists but for all just men wherever they may dwell. Moreover, any intelligent democrat appreciates the fact that people are actively interested in the affairs of political and judicial institutions; he understands too well the danger of apathy. (Does Miss Arendt object also to the defense holding press conferences?) Matters of justice, therefore—though prosecuted and judged by specialists—are not to be removed from the public. It is the Bible which teaches us that all are to be interested in justice and the way it is carried out. According to Scripture, one of the prime reasons for meting out punishment is “men should not only know that justice had been done, but they should also view its proceedings and take heed of its lesson.”

Miss Arendt certainly evinces her divergence from scriptural conceptions and displays a firm secular orientation to questions of moral import when she favors Eichmann to have been tried and judged by an international tribunal. Her argument is that the very law of 1950 under which former Nazis are to be tried and judged by the State of Israel should not have been passed by the Israeli Knesset in the first place. For the Nazi crime is unprecedented; genocide is not to be equated with murder.

“... just as the murderer is prosecuted because he has violated the law of the community, and not because he has deprived the Smith family of its husband, father and breadwinner, so these modern state-employed mass murderers must be prosecuted because they violated the order of mankind and not because they killed millions of people. Nothing is more pernicious to an understanding of these new crimes, or stands more obstructively in the way of the emergence of an international penal code that could take care of them, than the common illusion that the crime of murder and the crime of genocide are essentially the same. The point of the latter is that an altogether different order is broken and an altogether different community is violated.”⁸

In opposing the law of 1950, Arendt works under two misconceptions. Firstly, she assumes there is an order of nations similar to the national order of individuals. So long as there is no effective order of nations (possessing the power to enforce international law

and maintain peace and justice at all times) the rule of self help applies in bringing criminals to justice.”

Moreover, Miss Arendt assumes that genocide is a “new crime”; its gravity is unique. It was genocide alone which “violated the order of mankind.” Yet, we may rightly ask: Do we not chisel away at the hallowed concept of mankind when we murder but one human being? Arendt—as intelligent as she is and as humanitarian as she may be—is handicapped by her secular orientation. To her, law is anthropocentric, not theocentric. Crimes, therefore, are to be judged in relationship to the communal order they impair: murder violates the local communal order; genocide violates the world order, or the very concept of mankind. Anyone who has studied the Bible, however, will readily see that “man was created in G-d’s image.” The murder of but one human being shatters the concept of mankind (or rather its essence) and violates mankind’s moral and ethical order. Only one who fails to see godliness—that noblest leveller—in every man can differentiate between world-shattering genocide and plain, simple undisturbing murder.

Miss Arendt also finds it obnoxious that the Jerusalem court convicted Eichmann of crimes committed against the “Jewish people.”⁹ It cannot be said that Miss Arendt, thinking herself committed to a stronger universalism than the typical Jew, merely called for a sense of “crimes against humanity”—a recognition of the sufferings of all peoples at the hands of the Nazis—for that is exactly what the Jerusalem court did. It convicted Eichmann (and his ilk) of “crimes against humanity” as well as “crimes against the Jewish people.” Why Arendt failed to realize the validity of the count which held Eichmann guilty of crimes against the Jewish people is evident; she is a rabid assimilationist. She is irked to find that the Jerusalem trial reaffirmed the right of Jews to exist as Jews.

The truth, however, is that all those Eastern European countries which tried and judged the Nazi criminals at the end of the war had an opportunity not merely to “avenge” themselves (as Arendt sees it) but to condemn to death their enemies not only for murdering individuals but also for attempting to destroy cherished possessions—for seeking the murder of their cultures, their *bodysocials*. Jews, Poles, and Gypsies have a right to live, conscious of their different peaceful traditions, as do the Germans, their enemies, and the Anglo-Saxons, the victors of the war. The possessor of a heritage alone may discard his heritage; no outsider has the right to do violence to his heritage, just as no outsider has the right to force

a man out of the custom-built home he and his forefathers built with their own hands. Nationalism—as Mazzini¹² and Zionists understand it, of course, and not as aggressive fascists do—is most definitely a boon to humanity. Only one with an almost totalitarian hatred of the diversity of human ways of life can look upon the reaffirmation of minority identities with disdain.

The Jerusalem judges, unlike Arendt, knew how to differentiate between genocide and murder. Genocide is not “essentially” unique in its violation of mankind; it differs from murder only in its destruction of a heritage. Unlike aggressive warfare or plunder, it is not motivated merely by material gain but by an inhuman hatred of diversity as well. It is responsible both for an attack against mankind in its homocides and for the crime of the pogrom in its murder of a people.

Had Arendt sought to reaffirm scriptural insight into criminal culpability and relentless justice, we would, of course, have had no need to take exception to what emerges from her articulate and (to be honest) ironic pen. Yet, it is also true that Miss Arendt does call for a scriptural understanding of Eichmann’s crime. She rightly takes Israel to task for shrinking from surpassing modern western civilization’s legal assumptions. Unlike the District Court that had tried Eichmann, the Israeli Court of Appeal, in its judgment, found that “the appellant had received no ‘superior orders’ at all. He was his own superior and he gave all orders in matters that concerned Jewish affairs.”¹³ It is this attempt to trace the *source* of the Nazi evil to Eichmann himself which, in the author’s opinion, is “dangerous nonsense.” Why Arendt considers it “dangerous nonsense” is not clear. It may be merely because she judged Eichmann to have been guilty only of aiding and abetting¹⁴ in the commission of crimes with which he was charged—i.e. of “shipping people to their death in full awareness of what he was doing.”¹⁵ Perhaps she felt it was “dangerous nonsense” also because it diminished somewhat the moral responsibility of the rank and file of evil.

In the last few pages of her book, however, Miss Arendt does evoke clearly scriptural sentiments.

“Foremost among the larger issues at stake in the Eichmann trial was the assumption current in all modern legal systems that intent to do wrong is necessary for the commission of a crime. On nothing has civilized jurisprudence prided itself more than on this taking into account the subjective factor. Where this intent is absent, where, for whatever reasons, even

reasons of moral insanity, the ability to distinguish between right and wrong is impaired, we feel no crime has been committed. We refuse and consider as barbaric, the propositions ‘that a great crime offends nature so that the very earth cries out for vengeance; that evil violates a natural harmony which only retribution can restore; that a wronged collectivity owes a duty to the moral order to punish the criminal’ . . . And yet I think it is undeniable that it was precisely on the ground of these long-forgotten propositions that Eichmann was brought to justice to begin with, and that they were, in fact, the supreme justification for the death penalty. Because he had been implicated and had played a central role in an enterprise whose open purpose was to eliminate forever certain “races” from the surface of the earth, he had to be eliminated.”¹⁶

And the author, much disappointed with almost all that had transpired in Jerusalem, concludes with her own ringing address in which she says the following to the defendant Eichmann:

“What you meant to say was that where all, or almost all, are guilty, nobody is. This is an indeed quite common conclusion, but one we are not willing to grant you. And if you don’t understand our objection, we would recommend to your attention the story of Sodom and Gomorrah, two neighboring cities in the Bible, which were destroyed by fire from heaven because all the people in them had become equally guilty. This incidentally, has nothing to do with the newfangled notion of “collective guilt,” according to which people are supposedly guilty of, or feel guilty about, things done in their name but not by them—things in which they did not participate and from which they did not profit. In other words, guilt and innocence before the law are of an objective nature, and even if eighty million Germans had done as you did, this would not have been an excuse for you.”¹⁷

Why Miss Arendt possesses such an ambivalence to scriptural concepts and other matters of justice, this reviewer leaves for others to delve into. Perhaps Miss Arendt herself will someday attempt to explain why. Though it may be that Justice was not her objective in writing *Eichmann in Jerusalem*, nevertheless it is clear that questions of justice and moral import play a central role in this book. It was Miss Arendt’s ambivalence to such matters and her strangely

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"critical" attitudes which caught the interest of this reviewer, and which, I hope, interested the reader, too.

NOTES

1. p. 3
2. p. 87
3. p. 122
4. see p. 197 "With respect to such Jews (Jews of foreign nationality who were trapped in Poland), there existed two different trends in all German officers, the "radical" trend, which would have ignored all distinctions—a Jew was a Jew period—and the "moderate" trend, which thought it better to put these Jews "on ice" for exchange purposes . . . Needless to say, Eichmann belonged to the "radicals", he was against making exceptions for administrative as well as "idealistic" reasons."
5. p. 150
6. see p. 23. "Alas, nobody believed him. The prosecutor did not believe him, because that was not his job. Counsel for the defense paid no attention because he, unlike Eichmann, was, to all appearances, not interested in questions of conscience. And the judges did not believe him, because they were too good, and perhaps also too conscious of the very foundations of their profession, to admit that an average "normal" person, neither feeble-minded nor indoctrinated nor cynical could be perfectly incapable of telling right from wrong. They preferred to conclude from occasional lies that he was a liar—and missed the greatest moral and even legal challenge of the whole case."
7. p. 4
- 7a. See Rashi, Deut. 17:13.
8. p. 249
9. It is the "legal" distinction between genocide and murder which makes genocide appear to Miss Arendt as a generically new and graver crime than murder. Yet, this "legal" distinction may, in the Eichmann case, be further questioned. For, as Arendt herself claimed, Eichmann and his fellow murderers are not to be considered *hostis generis humanis* as are pirates on the open seas. The Jews were murdered within the boundaries of the various nations of Europe.
10. see p. 222
11. "G-d has written one line of His thought upon each people, and consequently each is to bring its gifts into the marketplace of the world's good." (quoted by N. Sokolow in his History of Zionism)
12. p. 192
13. p. 193
14. p. 254
15. p. 255

